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Health

Fundamentals of the healthcare system

The German healthcare system

Outpatient care: You can get help from doctors and pharmacies. Outpatient means that you can go home after treatment. This means that you do not have to stay in hospital.

Inpatient care: You receive help in hospital. Inpatient means that you stay in hospital after treatment.

The public health department: The [public health department](#) protects against illnesses and helps people to stay healthy. They offer preventative services. This means that the public health department has many offers. These help people to stay healthy and get more information about health. The public health department has many different tasks. You can find an **overview of all tasks** [here](#).



In Germany, everyone must have health insurance. This means that you receive help from the healthcare system.



As a rule, you can decide for yourself which doctor you go to. This is called **freedom of choice**.



Hospitals generally treat people who are seriously ill or have life-threatening injuries. For minor injuries or illnesses, you go to a doctor's surgery. **You can find information on emergencies** [here](#).

The German healthcare system in many languages



[Bochum health guide for migrants](#)



[Health for all - A guide to the German healthcare system](#)

Emergency numbers

Are you or someone else in an **emergency situation** and need **help immediately**? Is your life threatened?

Dial the following **emergency numbers**:

Police: ☎ 110

Fire and rescue service: ☎ 112

You should answer the following questions on the phone:

Who?

Your name and location.

Where?

Where exactly has something happened? City, street, house number, floor.

What happened?

What has happened? Brief description of the situation.

How many?

How many people need help?

Which ones?

What problems and injuries can you see?

Wait!

Only hang up when the other side has finished talking!

Emergency service numbers

Do you need help? Your doctor is not available?

Emergency service numbers are telephone numbers for medical help when doctors are not available. For example at weekends or on public holidays. You can find the most important numbers here:

- [General emergency service number](#) ☎ 116 117
- [Paediatric emergency service](#)
- **Paediatric clinic:** 📍 Alexandrinenstraße 5, 44791 Bochum ☎ 0234 50 92 63 1
- **General practitioner emergency service (including ophthalmologists):** ☎ 116 117
- **GP [emergency practice](#) in Bochum:** 📍 St. Josef-Hospital, Gudrunstraße 56, 44791 Bochum
- **[ENT emergency service:](#)** 📍 St. Elisabeth-Hospital, Bleichstraße 15, 44787 Bochum ☎ 0234 509-80
- **Dental emergency service:** ☎ 0234 770-055

- [Pharmacy emergency service](#)
- **Poison control centre:** ☎ 0228 192-40
- **Veterinary emergency service:** ☎ 01805 123-411

💡 Further numbers for emergencies and crises can be found [here](#).

Do you need to go to hospital?

- Take your **ID and insurance card** with you!
- If you **are seeking asylum**, you generally do not have health insurance. You can only be treated if you are ill or pregnant. You will need a **treatment voucher** for this. You can obtain this from the [Social Welfare Office](#).
- **In an emergency:** Show your residence documents at the hospital. The hospital will then recognise that you are seeking asylum. The Social Welfare Office will pay the costs of treatment in emergencies.

Health insurance

Compulsory insurance

[Insurance](#) is [compulsory](#) in **Germany**. Do you have a residence permit? Then you must register with a regular health insurance fund. You will receive an **insurance card** from the health insurance company. This entitles you to the same benefits as everyone else in Germany.

Choice of doctor

You can choose a **general** practitioner (family doctor) of your choice. Do you need treatment from a **specialist**? Then you usually need a **referral** from your family doctor first.



Do you need to go to hospital? Are you seeing a therapist? Are you seeing a doctor?

Always take your insurance card with you!

You are seeking asylum and are ill?

As a refugee or asylum seeker, you generally do not have health insurance. If you are ill and need to see a doctor, you will need a **treatment voucher**. You can obtain this **from the Social Welfare Office**. With this voucher, the visit to the doctor is free of charge for you.

Do you need an operation and it is not an emergency? Then the [Social Welfare](#) Office must authorise your stay in hospital. Apply for authorisation before you go to hospital. Your doctor will issue you with a certificate to this effect. The [Social Welfare](#) Office will only cover the costs for medically necessary operations.

Further information for asylum seekers can be found here:

[German](#) - [Arabic](#) - [Farsi](#) - [English](#) - [Dari](#) - [Kurdish](#) - [Pashto](#)

Health card

What is the electronic health card (eGK)?

