

HEALTH

This section contains information about the National Health Insurance, *Heilsutrygd*, how public health services are organised, and what steps to take should you fall ill and not be able to work.



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NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

All individuals residing in the Faroe Islands who have a Faroese ID number, *p-tal*, are automatically covered by the National Health Insurance, *Heilsutrygd*.

The National Health Insurance covers general and specialist medical treatment and subsidises either in full or partially medicine, dental treatment and other specialist treatments, i.e. physiotherapy, psychotherapy and podiatry.

Health care services are financed by the government and by mandatory contributions from all residents, through the National Health Insurance.

Apart from the contribution to the National Health Insurance, health care is generally free in the Faroe Islands. However, exceptions apply to medicines, dental treatment and some other specialist treatments.

All residents from the age of 18 pay a monthly contribution to the National Health Service. The contribution is regulated by law and consists of a fixed amount and a certain percentage of taxable income. It is deducted automatically from income by TAKS (A-income or normal wages) and can be adjusted.

YOUR PRIMARY DOCTOR

The National Health Insurance is the agency with the overall responsibility for primary doctors. When you are registered in the national registry and get your ID number, the National Health Insurance will send you a letter regarding your primary doctor (general practitioner).

The tasks of a primary doctor, *kommunulækni*, are providing general medical services, such as vaccination and regular health check-ups of children. Your primary doctor can refer you to another specialist if this is needed, e.g. an optometrist.

Check your local municipality for addresses, opening hours, phone numbers and when the lines are open for booking appointments.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

Within normal working hours you can call the doctor's office and book a time/session for you to see the doctor – or your doctor's office may have an online-booking service (you will always receive a confirmation on your phone, if you have used the online-booking service).

MEDICINE AND PHARMACIES

Your primary doctor might give you a prescription for medication that you need. Then you will need to go to the pharmacy to pick up the medication. The doctor will inform you when the medication is ready for you at the pharmacy.

Medicine is sold at pharmacies. Some are freely available to buy and others are prescription drugs so you will need a doctor's prescription. Some medication is cheaper because of benefits from the National Health Insurance.

PRIMARY DOCTOR - MAKING AN APPOINTMENT



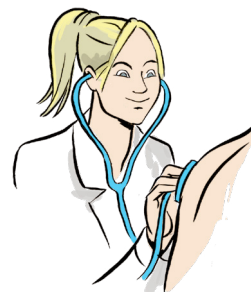
1 ARE YOU ILL AND NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR?

The tasks of a primary doctor are general medical help and vaccination and regular health check-ups of children



2 CALL YOUR PRIMARY DOCTOR AND BOOK AN APPOINTMENT

Be on time for your appointment, preferably five minutes early (you can also book online).



3 THE DOCTOR WILL EXAMINE YOU

The primary doctor has an important and central role in the health care system.



4 PRESCRIPTION

If you require medicine for your condition, the doctor will issue you a prescription.



5 MEDICINE

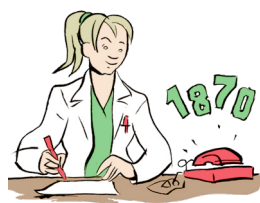
After talking to your doctor you can go to the pharmacy with the prescription

WHO TO CALL?

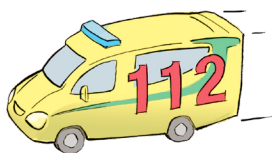
PRIMARY DOCTOR, GP SERVICE OR EMERGENCY 112?



Primary doctor: See your primary doctor about general health issues.



GP Service tel 1870: This service, known as *Læknavaktin*, accepts patients who are in immediate need of medical care, this can be owing to illnesses or injuries that cannot wait until the next day. (This service is open outside normal working hours, weekends and holidays).



EMERGENCY CALL TEL 112: In case of life-threatening and acute situations.

EMERGENCY SERVICES - 112 AND 1870

112 is the emergency telephone number in the Faroe Islands. It must be used for emergency calls only, when people are seriously injured or ill and need immediate treatment.

1870 is the telephone number for the after-hours GP Service, *Læknavaktin*. If you are in need of talking to a doctor outside normal working hours and you cannot wait until the doctor's office opens, then you must call the after-hours GP Service. This national service is open after normal working hours, from 16.00 until 08.00 and at all other times when the doctor's offices are closed, on weekends and holidays. This service is able to assess your situation, advise you directly or send a doctor to your home, or they may ask you to go in for a check-up at a hospital.

Læknavaktin can call on doctors in other parts of the country who are on stand by and can drive out to a patient, if there is a need for that.

RECEIVING TREATMENT IN A HOSPITAL

Patients may be referred to a hospital by the primary doctor.

There are three hospitals in the Faroe Islands – in Tórshavn, Klaksvík and Suðuroy.

The National Hospital in Tórshavn is the main hospital. Most illnesses and injuries can be managed at the National Hospital, but in some cases it may be necessary to receive treatment abroad.

PREGNANCY CARE

Health services during pregnancy and childbirth are free of charge for any woman who is living in the Faroes and has received the Faroese ID no., in Faroese known as *p-tal*.

Women who have not received the ID no. are not entitled to free hospital treatment, even if they are married and move to an address in the Faroe Islands. They will be charged as foreigners in accordance with a specific pricing system.

Pregnancy check-ups are carried out by primary doctor and midwives around the country. Ultrasound scans are available, usually scheduled in the 18th week of pregnancy.

