Out of Home Care



Introduction

The Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) journey isn’t aways easy and can come with different experiences and challenges. Looking after your health can sometimes feel overwhelming and navigating the health system can feel confusing. There is support available to help young people with care experience understand the healthcare system, know their rights and learn why their health matters.

This guide will help you make informed decisions about your health and know where to go for support. If you are in, or leaving Out-of-Home Care, learning about the health system can help you to feel more confident in managing your own health.

> *Out-of-Home Care is an arrangement for children and young people aged 0 to 17 who are unable to live with their parents. Children and young people in out-of-home care may live with foster carers, a relative (kinship care), or in residential care.*

What is a Health Management Plan?

In NSW, young people in statutory (meaning ordered by a court) out-of-home care will have access to the NSW Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) Health Pathway Program. The OOHC Health Pathway Program will help you on your health journey.

The Program will help plan and nagivate your health checks with doctors, nurses, dentists, counsellors and other healthcare providers if you need them. Your health needs will be explained to you in a Health Management Plan, written by a health professional.

The plan is specific to you and includes:

- Details of your current health
- Your health needs (for example, you might be due to see a dentist or get your eyes checked)
- A plan for how your health needs should be managed, including which health services can help, vaccination status and when your plan should be reviewed.

Your carer or caseworker will go with you to health appointments until you're old enough to go on your own.

> *Tip – If you need to visit a doctor, it is helpful to have a regular doctor (GP) you already know. Having a regular doctor means that when a health issue comes up, you can see someone you already know who you trust and who understands your health history. If you go to see a new doctor, it's useful to bring your Health Management Plan.*

Want to book a health appointment on your own?

If you don't have a doctor/GP, you can have talk to your carer, caseworker or a youth worker and ask them to help you find the right health service and a doctor

you can see regularly.

You can also talk to another support worker or an adult you trust.

If you want to book an appointment yourself, the Visiting the Doctor topic explains:

- how to make an appointment
- what to bring
- what is covered by Medicare

As you get older, you will start managing more of your own health and health care. This can include:

- managing medication
- booking doctor's appointments
- going to the dentist
- managing and attending appointments with other healthcare providers.

The CREATE Foundation has information for young people in out-of-home care about visiting a doctor or dentist, and other useful health and non-health information. To learn more about health topics that are important to you, see Common Health Topics. It includes information about different areas of your health, as well as links to health services, resources, and support specifically for young people in NSW.

You can also see the Resources and Services page for more online and over the phone health support.

What support is available and who can you contact?

Healthcare can be provided by many different people and services. These include hospitals, health clinics (such as GPs) and health care workers (such as nurses). In NSW, there are 15 Local Health Districts (LHDs). These are areas that manage health services and hospital in a specific area of the state.

Youth Health Services

Some areas and LHDs have youth health services with health professionals who specialise in helping young people to access the health system.

These services are provided in a safe, relaxed, and youth-friendly environment. To find a local youth health service, visit NSW Youth Health Services.

Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) Health Pathway Program

Each LHD has an Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) Health Pathway Program, which is supported by a OOHC Health Pathway Coordinator. The Program can help you:

- find health services that are right for you while you are in care
- create and update your Health Management Plan (a record of your health needs)
- manage your health needs as you transition out of care and into adulthood.

You can find your local OOHC Health Pathway Coordinator here. It is recommended you speak with your caseworker or carer about the OOHC Health Pathway Program.

Leaving Care

If you are in out-of- home care, or preparing to leave care, you can also visit the leaving care information for young people website.

This website supports leaving care planning and provides support to help you transition smoothly.

Other resources and support

- The Ask for Health Resources and Services page has a list of other online and over the phone health support services.
- The CREATE Foundation has information for young people in out-of-home care about health and wellbeing, as well as other non-health information.
- Know your rights while you are in out-of-home care.
- AbSec Leaving Care Hub created to help young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prepare for leaving care