The electronic health card is very important. You can use it to go to a doctor. The doctors' work is paid for by your health insurance. You will receive the health card **from your health insurance company**.

When do I need the health card?

You should always have your health card and that of your children with you. **The health card is important for visits to the doctor and in hospital.** Doctors need your health card. When you visit a doctor, you must present your health card at least once a **quarter**. A quarter is three months. The year has four quarters. These start in January, April, July and October.



Have you been referred to a specialist doctor? Make sure that the **referral** is from the **current** quarter. If the referral is from the previous quarter, then the referral is no longer valid.



Many doctors no longer write prescriptions on paper. Your prescriptions are on your health card. You need prescriptions, for example, to pick up medication at the pharmacy. You can go to the pharmacy with your health card and get your medication there. This prescription is also called [an e-prescription](#). You can find more information [here](#).

What should I be aware of when travelling abroad?

Your health card is a European health card. You can go to the doctor in all **EU countries** and in some other countries. If you visit a doctor abroad, treatment is not always free. If you are travelling abroad, it is advisable to take out **international health insurance**. You can find more information [here](#).

Visit to the doctor

General practitioners

When do I see a family doctor?

GPs and general practitioners carry out important examinations. They are the first to help you if you are ill. They prescribe necessary medication and tell you whether you need to see a specialist. Specialists carry out specific examinations in which they specialise.

So if you are ill, go to your family doctor first. They can also give you a **sick note or a medical certificate** if you are ill. This is important if you need proof that you are ill.

You can decide for yourself which GP you would like to see. It is important that you make an appointment beforehand.

You can find an **overview of family doctors in Bochum** [here](#).



Family doctors are also called **general practitioners** .

Is the practice closed?

The **medical emergency service** will help you (☎ 116 117). The medical emergency service will tell you which doctors can help you outside opening hours. You can find other important contacts [here](#).

Dentists and dentists

Do you have a toothache?

Then go and see a dentist. Even if you have no pain, **go for regular check-ups**. These check-ups are important for your health. The health insurance company pays for these check-ups. They take place twice a year.

You can find an overview of **dentists in Bochum** [here](#)

Is your dentist closed?

If your **dentist** is **closed** , you can contact the [dental emergency service](#):

☎ 0234 / 5 87 91 24

Gynaecologists (female and male gynaecologists)

What are gynaecologists?

Gynaecologists are there specifically to treat women. They are also known as gynaecologists.

What do gynaecologists do?

- **They carry out preventive examinations.** They detect diseases early.
- **They carry out examinations for cancer.** For example, for breast cancer and cervical cancer.
- They treat **sexually transmitted diseases**.
- They help with problems with **hormones**.
- They help women during **pregnancy**.
- They provide advice on **contraception** and **family planning**.
- They offer advice on the **menopause**.



Make an appointment in good time. It often takes a long time to get an appointment.

Where can I find a gynaecologist?

You can find an overview of all gynaecologists in Bochum [here](#).

Where can I find more information about women's health?

 [Women and Health| City of Bochum](#)

 [Women's health | BMG](#)

 [Women's health portal](#)

Paediatricians and paediatricians

What do paediatricians do?

Paediatricians examine children and adolescents. There are [examinations](#) for children. These examinations are important for your child's health. The examinations are designed to recognise or prevent illnesses in your child at an early stage. The examinations are called "[U examinations](#)". The examinations must be carried out at a specific time. They are free of charge. Go to the paediatrician.

Is your child starting school next year?

The school entrance examination takes place before your child starts school. Your child's readiness for school will be checked. You will automatically be sent an appointment for your child's school entrance examination.

Is your child new to Germany?

Children and young people who are new to Germany will also be invited to the school entrance examination by the public health department. The examination for these children and adolescents only takes place when they attend school.

Vaccinations

Many immunisations are recommended in Germany. There is no compulsory immunisation. You can find more information [here](#).

! Special regulations apply to measles immunisation. You can find more information [here](#).

Further information on paediatrics and adolescent medicine

 [Paediatricians and adolescent doctors in Bochum](#)

 [Child and adolescent psychiatric service](#)

 [School psychology advice centre](#)

Psychotherapy

What does a psychotherapist do?

A psychotherapist helps people who have **mental health problems** .

