

What To Expect at a Walk-in Clinic

Walk-in clinics operate differently from a family practice. Although there are operational differences, the level of care provided is still at a high standard, and you will be treated and cared for just like any other patient.

1. **Expect to wait.** Estimated wait times are exactly that. Wait times can also change if emergencies arise. The doctors and staff are doing their best to support you, so please remember to be kind, respectful, and patient.
2. **Appointments** will be short and limited one concern per visit. Additional issues will require subsequent appointments. This may be inconvenient, but it serves to ensure that everyone is afforded time with the doctor.
3. **A walk-in clinic will not receive and store your chart.**
4. Walk-in clinics **do not accept booked appointments.**
5. You may be seen by **one of many doctors** at your walk-in clinic.
6. Walk-in clinics will **not refill prescriptions** over the phone or via faxes from your pharmacy.
7. You will be recalled to the walk-in clinic if the doctor deems it necessary to share **test or lab results**. If you haven't heard from the clinic and are feeling anxious about a result or report, return to the clinic and consult the clinic staff.
8. **Codes of conduct** are clearly posted in walk-in clinics. Be sure to follow these guidelines and be mindful of your actions when needs and emotions are running high.
9. **HealthLinkBC** provides access to non-emergency health information and advice. You can call 8-1-1 or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca 24 hours a day.

***“I have no family doctor...
What do I do now?”***

Without a family doctor, you may feel scared, unsettled, frustrated, or angry.

Please know that Family Physicians, Medical Office Assistants, and other members of the primary care team understand, and are working hard to ensure your day-to-day care needs are being met.

Significant changes are underway in the Western Communities, on the Saanich Peninsula, and throughout British Columbia to develop Primary Care Networks, with the specific aim of increasing the number of residents who have access to quality primary care and who are attached to a primary care provider.



Some suggestions to help you at this time:

- ✓ Pick **one** walk-in clinic, close and convenient to you, to be your primary source of care. A chart will be developed for you here.
- ✓ Check www.medimap.ca to stay current with your walk-in clinic's hours and closures.
- ✓ **Your Medical Chart**
 - Your family doctor is required to ensure that your medical chart is securely stored for at least 16 years.
 - If you choose to receive care from multiple walk-in clinics, request copies of your reports, bloodwork, etc. and keep those documents in your chart.
- ✓ **Prescriptions**

Try to synchronize your prescriptions so they all run out around the same time. This will decrease the number of times you will need to visit your walk-in clinic for renewals.

For urgent medication refills, speak with your pharmacist. He or she may be able to provide an emergency refill of your prescription, including medications for chronic conditions.
- ✓ **Chronic Diseases, Annual Physicals and Baby Checkups**

For these appointments that typically take longer, plan for multiple visits at the same walk-in clinic. Discuss with the walk-in clinic physician what the plan is for the next visit(s) so that you know what the intention is for next time.

While this is not ideal, it will ensure that you continue to get the care you need.
- ✓ **Standing Orders**

If you have a standing order with a family physician who is no longer practicing, visit your preferred walk-in clinic to get a new standing order requisition. Be sure to let your preferred laboratory know to cancel the old standing order.

- ✓ **Pap Smears, STD Checks, and Sexual Health**

While walk-in clinics can provide these services, they can also be received from Island Sexual Health (www.islandsexualhealth.org), where you can pre-book an appointment.
- ✓ **Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Addictions, Social Services**

Your walk-in clinic can provide or link you with these services. Other great resources for support include:

 - Vancouver Island Crisis line: <http://vicrisis.ca>
 - Umbrella Society: www.umbrellasociety.ca
 - Victoria Cool Aid Society: <http://coolaid.org>
 - FETCH: <http://south-island.fetchbc.ca/>

Youth (ages 12-24) can also access services through:

 - Foundry: <https://foundrybc.ca>
 - Bounce Back: <https://cmha.bc.ca/programs-services/bounce-back/>
- ✓ **Influenza Vaccines**

Flu shots are provided at a wide variety of locations including public health clinics, pharmacies, and travel clinics.
- ✓ **Travelling**

Consult a Travel Health clinic as early as possible, and preferably at least six weeks before you travel. For more information visit the Victoria Travel Clinic: <http://tmvc.com>
- ✓ **For information on when clinics are accepting new patients:**
 - Victoria Medical Society: <http://victoriamedicalsociety.org>
 - Medimap: www.medimap.ca

For critical or life-threatening conditions call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room.

Hospital emergency rooms are not the best places to go for common illnesses or minor injuries.