

When you need help for your health (Sexual and reproductive health)

We know that women want accurate, reliable, and local information about their healthcare options.

We also know that sexual health can feel awkward or difficult to talk about, even with a doctor or health professional.

It's important to have access to quality, non-judgemental and supportive healthcare to stay in control of your sexual and reproductive health.

What do you need from your healthcare?

Not all sexual healthcare is the same. There's a big variety in factors such as cost, the continuity in your care, and the kinds of care available. When looking for a health professional or service, some of the things you might consider are:

- How much you are willing or able to pay
- Whether you need care for symptoms or a health condition soon, or over the long term
- How close the service is to home, work, or campus
- Opening hours, availability of appointments, and wait times
- Your preference for a doctor, nurse or health professional of a particular gender
- Your preference for a health professional with particular language skills or cultural awareness
- Your preference for a health professional or clinic providing LGBTIQ+ affirming care

When deciding if your health care provider is right for you, ask yourself:

- Did I feel comfortable and supported with them?
- Was I able to ask the questions that I needed to?
- Did I get the outcome I needed?

TIP: Look for General Practitioners (GPs or doctors) with an interest in sexual or women's health, training in Mirena and Implanon insertion or the National Certificate in Reproductive and Sexual Health

During an appointment, it can be difficult to keep track of everything you've discussed. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure! Choose Wisely Australia¹ recommends asking:

- What is this test, treatment or procedure for, and do I really need it?
- What are the risks?
- What are the costs?
- Do I have other options?
- What happens if I decide not to do anything?

Women's Health Matters is an independent, non-partisan think tank that works to improve the health and wellbeing of all women in the ACT and surrounding region. To learn more about us and what we do, visit www.womenshealthmatters.org.au

¹ NPS Medicine Wise (n.d.), '5 questions to ask your doctor or other healthcare provider', Choosing Wisely Australia, available from: <https://www.choosingwisely.org.au/resources/consumers-and-carers/5questions>, 14/2/2022

Where to go

There are different healthcare services you can access for your sexual health. The right service will depend on your needs and priorities. Some services you might consider include:

Healthdirect

The healthdirect helpline is a free, 24/7 advice line where you can talk to a registered nurse about your health issue and who can advise you on whether your issue is urgent. Registered nurses can arrange a call-back from a GP if needed.

1800 022 222

General Practitioners (GPs)

GPs are doctors who are the first place you go when you have a health issue or need, including contraception and sexual health checks. GP practices are privately-run and each practice will charge different amounts for appointments. Some GPs provide bulk billed services, which means they are free if you have a Medicare Card. Some GPs have a special interest in

You can search healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services for a list bulk billing GPs in the ACT based on postcode and accessibility requirements.

Walk-in Centres

Walk-in Centres in Dickson, Belconnen, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong and Weston Creek provide free health care (including for international students) from nurse practitioners for non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses, including emergency contraception and testing and treatment for urinary tract infections. They are open 7:30am to 10:00pm daily. No appointment is needed.

health.act.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-centres/walk-centres

MSI Australia

MSI Australia provides medical and surgical abortions and contraception. Abortion is provided for free and includes long-acting reversible contraception, including for international students.

1300 863 549 or

www.mariestopes.org.au/bookings/locations/canberra/

Canberra Sexual Health Centre (CSHC)

Provides non-judgemental and free sexual health care (sexual health checks, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections), including for international students. Same day or next business day appointments are often available.

02 5124 2184

Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT)

SHFPACT offers sexual or reproductive health care, including provide pap smears/cervical screening, STI checks and contraception and fertility advice. Concessional fees are available for everyone 21 and under, full time students under 25, and Commonwealth concession card holders.

02 6247 3077 or

www.shfpact.org.au/index.php/clinic

Meridian Pop-up GP Clinic

The Meridian GP pop-up provides short-term or one-off GP support for LGBTIQ+ folk who experience barriers to seeing a safe and affirming GP, that operates Thursday mornings. Services are by appointment, and may be bulk-billed.

