



Choose the right healthcare this summer holiday

With the official arrival of summer, many of us are gearing up for a well-deserved break with whānau and friends.

Staff working across our health system are planning much-needed time off too, so some health services may have reduced staffing over the summer holiday.

As part of your planning, it's good to remind yourself about options for healthcare if you or your whānau are injured or unwell this festive season. The secret to making the right choice is knowing when you should look after yourself and rest at home, and when you need to seek medical advice or care.

Be ready

- Now is a good time to make sure your cupboard is well-stocked with first aid essentials including pain relief, antihistamines, plasters and bandages, rehydration sachets, throat lozenges, face masks and a thermometer.
- If you take regular medicines, call your general practice team well ahead of the holidays to make sure you have a repeat script if you need one.
- Ensure you have enough RATs to test everyone in your whānau over the holidays if you need to. Opening hours at RAT collection sites will change over summer; you can check here: [COVID-19 Testing – Healthpoint](#). If you're off on holiday, it's a good idea to take a kit that has RATs, hand sanitiser and masks, as well as your usual medicines and first aid items.
- [Be sunsmart](#) – if it's hot, stay hydrated and in the shade. If you are out in the open, make sure you slip, slop, slap, and wrap. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and remember water for children and pets.
- Avoid your family getting sick from food poisoning by following the 3Cs: [Clean, Cook, Chill](#).

Self-care

[HealthInfo.org.nz](#) and [Health Navigator](#) have loads of useful information to assist with self-care for a range of conditions. Use the A – Z tabs for easy-to-read information about treating fevers, aches and pains, coughs, sore throats, cuts and sprains, and vomiting and diarrhoea at home.

Check in on family, friends, and neighbours, particularly those who live alone or at higher risk of getting very sick, such as older or disabled people.

Healthline

If you or your whānau are feeling unwell but you're not sure if you need to see a doctor, or you want advice about what's happening and what you should do next, call Healthline free, 24/7, on 0800 611 116. If your general practice is closed, Healthline may be able to help if your employer requests a medical certificate.

Pharmacy

Make the most of your local pharmacist for advice and to recommend over-the-counter medication. They can help with a broad range of issues including treatments for urinary tract infections, emergency contraception, blood pressure checks, conjunctivitis, and minor ailments such as cough/cold, wound/acute injury management and simple pain management.

General practice team/ family doctor

Your general practice team should be your first port of call for appointments. If it's urgent, talk to the reception team at your general practice as they may have same-day appointments available. It's wise to call first, as some practices will be operating reduced hours over summer. If you can't get an appointment with your general practice team, you

might like to try a virtual consultation with a New Zealand registered health practitioner without seeing them in person. You can find a list of some of these providers [via Health Navigator](#).

Urgent care

If you need urgent medical attention – for example a broken bone, bad sprain or cut, head bump or a fever that won't go away – or if your general practice team isn't available, it might be time to visit an urgent care facility. Kids under 14 have free medical visits after hours (after 6pm weekdays and during weekends) although there may be surcharges for other services, such as x-rays. Canterbury's urgent care facilities can be busy, with long wait times. Call Healthline first to see if visiting an urgent care centre is the best option for you.

Emergency department

The emergency department is for serious injuries and critical medical conditions that cannot wait, such as serious accidents or chest pain. If it's an emergency, call 111 or go to the emergency department if you are seriously unwell.

Other resources

- For a sports injury, you can go straight to a physio or sports injury clinic. They can treat you, register an ACC claim or refer you to a specialist.
- If you need an emergency dental appointment there are several places you can contact, and some provide subsidised services. Find out more on the Te Whatu Ora Waitaha Canterbury website at <http://bit.ly/3WX19ds>

Cut out and keep / save these numbers to your phone

- In an emergency, always call 111
- Healthline 0800 611 116 (24/7 – interpreter support available)
- Plunketline 0800 933 922 (24/7)
- New Zealand National Poisons Centre 0800 764 766 (24/7)
- 1737 free call or text with a trained counsellor or peer support worker (24/7)
- Lifeline 0800 543 354 or free text 4357 (24/7)
- Youthline 0800 376 633 or free text 234
- COVID-19 health advice 0800 358 54 53 (24/7)
- www.healthnavigator.org.nz
- www.healthinfo.org.nz
- www.yourbestcare.co.nz
- www.healthpoint.co.nz
- www.healthnavigator.org.nz/apps/v/virtual-consult-apps/
- covid19.govt.nz/prepare-and-stay-safe/have-a-safe-as-summer/
- watersafety.org.nz