

## The German healthcare system, health insurance

### The German healthcare system


In Germany, many institutions are part of the healthcare system. There are three areas:

1. Doctors' surgeries and pharmacies: they provide outpatient medical care. "Outpatient" means that you can go home again after treatment.
2. Acute care in hospitals in an emergency and inpatient medical care. "Inpatient" means that you stay in hospital for treatment.
3. Health protection: protection against infections and preventive services. "Preventive" means: services that maintain your health and help you avoid becoming ill.


Outpatient and inpatient care helps sick people. You can decide for yourself which doctor or facility you go to. This is called freedom of choice.

### Health insurance

In Germany, it is compulsory to have health insurance. As soon as you have a residence permit, you must register with a health insurance company. You will then receive an insurance card, which you can use to access medical services throughout Germany. You are then entitled to the same services as all residents in Germany.

 ["Health for all"](#) provides information in 15 languages on the following topics

- Statutory and private health insurance
- Medical care
- Electronic health card
- Visiting a doctor, duty of confidentiality
- emergencies
- Prevention and early detection of illnesses
- Long-term care insurance

Further information in other languages can be found at  [Migration and health](#).

### Good to know

Hospitals treat emergencies. This means when people are seriously ill or have life-threatening injuries. For minor injuries or illnesses, you can go to a [doctor's surgery](#). You will receive good help there.

You may also need a doctor at night or at the weekend. But it is not always an emergency. Then you can go to the [medical on-call service](#).

If you have a toothache, you can go to a dental practice. There is an [emergency dental service](#) at weekends.

Here you can find information about [pharmacies](#) and which ones are open at night or at weekends.

---

## In an emergency

Are you or someone close to you suffering a life-threatening injury? Or is there another medical emergency? Then call the rescue and emergency service:

 [112](tel:112)