02 6257 2855 or

wellbeingservices@meridianact.org.au

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services GPs

Winnunga is a health service with GPs and nurses run by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community. It is free for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

02 6284 6222

Women's Health Service

Provides free health assessment and short term care with a nurse or doctor for women who have difficulty accessing health services and who have a Medicare Card. All doctors and nurses are women.

02 5124 178

When you need help for your health (General Health)

We know that women want accurate, reliable, and local information about their healthcare options, but when you're new in town, it can be hard to know where to go.

Staying on top of your health can help you get more out of your life and feel in control.

What do you need from your healthcare?

Not all healthcare is the same. There's a big variety in factors such as cost, the continuity in your care, and the kinds of care available (including doctors and nurses) which you will need to balance. If you're looking for something specific, you might need to look around or try different options to find the right fit for you. Some of the things you might consider are:

- How much you are willing or able to pay
- How close the service is to home, work, or campus
- Opening hours, availability of appointments, and wait times
- Your health conditions
- Specialist knowledge e.g. interest or certifications in mental health, sexual health
- Other factors such as the gender of the health practitioner, if they are LGBTIQ+ affirming or their language skills

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- Did I get the outcome I needed?

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- What is this test, treatment or procedure for, and do I really need it?
- What are the risks?
- What are the costs?
- Do I have other options?
- What happens if I decide not to do anything?

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www.womenshealthmatters.org.au

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Where to go

There are lots of healthcare services you can access. The right service for you will depend on your needs and priorities. Some services you might consider include:

General Practitioners (GPs)

GPs are doctors who are the first place you go when you have a health issue or need, including contraception and sexual health checks. GP practices are privately-run and each practice will charge different amounts for appointments. Some GPs provide bulk billed services, which means they are free for holders of a Medicare Card.

You can search healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services for a list bulk billing GPs in the ACT based on postcode and accessibility requirements.

ANU Medical Centre

ANU provides an on-campus GP service that is free for students.

02 6125 2211 or
www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/medical-services

UC Medical Centre

UC provides an on-campus GP services that is free for students

02 6201 2351 or www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/bruce-ACT-2617/university-of-canberra/doctors

Walk-in Centres

Walk-in Centres in Belconnen, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong and Weston Creek are run by ACT Health and offer free health care from nurse practitioners for non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses. They are open 7:30am to 10:00pm daily, and no appointment is needed. Walk-in Centres are free for international students and people without a Medicare card.

02 5124 8080 or health.act.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-centres/walk-centres

Healthdirect

The healthdirect helpline is a free, 24/7 advice line where you can talk to a registered nurse about your health issue and who can advise you on whether your issue is urgent. Registered nurses can arrange a call-back from a GP if needed. It is free for international students and people without a Medicare card.

1800 022 222

Canberra Sexual Health Centre (CSHC)

CSHC is a clinic specialising in sexual health which provides non-judgemental and free care, including for international students. They provide sexual health checks and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Same day or next business day appointments are often available.

02 5124 2184

Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT)

SHFPACT offers sexual or reproductive health care, including provide pap smears/cervical screening, STI checks and contraception and fertility advice. Concessional fees are available for everyone 21 and under, full time students under 25, and Commonwealth concession card holders.

02 6247 3077 or
www.shfpact.org.au/index.php/clinic

MSI Australia

MSI Australia provides contraception and medical and surgical abortions. Fees apply for all services, but may offered at reduced cost if needed, including for international students.

1300 863 549 or
www.mariestopes.org.au/bookings/locations/canberra/



**Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and
Community Services GPs**

Winnunga is a health service with GPs and nurses
run by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait

Islander community. It is free for Aboriginal
and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

02 6284 6222 Open weekdays 9:00am to 5:00pm at
63 Boolimba Crescent, Narrabundah

the voice for women's health and wellbeing in the ACT

When you need help for your health (Mental Health)

When you're struggling with your emotions, moods or mental health, it can be hard to know where to go to find support that meets your needs. We know that women want accurate, reliable, and local information about their healthcare options.

Staying on top of your mental health can help you to better cope with stress, upsetting situations and experiences, and feel in control of your life.

