

Have you got a GP?

General practitioners, known as GPs, are local family doctors. GPs care for people of all ages and with many different health problems. Having your own GP is very important. Your GP should:

- **know you well**
- **have details of all your medical conditions**
- **understand your overall health.**

Your GP is a source of information about your health needs and provides information to specialist doctors and hospitals. Your GP acts as your central health co-ordinator to make sure you get the right treatment.

Your GP is part of your healthcare team

Your GP is important to Peter Mac. We consider your GP a part of your healthcare team. They give us information about you before you visit Peter Mac (usually via a referral letter) to let us know what care you may need.

After we have seen you at Peter Mac, we let your GP know about your visit. It is helpful to check your GP has received all the details about any care you receive at Peter Mac to assist them in providing you with the best possible healthcare plan.

When you come to Peter Mac we will ask your permission to communicate with your GP. You have the right to refuse this and we will respect your decision.

Your GP should be able to:

- treat many different illnesses
- check/screen for different illnesses
- including cancer
- write letters to direct you to a specialist
- for help or treatment (known as a referral letter)
- give vaccinations/immunisations

- give medical advice if travelling
- provide aged care
- treat small accidents, including cuts that need stitches and mending of some broken bones
- help with personal problems and mental health concerns such as depression
- write referral letters and healthcare plans, where possible, to manage your health needs and to access lower cost services such as physios, psychologists and dietitians
- tell you how to get GP care after hours and what the associated cost might be.

How can you help your GP and Peter Mac?

Help your GP and Peter Mac stay in touch.

Always check:

- Peter Mac has all your up-to-date GP details. This helps us to inform your GP of your treatment, medication changes and follow-up appointments you need.
- Your GP addresses your Peter Mac referral letter to the right person. It needs to be written to a named, specialist doctor and unit and includes your GP details.

- Your GP receives all your relevant health information from Peter Mac.

Choosing the right GP for you

When choosing a GP think about your own needs and what is important to you.

Some things to think about are:

- Does the GP clinic have male and female doctors?
- Does the GP speak other languages?
- Are there interpreters available?
- How do I pay? Do I pay cash or can I use my Medicare card?
- What hours are they open? What happens if I need a GP late at night or over the weekend?
- What plan does the GP have for when the clinic is closed?
- Does the GP clinic do home visits?
- Does the clinic have wheelchair access?
- Is there a nurse at the clinic to help with care such as taking blood or changing dressings?
- Can I make a longer appointment if I need to? How much will it cost me?

Finding a GP

Speak to family, friends and neighbours about the GPs in your local area. Ask them if they can suggest or recommend a good GP to you.

You can also speak to the local pharmacy and other community groups about different GPs available in your area.

You can also search the internet for local GPs and GP clinics.

Some helpful websites for GP information are:

The Better Health Channel

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

The Yellow Pages

www.yellowpages.com.au