

Getting help from the GP



headspace

Mildura

Suite 2/125 Pine Ave, Mildura VIC 3500
(cnr of Pine Ave & 10th St)
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What is a general practitioner (GP)?

General practitioners (GPs) are doctors who are trained to help you with any type of physical or mental health issue. They keep your health issues private and their services are either free or at a low cost. This means that seeing a GP is a great place to start when you are concerned about any health issues including contraception, sexual health, drug or alcohol use, relationship problems, or feeling down or upset. GP's are widely available around Australia.

Our GP is **Dr Ajay Chowdhry**

See profile over page....

Your family GP is often a good place to start if you need some help and feel comfortable talking to them. Even if they know your family they are still required to keep information about you private. (There is more information about confidentiality over the page).



headspace Mildura is open
Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.

Our lovely GP Dr Ajay
Chowdhry is here on most
Fridays from 9am – 12noon.

See poster in foyer or on website for
specific dates

Note: You may want to talk to the GP on a day he is not here. We are happy to take a message and she will return your call on her next working day. **headspace Mildura is NOT equipped to manage urgent health needs. If your concern is urgent please phone '000' or alternately Mildura Base Hospital on 5022 3333.**

Cost:

Free: just bring along your Medicare card

You will need to show a Medicare card or give your Medicare number to be bulk billed. You can use a parent's or family's card but if you are Australian and over 15 years of age you are entitled to have your own Medicare card.

Having your own card means that your parents are unable to review your visits to the doctor. You can apply for your own card by filling out a form available at a Medicare office, or through the Medicare website

(www.medicareaustralia.gov.au). Your GP and some pharmacists might have forms as well.



Making an appointment:

You'll usually need to make an appointment to see a GP, either by **phoning or dropping into the centre**. The receptionist doesn't need to know the reason why you want to see the GP but on your first visit you will have to provide your personal contact details.

If you don't feel comfortable going on your own consider taking someone else to the appointment; a friend, parent or relative. Some GPs may not have appointments for new patients for a week or two, or sometimes even longer. Let them know if it's an urgent problem. If you need immediate medical attention call 000 or go to the hospital Emergency Department. Appointments are usually for 10-15 minutes. For your first appointment, or if you have a number of issues you want to talk about, ask for a longer appointment so you have plenty of time to cover everything. First appointments with GPs usually longer so that they can get to know you. If your concerns are about a physical health, sexual health or contraception issues you will probably get an appointment quite soon. If you are asking for help with mental health issues, including feeling worried, upset or down, you may be seen by an E&A worker before seeing a GP.

What to expect when you visit a GP

At your first visit the GP will usually ask a range of questions about your general health and lifestyle, your family background, how you are thinking and feeling, and how you are getting on at school/work/study and with your family and friends.



GPs need to know about you as a 'whole person' so that they can understand the problem and give you the right advice. They are not prying into your life for no reason, and they are not making judgments about you. The GP might want to give you a physical check-up, for example by taking your blood pressure, heart rate and temperature, or examining other parts of your body relevant to your problem. A GP cannot perform any type of physical examination without your permission.

The GP will then discuss the problem and what to do next. Ask questions so you understand what is going on and what you can do to feel better. Sometimes the GP will ask you to come back for a return visit to check on your progress, discuss the results of any tests, or just to have some more time to explore the problem. To make sure everything is going okay for you or to monitor other health problems, the GP may also want to see you regularly. For routine test results, the GP may arrange to ring you on the next working day after the results have arrived.

The GP may talk with you about seeing someone like a psychologist or counsellor to support you with your mental health. They will explain how this might help, what services are available and how to get started. They can also fill out a **mental health care plan** to help you access these services for free.

About Dr Ajay...

Dr Ajay Chowdhry graduated in Medicine in 1998 and moved to Australia in 2000. He completed his Masters in Health Sciences from La Trobe University (Melbourne) in 2002.

Dr Chowdhry has been working at Ontario Family Practice since 2007.

He enjoys the variety that general practice brings, and places great importance on holistic and preventative care.

He loves working in Mildura due to its good weather, relaxed lifestyle and ability to spend time with his family. His favourite past times are playing tennis, listening to music, and playing with his boys. He is a very passionate Essendon Football club member.



Changing GPs

If you are not feeling comfortable and safe with your GP you can change to another GP and ask that your medical records get transferred. You are also welcome to provide suggestions/feedback to any of us or via our anonymous feedback box in reception. Or for serious concerns regarding your care you can contact:

Health Services Commissioner Complaints and Information
Telephone: 1300 582 113 Fax No.: (61 3) 9032 3111
E-mail: hsc@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Confidentiality

All GPs have to keep information about their patients private. This means they cannot discuss your visit with anyone else but there are some exceptions. If a GP thinks you are likely to harm yourself or someone else they have a 'duty of care' to make sure you stay safe so they may need to tell other people. There are also some circumstances by law that require GPs to share information. The GP may talk with you about seeing someone like a psychologist or counsellor to support you with your mental health. They will explain how this might help, what services are available and how to get started. They can also fill out a mental health care plan to help you access these services for free. If you want to know more about your rights to privacy and confidentiality ask your GP to talk it through with you at the beginning of your first appointment.