- **Help through dialogue:** Psychotherapists talk to people who have problems. For example, in cases of stress, anxiety or sadness.
- **Listening and understanding:** A psychotherapist listens carefully to people. They want to understand what is bothering the person.
- **Finding solutions:** Together they consider how the person can feel better. They look for ways to deal with the problems.
- **Help after difficult experiences:** Some people have experienced very bad things, for example war, violence or torture. Psychotherapy can also help in these cases so that people can better process what they have experienced.
- **Different methods:** There are various conversations and exercises that can help to better understand thoughts and feelings.
- **No medication:** No medication is prescribed in psychotherapy. Its work is to support you through dialogue.



Have you experienced bad things, such as **violence** or **torture**? Then you have the right to help. Psychotherapy can help you to feel better again.

Where can I find help?

[Social psychiatric service](#)

The Social Psychiatric Service offers help for people in difficult life situations who have signs or consequences of mental illness.

[Medical Refugee Aid Bochum e. V. \(MFH\)](#)

- Counselling on the subject of psychotherapy from Medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe Bochum e. V. (MFH)
- Psychotherapy consultation for refugees and professionals:



Tuesday: 2 - 3 pm

0234 - 913 87 43

[Psychosocial Help Bochum e. V.](#)

What do I say on the phone when I need help?

- I have **psychological problems**.

- I am **looking for psychotherapy**.
- I name **times when I can make appointments**.
- I need **an interpreter/no interpreter**.
- Please state your **residence status**.
- Please state your **health insurance**.

! In [an emergency](#):

In acute psychological emergencies, especially if there is immediate danger to yourself or others, you should not hesitate. Call the **emergency services (112)** or the **police (110)** immediately!

You can also contact the medical **on-call service (116 117)** or go directly to the nearest hospital.

How do I find a psychotherapist?

- [Specialist search](#): With search function and available in several languages
- [Psychotherapist search](#)
- Your health insurance company can help you find a **psychotherapist**.

Pharmacies and medicines

What are pharmacies?

People go to a pharmacy when they need medication. Many medicines can only be obtained with a prescription from a doctor. Some medicines can also be bought without a prescription. For example, tablets for headaches.

Pharmacies are usually open from Monday to Saturday. Opening hours vary depending on the pharmacy. Do you urgently need medication at night or at the weekend? Every pharmacy has a sign with the name and address of the pharmacy with emergency service. You can also find this information on the Internet.



You can find the **pharmacy emergency service** in your area [here](#).

What is a doctor's prescription?

A doctor's prescription is a note from a doctor. You can use it to obtain medication from the pharmacy. There are different types of prescriptions:

- **Pink prescription:** The pink prescription is for people with statutory health insurance. The health insurance company pays a large part of the costs. You often pay €5-10 as a co-payment at the pharmacy.
- **Blue or white prescription:** The blue prescription is for privately insured persons or special medicines. You pay yourself first and can check whether you can get the money back from your health

insurance.

- **Green prescription:** The green prescription is for herbal or light medicines. You usually have to pay for the medication yourself. Some health insurance companies offer a health budget. You can find more information [here](#).
- **E-prescription:** Many doctors no longer write prescriptions on paper. Your prescriptions are stored on your health card. You can go to the pharmacy with your health card and get your medication there. This prescription is also called an e-prescription. For the e-prescription to work, the doctor must read your health card once a quarter. Make sure that your health card is valid.

People with disabilities

In Germany, almost one in ten people has a severe disability. People with disabilities must have the same opportunities as healthy people. They should be able to participate in society. That's what the law says. There are measures for **inclusion** to achieve this. For example, people with disabilities can get help at work. There is also special support for small children. This is called **early intervention**.

There are different types of disabilities:

- **Physical disability:** When the body is restricted. For example, when walking, gripping or moving.
Example: Someone is in a wheelchair or has a prosthesis.
- **Sensory disability:** When vision or hearing is impaired.
Example: Someone is blind or hard of hearing.
- **Mental disability:** When learning, thinking or understanding is more difficult.
Example: Someone needs more time to learn or understand something.
- **Mental disability:** When feeling or behaviour is severely impaired - often due to mental illness.
Example: Someone has severe anxiety or depression that has a major impact on their life.
- **Learning disability:** When learning is permanently difficult.
Example: Someone has great difficulty with reading, writing or maths.
- **Chronic illnesses:** Chronic illnesses are illnesses that you have permanently, such as: diabetes, heart disease and depression.

