



← Access the resources below by scanning this QR code with your phone camera. ←

How to access other parts of the health care system



What is a medical specialist/specialist doctor?

- Your family doctor (this is the same as a primary care provider) can usually diagnose and treat most medical concerns but when something is too complex for general training, they will refer you to a specialist doctor who is an expert in that area.
- There are over 40 different specialties, and if your primary care provider refers you to a specialist, then there will be no additional cost for a “medically necessary” visit with a specialist. You only need a referral through your doctor once and then you organize appointments directly with the specialist moving forward.



Please note that you will not be able to get an appointment with a specialist doctor without a referral from a family doctor or nurse practitioner. The referral can come from your own family doctor, nurse practitioner or from a walk-in clinic.

- If you want a referral for an elective procedure, there may be extra costs. Examples of elective procedures include cosmetic surgery, hip and knee replacements, cataract surgery.



How long does it take to see a specialist or get surgery?

- Wait times to see a specialist for surgeries, procedures and diagnostics depend on the service and the level of “priority” your situation is (whether it is an emergency or not). If you want to learn more about the different wait times based on the specialist, surgery, procedure or diagnostic you need, scan the QR code at the top of the page to access Ontario Health’s website that shows wait times for you based on the city you live in and the service you need.



How can I find care specialists for seniors?

- Geriatrics Ontario has an interactive map that shows where to find geriatrics (senior) specialists across Ontario and directions to these clinics – scan the QR code at the top of this page to access the map. This resource is best for someone who is more familiar with technology and navigating Google Maps, so maybe a younger caregiver to a senior citizen.

How do I find a specialist doctor?

- To see a specialist doctor, you need a referral from a primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) or a walk-in clinic- you need Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) to see a specialist.
- To apply for OHIP, you would need to provide documents that prove your legal immigration status, proof that you live in Ontario, and something that “supports and confirms” your identity. Scan the QR code at the top of the page to access a resource to learn about the process of getting OHIP, finding a family doctor or walk-in clinic, seeing a specialist and more.