

How to find a family doctor



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If you don't have a family doctor, a better understanding of the ways to obtain one can simplify your research.

www.westislandhssc.qc.ca

According to the *Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens*, one person out of four in Québec does not have a family doctor. For any health problems, the first priority is to contact Info-Santé by dialing 811.

**If you have a family doctor, this is the person you should first speak to about your health needs.
If you don't have a family doctor, there are several ways to rectify the situation:**

1) Your family

Certain doctors whose practice is already full accept to take their patients' family members.

2) The brochure entitled *Access to Health Care in Your Neighbourhood* and the telephone directory.

The brochure, available in CLSCs and distributed every two years in homes within the catchment areas, describes the health services available on the West Island. You can contact the medical clinics listed or use the phone book to find clinics in your neighbourhood. Find out if they take on new patients or if they can enter your name on a waiting list.

3) New doctors

Young doctors who arrive on the job market don't always have an established clientele. Contact a few medical clinics to find out if these doctors take new patients.

4) Network clinics and other medical clinics offering services that do not require an appointment

Walk-in clinics are for minor emergencies. Always call beforehand to find out if a doctor can see you. Try to always go to the same walk-in clinic. The medical team will have access to your medical records and is in a better position to help you in the long term. After a few consultations, if you don't have a family doctor, ask the doctor who is seeing you or another doctor working in the clinic if he or she is willing to become your family doctor.

Network clinics offer consultations without appointments, 365 days a year, 12 hours on weekdays and 8 hours on weekends and statutory holidays. These clinics offer services in cases of minor emergencies to the population and services with appointments to its clientele. The contact information for network clinics on the West Island is listed on the map in the brochure.

Important note: The clinic may close access to walk-in services if the number of people in the waiting room exceeds its capacity.

In emergency situations, network clinics can carry out certain medical tests and samplings on site or nearby and give patients more rapid access to radiology and medical specialists.

One of their roles is to help vulnerable patients who contact them find a family doctor. The accepted vulnerability criteria are numerous and change over time. As an example, these include:

- being 70 years or older
- being diabetic
- suffering from heart failure;
- emphysema;
- hypertension;
- cancer.