What is inclusion?

[Aktion Mensch](#) says: "Inclusion means that **everyone** belongs naturally. Or in other words: inclusion is when **everyone is allowed to participate**. No matter what you look like, what language you speak or whether you have a disability.

For example: children with and without disabilities learn together at school. When everyone can be involved everywhere, at work, at home or in their free time: that's inclusion."

All people should have **the same opportunities**. They should not feel excluded or disadvantaged. According to the principle of inclusion, all people are equally involved in life with and in society.

! Disability as an insult

It is **okay** to say: "This person has a disability" or: "A person with a disability needs support." This is **respectful and factual**.

It is **not okay** to say: "You are disabled!" (as an insult) or: "He's completely disabled!" Such sentences are **hurtful and discriminatory**.

What is early intervention?

[Early intervention](#) is help for children who develop more slowly, have a disability or could develop a disability. Early intervention is available from birth to school age. It not only supports the child, but also the parents and family.

Early intervention helps, for example, with

- Learning to speak
- Moving and walking
- Seeing or hearing

Goal: The child should **develop well** and be able to **live** as **independently** as possible.

Where can I find help and counselling?

You can find counselling services and information for people with disabilities [here](#)

Severely disabled person's pass

Would you like to apply for, extend or change a severely disabled person's pass?

To apply for, extend or change a [severely disabled person's pass](#), you need a form. You can obtain this form from your local citizens' office. You can also submit initial applications or apply for changes there. You can find your local citizens' office [here](#).

You must send the completed form to the [Versorgungsamt Dortmund](#).

You can find more information on the application procedure on the website of the Versorgungsamt. You can find the application form [here](#). You can also submit the application

online via the [ELSA.NRW](https://www.elsa.nrw.de) portal.

Care

What does caring mean?

Caring means looking after someone. This can be at home or in a care home. Care is important when someone **is ill, old or disabled and needs help**. People are usually no longer able to look after themselves.

Where can I get help?

Those affected and their families often have many questions about care. The [Ruhr Regional Office](#) can **help** you with all **questions relating to care**.



You can find **care counselling for family members** [here](#).



Most **health insurance companies offer their own care counselling services**. Always check **with your health insurance provider first**.

What is long-term care insurance?

Long-term care insurance is a social insurance scheme in Germany. It **helps people who need support in everyday life due to illness or old age**. For example, with washing, dressing or eating.

Who is covered by long-term care insurance?

Everyone who has statutory health insurance is automatically covered by long-term care insurance. Anyone with private health insurance needs private long-term care insurance.

Who is entitled to care benefits?

Anyone who is in need of long-term care can receive benefits from long-term care insurance. In need of care means: you can no longer do important things in everyday life on your own - for example due to illness, an accident or old age.

Does the person in need of care have a **tolerated stay permit or a residence permit**? Then they are **not automatically** registered with long-term care insurance.

Do you need care and have **no care insurance**? Then the [Social Welfare Office](#) is responsible for you and not your health insurance. The insurance period only begins two years after your residence permit.



A person must have had long-term **care insurance for at least two of the last ten years in** order to receive long-term care benefits.

What care benefits are available? What is a care level?

The assistance you receive depends on your [care level](#). The care level determines which care benefits the sick person can receive. This includes, for example, care allowance, but also aids such as a hospital bed. The higher the care level, the higher the benefits.

There are a total of **five care levels**. The level of care a person receives is determined by the Medical Service. An **assessor** visits the person and decides the level of care based on various factors. These factors include observing how independently a person copes with everyday life and what their living situation is like. You can find more information on care levels [here](#).

How much care allowance does a person in need of care receive?

The care allowance is paid either to the person in need of care themselves or to the person caring for them. The care allowance depends on the level of care. People in need of care only receive care benefits from a care level of 2.

You can find an overview of care benefits [here](#).

Counselling centres



Most health insurance companies offer their own care counselling services. If you have any questions, please contact your health insurance provider first.



[City of Bochum - Counselling for senior citizens](#)



[Senior citizens' offices in Bochum](#)



[Care counselling - Catholic Hospital Bochum](#)



[Care counselling - BG University Hospital Bergmannsheil Bochum](#)



[Care counselling - Caritasverband Ruhr-Mitte e. V.](#)



[Care counselling - DRK Kreisverband Bochum e. V.](#)



[Family and nursing care Bochum](#)