For many people, a GP will be their first point of access for mental healthcare. A GP can create a Mental Health Plan for you and provide referrals for you to receive subsidised therapy from a psychologist or specialist care. They can also prescribe you medication for your mental health. It's important to ask about the different options that are available.

You may also be able to access some mental health support services in the community or over the phone without a referral.

When looking for mental health support, there are different options to choose from. Some differences in the services available include the price, how long you will need to wait for an appointment, the kind of treatment you are seeking and whether you will have an ongoing relationship with the practitioner. Some of the things you might consider are:

- How much you are willing or able to pay
- How close the service is to home, work, or campus
- Opening hours, availability of appointments, and wait times
- The kind of treatment you are seeking (medication, psychological therapy)

Whether you are seeking an ongoing relationship with a single practitioner

Other factors such as the gender of the health practitioner, if they are LGBTIQ+ affirming or their language skills

When deciding if your health care provider is right for you, ask yourself:

- Did I feel comfortable and supported with them?
- Was I able to ask the questions that I needed to?

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Where to go

If you are worried you may harm yourself or someone else, or need immediate help for someone else in this situation, please call 000.

Access Mental Health

24 hours a day, 7 days a week phonenumber for people experiencing crisis. Provides mental health assessments over the phone to decide what type of mental health support is required, including short-term mental health support, referral for long-term mental health support or urgent assessment and intervention.

1800 629 354

Lifeline

If you're not at risk of immediate harm but need to talk to someone now about your mental health, please call Lifeline on 131 114 (available 24/7).

Canberra Head to Health

A free phonenumber and service. Call or walk in to chat to a professional who can assess your mental health and wellbeing, and recommend next steps. This might include support through Head to Health clinicians, referring you or providing you with online resources.

1800 595 212 or check canberraheadtohealth.com.au for weekday walk in hours at Shop 7 (Ground Floor), 14 Childers Street, Canberra City

General Practitioners (GPs)

GPs are doctors who are the first place you go when you have a health issue, including with your mental health. GPs can prescribe you medication or refer you to a psychologist or psychiatrist.

You can search healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services for a list bulk billing GPs in the ACT based on postcode and accessibility requirements.

ANU Counselling

A free, confidential, and non-diagnostic service available to all currently enrolled ANU students.

02 6125 2211 or counselling.centre@anu.edu.au

UC Counselling Service

A free, confidential service available to all currently enrolled UC students by appointment.

02 6201 2351

CIT Counselling

CIT Counselling provides counselling support for students of CIT. Appointments are available Monday to Friday within business hours, by telephone, video call or face to face.

02 6307 3290 or citcounselling@cit.edu.au

ANU Wellbeing and Support Line

A phone service for all current students stress and other mental health concerns, operating 5pm-9am weekdays, 24/7 weekends and public holidays.

1300 050 327 or text 0488 884 170.

headspace ACT

A mental health service for young people aged 12-25 offering counselling, support, and resources for mild to moderate mental health and substance use issues. It is a free or low-cost confidential service.

02 6113 5700 or info@headspacecanberra.org.au

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services

A health service providing psychologists, psychiatrist, mental health nurses and counselling which is run by and free for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.

02 6284 6222 or open weekdays at 63 Boolimba Crescent, Narrabundah



Meridian Counselling

A confidential peer-led counselling service for people living with or impacted by HIV and LGBTIQ+ people. Services are low cost and charged based on annual income.

02 6257 2855 or email

wellbeingservices@meridianact.org.au

Eating Disorders Clinical Hub

A public referral pathway for help with an eating disorder. Anyone can refer themselves or someone else for assessment and support.

02 5124 4326 or email

chs.eatingdisordersclinicalhub@act.gov.au

Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC)

Confidential counselling and support for women and children who have experienced any form of sexual assault or harassment recently or in the past, and can also assist with reporting.

02 6247 2525 or www.crcc.org.au/contact-us/

1800RESPECT

A 24/7 phonenumber and online service providing counselling, information on domestic, family and sexual violence.

1800 737 732 or 1800respect.org.au

the voice for women's health and wellbeing in the ACT