

FINDING A FAMILY DOCTOR OR NURSE PRACTITIONER

Where to go when you are looking for help

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Finding a family doctor or nurse practitioner can be difficult, particularly in more remote areas. But they do exist. Here we offer tips on how to find a family doctor (often called a general practitioner, or GP) or a nurse practitioner. Nurse practitioners are registered nurses with advanced education who can perform many of the same functions as a family doctor. Among other functions, they can assess patients' needs and take a comprehensive health history, order and interpret laboratory tests, make diagnoses, prescribe medication and treat patients.

To find a family doctor or nurse practitioner, you have a few options:

- Ask a friend or relative if their doctor is accepting new patients.
- Inquire at your nearest hospital to find out if they have a family practice unit.
- Find out if your nearby community health centre has doctors who are accepting new patients. (To find a community health centre near you, check the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care website: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/chc/locations.aspx).
- Check your local newspaper to see if there are new doctors setting up practice who may be accepting patients.
- Contact Health Care Connect, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario or Health811 (see below).

Health Care Connect

Call 1 800 445-1822 press 5, or register at <https://hcc3.hcc.moh.gov.on.ca/HCCWeb/faces/layoutHCCSplash.jsp>.

How can Health Care Connect help me?

Health Care Connect helps Ontarians find a family doctor or nurse practitioner in their area who is accepting new patients.

How can I sign up for the program?

You can sign up for Health Care Connect if you do not already have a family doctor or nurse practitioner. If you already have a family health care provider but want someone different, you can let them know that you want to stop using them, or you can call ServiceOntario at 1 888 218-9929.

If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, or if there are additional organizations or programs that would be helpful to include, please email the information to us at access.resources@camh.ca.

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How soon will I be connected with a family health care provider?

After you register, you will get an information package directing you to a care connector who will refer you to a family doctor or nurse practitioner as soon as one becomes available. There is no guarantee how long this could take.

How are patients referred to family health care providers?

Priority goes to people with greater health needs. You will be asked questions about your health when you register for Health Care Connect.

Will the same family health care provider be found for my whole family?

Health Care Connect will try to find the same health care provider for every member of your family. But there is no guarantee that your whole family will be referred together.

What happens once I am referred to a family health care provider?

Once you are referred to a family health care provider, it is up to you to make an appointment and decide whether that person is right for you. If you choose not to accept the referral, you will need to call Health Care Connect and register again.

What if I move?

If you move, you must call your care connector to give them your new contact information. You will be directed to a care connector in your new community who will search for a family health care provider in your new area.

What if my health circumstances change?

If your health needs change, contact your care connector, who can help you with next steps.

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

The College has a Find a Doctor search at <https://doctors.cpso.on.ca>. Choose the Advanced Search option, leave the physician name blank (you can't provide the name of a doctor you don't have!) and enter the postal code and city where you are looking for a doctor. Then contact the doctors listed to see if they are accepting new patients.

Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario

Call 416 980-4566 or search the list of nurse practitioner-led clinics at <https://npao.org/nplcs>. You will see a map of clinics in Ontario. You can zoom into your region and contact clinics closest to you. The site also explains what nurse practitioners can do.

Health811

Call 811 for free and confidential help on finding a family doctor or nurse practitioner. You can also use the online search tool at <https://health811.ontario.ca/static/guest/home> to start a live chat.

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