



Health Care Homes patient handbook

Welcome to Health Care Homes

Welcome to the Health Care Homes program.

This booklet is for you, your family, friends and carers. It's designed to answer your questions and help you get the most out of being a Health Care Homes' patient.

What is a Health Care Home?

A Health Care Home is an existing general practice or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) that provides primary health care, in the one place, for people with chronic conditions.

Chronic conditions include long-term conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, heart and lung conditions.

The Health Care Home Trial will run from 1 October 2017 until 30 June 2021. Up to 12,000 patients, from around 170 general practices and ACCHS nation-wide, will be able to become Health Care Homes' patients.

Health Care Homes is an Australian Government-funded initiative.

The benefits of Health Care Homes

Here are some of the pluses of Health Care Homes:

- **My care team** — you have a care team, led by your usual doctor.
- **My shared care plan** — with the support of your care team, you will develop a shared care plan. This plan helps you have a greater say in your care; and makes it easier for all the people who look after you, both inside and outside the Health Care Home, to coordinate your care.
- **Better access and flexibility** — with a care team behind you, you have better access to care. Health Care Homes can also be more responsive and flexible. If you want to talk to someone in your care team, you won't always need an appointment with your GP. You might call or message the practice team. Or they might call you to see how you're going.
- **Better coordinated** — your care team will do more to coordinate all your care from your usual doctor, specialists and other health professionals.



My shared care plan

After you enrol as a Health Care Homes' patient, your doctor and/or other care team members will sit down with you and come up with a shared care plan.

Under Health Care Homes, your care plan will be shared electronically or online. This means that all the people who look after you have the latest information about your care, results and medications at their fingertips.

So do you.

This plan will be tailored to you and your conditions. It will include:

- health goals and how to achieve them
- other information about your care, medications and the specialist doctors or other health professionals who look after you.

If you already have a care plan for any health care needs, important information from this plan will be included in your Health Care Homes' care plan.

My care team

As a Health Care Homes' patient, you will have one team — your care team — coordinating your care.

Your doctor leads the care team. Other members of the care team might include the practice nurse, a care coordinator, a medical practice assistant or receptionist or, if relevant, your Aboriginal health worker.

People like your physiotherapist, podiatrist or other health professionals, outside the practice, are also part of the care team.

Your care team will coordinate your care — for example, they will make sure your tests are done when it suits you, appointments with specialists are made and reports are read and shared.

Your care team will listen to your opinions and preferences about your health.

You can have a family member, friend or carer with you whenever you talk to or meet with someone from your care team.

It's important that you tell your care team about any changes in your health, symptoms or the way you feel. Tell them when things are working well for you too.



Better access

With a care team behind you, you will have better access to the care you need.

While each practice or ACCHS will be different, your Health Care Home might offer:

- phone, email or video conferencing with your doctor or care team
- better after-hours support
- small group coaching on health and lifestyle
- group discussions with a doctor or practice nurse, for people with similar conditions
- monitoring symptoms remotely through new technologies.

Ask your care team how this will work in your Health Care Home.

Having a care team you can contact when you need to will help you feel more confident about:

- managing your conditions
- changing or adjusting your care to meet your needs.



What's different about Health Care Homes?

Here are some of the things about a Health Care Home which may be new to you:

Current care	Care in a Health Care Home
I can only book in to see my doctor.	I have a care team looking after me. They contact me sometimes to check on my progress. I can contact and book in to see other members of the care team, as well as my doctor.
I usually see my doctor when one of my symptoms is getting worse. I figure out if it's better to call my doctor or my specialist for a particular problem.	My care team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help me stay on top of my conditions. I can • contact them if I notice any changes or if • anything is deteriorating. • make sure I see the right doctor at the right time.
I have to remember what happened at the hospital and then tell the doctor about it.	The care team follows up on all the care I receive including results, hospital visits and visits to my specialist doctors and other health professionals. Everyone I see updates the shared care plan after my appointments.
My doctor usually tells me what I should do.	I talk to my doctor, my care team and my family, friends or carer about my options. I decide what's best for me.
When I need to see someone after hours, I have to go to a different clinic.	With a team behind me, it's easier to talk to someone when I need to. Health Care Homes may offer you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • phone, email or video conferencing with a • doctor or care team • after-hours support • small group coaching on health and lifestyle • group discussions with a doctor or practice nurse, for people with similar conditions • new technologies to monitor symptoms remotely.

