

HEALTH

Choosing a doctor



In Belgium you are free to choose your doctor. To find a doctor in your neighbourhood, visit the website [Doctena.be](http://doctena.be) or [Doctoranytime](http://doctoranytime.be)

Most consulates and embassies keep a list of doctors and dentists who speak their country's language. The volunteer-run Community Help Service Helpline (T : +32 (0)2 648 40 14; <http://www.chs-belgium.org/en/>) can provide details of English-speaking doctors and dentists in Brussels. There are several medical centres in Brussels with various general practitioners and specialists located in the same building.

Doctors can be registered as "conventionné" or "non-conventionné". The former apply prices that are close to the amount which your health insurance will reimburse, whereas the latter are free to set their own fees. It is worth asking in advance about prices when you have your first consultation! The doctor will give you a green certificate of treatment after the consultation. This has to be sent to the insurance association for reimbursement.

Pharmacies



Brussels has a large number of pharmacies, which are identified by a sign with a neon green cross. They are generally open daily from Monday to Friday and often on Saturday mornings. They provide a rotating emergency service on Saturday afternoons and on Sundays (addresses are posted up every month in their shop windows and listed on the website www.pharmacie.be).

Some medicines are available without prescription. The cost of these medicines is not refunded. Other more specific medicines are sold only upon doctor's prescription and are generally partly reimbursed by the 'mutualité'.

Nearly all medicines available on the international market can be found in Belgium, but they may be sold under another name than in your home country. In that case, you should ask your G.P. at home to make out a prescription with its chemical composition, or show your local pharmacist the original packaging.

The Belgian government now has a policy for encouraging doctors to prescribe generic medicines. These have exactly the same properties as the original medicines, but are at least 30% cheaper.

Apart from medicines, chemists also sell diet products, skin and hair care products as well as baby foods. Some chemists specialise in homeopathic medicines (which are not reimbursed), while others rent certain types of medical equipment.

Hospitals



Brussels offers a wide choice of public and private hospitals, university hospitals and polyclinics. Public and private hospitals (some of which with university status) operate with teams of medical specialists from different disciplines. Some specialists are based full-time at the hospital, while others also run a private practice.

Patients who opt for a shared hospital ward pay a set tariff for the room and treatment. The costs are almost completely reimbursed. But patients who opt for a single room, will have to pay extra charges for the room. In this case the doctor can set his own fee for treatment. Patients have the right to ask for a breakdown of extra charges in advance.

In the event of hospitalization, the patient has to pay a guarantee on admission as well as proof of membership of a 'mutualité'. In most hospitals a parent is allowed to spend the night in their child's room.

For a complete overview of all Brussels and Belgian hospitals, visit www.hospitals.be

Emergency services



Most doctors have consulting hours between Monday morning and Friday evening, usually by appointment. Weekend emergency services are provided by general practitioners for home visits. You can find a list of night doctors listed by municipality on the website www.famgb.be.

Otherwise, many of the larger hospitals and clinics have emergency services providing medical care and advice at any time of the day or night and on weekends and public holidays. In Belgium you can call an ambulance using the emergency number 100. You can also use the European emergency number 112, which applies in all countries of the European Union.

Download TOODDOC, the free Belgian app dedicated to medial emergencies to find an appointment with a specialist: https://tooddoc.com/?fbclid=IwAR3f9N8TNbavrg4Za_1YlvZWsc6Vp4PJ-osOLN5Fe18r7nFGVf866hGWyl

USEFUL LINKS



Doctena

CHS

Community Help Service

Pharmacie.be

Hospitals.be

Tooddoc