The Child Health Care Service, Gigni, can provide home-visits during pregnancy if wanted, or if the family has special needs. The aim is to provide guidance to future parents to ensure that your child has a healthy start in life. The home visits are provided by health visitor nurses, who work at *Gigni*.

Gigni provides regular home visits to new families in the Faroe Islands. The main goal is to promote health, to prevent

sickness, to strengthen and develop parental competency, and to uncover challenges to a child's wellbeing and development as early and quickly as possible.

The health visitor nurse is trained in the field of child and family health. The nurse is able to provide useful advice if you are in doubt about anything, and she will help to ensure that your child has a safe and healthy start in life.

NAMING YOUR CHILD

After your child is born, you have six months to choose a name. You are obliged to register the name officially before the six month deadline. The state church office located in the municipality you live administers the name registration.

If you are a non-Faroese citizen and you choose a name according to the rules and customs of your home country, which is not on the approved list of names, you will need to provide documentation with an application form to the Environment Agency, *Umhvørvisstovan*. **For more information, please contact the Environment Agency tel. 34200, www.us.fo.**

For more general information you can visit the website of the Language Board, *Málráðið*, where there is an official list of names, for males and females: www.malrad.fo.

CHILDBIRTH

Childbirth takes place at the hospital, in most of the cases it is at the National Hospital, *Landssjúkrahúsið*. Mother and child normally stay between 2 and 5 days in hospital after childbirth.

Health visiting nurses regularly examine babies in their home up to the age of 18 months.

School nurses, who are also employed by Gigni, provide regular medical check-ups and personal interviews as well as parental guidance and information on health-related issues.

Primary doctors provide medical check-ups up for children up to the age of 5 and vaccinations according to a vaccination schedule.

DENTISTRY, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE AND PHYSICAL THERAPY

Dental care for adults is carried out by dentists in private practice. The National Health Insurance covers part of the cost of dental care.

Children up to the age of 18 are entitled to free public dental treatment. Children's dental services are administrated by the municipalities. From the age of 18 until the age of 23 the National Health Insurance, *Heilsutrygd*, covers all of the costs relating to dental checks.

For information on your nearest dentist's clinic, please contact your local municipality.

Mental health services and physical therapy are available at private practices.

If you are referred to a psychologist or a physical therapist by your primary doctor, the National Health Insurance will cover 40% of the cost. If you consult e.g. a psychologist without referral from your primary doctor, you will have to pay the full price. The same applies to physical therapy, occupational therapy and other therapists

CHILD HEALTH CARE SERVICES – COUNSELING AND NURSE HOME VISITS

Health services for children up to the end of school age (16-17) are free of charge. The aim of this service is first and foremost to promote health and prevent ill health. Gigni provides health care service to families with small children, school-aged children and teenagers in the Faroe Islands.

Health visiting nurses examine children in their home regularly up to the age of 18 months. Health visiting nurses visit the family and examine the baby and provide parental guidance and health information starting as soon as possible after the family is back home from the hospital. If the child or the family has special needs, the nurse's home visits can continue up to school age, otherwise the service is provided on request from the family or referral from other practitioners.

Parents and other carers are by law not permitted to hit children – even in connection with disciplining. The health visiting nurse will be happy to offer advice and guidance on raising children.

Anyone moving to the Faroe Islands with small children must contact the children's nurse in order to receive home visits and services provided by the health visiting nurses. This includes families with children older than 18 months. Parents are always welcome to contact Gigni if they would like advice, counselling, home-visits, etc.

To get in touch with Gigni, families can call the main office on tel. 562300 or send an email to gigni@gigni.fo. Families do not need any referral to get counselling or home visits from Gigni.

Primary doctors provide medical checks up to the age of 5 and vaccinations according to a vaccination schedule.

School nurses provide regular medical checks and personal interviews, as well as parental guidance and information.

It is recommended that parents follow the national recommendations on child health checks and vaccinations.

If considered necessary, Gigni works closely together with primary doctors, staff at day-care centres or teachers at school or the local social worker at the child protection office. This is always done in close collaboration with parents.

Local medical officers and primary doctors provide medical checks up to the age of 5 and vaccinations according to a vaccination schedule. Parents have an obligation to ensure that their children attend health checks.

School nurses provide regular medical checks and personal interviews as well as parental guidance and information.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM UNABLE TO WORK DUE TO ILLNESS?

As an employee in case of sickness you might need to get a doctor's certificate that describes your condition. This might be the case if you are employed as an hourly paid worker and you want to receive a sickness benefit for any lost income. Anyone who has been in employment for at least 120 hours within the last 13 weeks is entitled to sickness benefit as of the first day of their illness. The Department of Social Services, *Almannaverkið*, implements the law on sickness benefits and an application must be submitted within 60 days of the first day away from work.

You may be entitled to paid leave from your employer as of the first day of illness. This depends on your type of employment.

RELEVANT AGENCIES

Department of Social Services, *Almannaverkið*, www.av.fo, tel. 360000

Child Health Care Services, Gigni, www.gigni.fo, tel. 562300

The National Hospital, *Landssjúkrahúsið*, www.ls.fo, tel. 304500

National Health Insurance, *Heilsutrygd*, www.heilsutrygd.fo, tel. 614000



REMEMBER - RIGHT TO AN INTERPRETER

In connection with appointments with your primary doctor, or a specialist, you have a right to an interpreter free of charge if needed. This is also the case when your child sees the doctor.