Adapted from F.Daniel Duffy, Dean for Academics, University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine



My Health Record

All Health Care Home patients are encouraged to have a My Health Record. If you don't have a My Health Record, your care team can help you sign up.

My Health Record is a secure, online summary of your health information. Here are some of the benefits of My Health Record:

- Your important healthcare information will be available online, in one place. Your doctors, specialists or hospitals can access this information.
- Even if you move or travel interstate, the information can be viewed securely online, anywhere, any time.
- You can access your health information from any computer or device with an internet connection.
- If you want to, you can control who sees what information in your My Health Record.
- Once it's set up you don't need to do anything.
- In an emergency, healthcare providers can see your health information to provide you the best possible care quickly.
- If you want, you can list any allergies, adverse reactions and medical conditions you may have, to help healthcare providers give you better advice and treatment.
- You won't need to worry about having to remember and repeat your health history to new or different healthcare providers.

More about Health Care Homes

What will it cost me if I become a Health Care Homes' patient?

Ask your doctor or practice receptionist about this. Some people don't have any out-of-pocket expenses when they go to see their doctor; while others are asked to pay a contribution. This will be the same under Health Care Homes.

What if I don't want to change my care? I like everything just the way it is.

Joining Health Care Homes is voluntary. You don't have to become a Health Care Homes' patient.

If you do sign up for Health Care Homes, you don't need to change **anything** about your current care. You can keep seeing the doctors you know and trust.

The beauty of Health Care Homes is that it makes it easier for all the people who look after you — from your doctor to your specialist doctors and others — to share information about your health and to coordinate care based on your needs.



My doctor and my usual clinic already coordinate my care. Why should I sign up for Health Care Homes?

Doctors and practices already work hard to coordinate care for their patients. Health Care Homes focuses on improved flexibility and coordination for you and your care team.

No two patients are the same. Health Care Homes also helps doctors and clinics tailor care to each patient. The government pays Health Care Homes in a different way, to reflect the responsive, flexible way in which they look after their patients.

I already have a GP management plan, a team care management plan or mental health treatment plan. What will happen to these if I join Health Care Homes?

These plans will form the basis of your new shared care plan. For example, if you have a GP management plan, you will continue to be eligible for up to five allied health services each calendar year.

With Health Care Homes, can I see my doctor whenever I want to?

Some Health Care Homes will keep their appointment schedules free at certain times, so that Health Care Homes' patients can drop in, or get an appointment that day.

But every Health Care Home will be different. Ask your doctor or practice receptionist how this will work in your practice.

If after-hours access is important to you, ask about this too.

If I am enrolled in a Health Care Home can I see another doctor?

When you are at home, you should always try to go to your Health Care Home. If you are travelling, however, you can see another doctor.

What if I get really sick? Or go to hospital?

If you get really sick, your care team will continue to care for you. They may also work with you to adjust your care plan as needed.

If you go to hospital, the care team will follow up with the hospital.

How does Health Care Homes fit in with state-funded isolated travel and accommodation allowance payments?

Being a Health Care Homes' patient will not affect your eligibility for any state-based isolated travel and accommodation allowance payments.

Can I stop being a Health Care Homes' patient?

Yes, you can withdraw from your Health Care Home. However, it is a good idea to first talk to your care team if you are unhappy about any aspect of your care. They might be able to help.



If you withdraw from Health Care Homes, you will not be eligible to reapply during the stage one trial, which runs from 1 October 2017 to 30 June 2021.

[I have other questions too...](#)

If other things about your care have changed, talk to your care team, your GP or your practice about them.

You can also find more information at
www.health.gov.au/healthcarehomes-consumer

[What if I have a complaint about a Health Care Home?](#)

If you are unhappy with any changes to your care because of Health Care Homes, talk to your care team. They may be able to resolve the problem. Many practices have a formal complaints process. Ask the practice manager or reception staff about making a complaint.

You can also contact the Department of Health:

- freecall 1800 290 637
- an online complaints form is available at health.gov.au

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can use the National Relay Service to access these numbers:

- 1300 555 727
- you can also visit the National Relay Service online at health.gov.au



My Health Care Home details

Health Care Home

Practice name
Contact phone number
Contact email
Street address

My care team

My doctor
Care coordinator
Nurse
Receptionist
Afterhours contact details
Other care team members

My details

Medicare number
Card expiry date /
Private health insurer
Private health number
Notes