

Factsheet: Information on Healthcare in the Netherlands

General Practitioner, GP (Huisarts)

GPs are your first point of contact for healthcare in the Netherlands. A GP treats patients for basic health problems. They can answer most of your general health questions and perform standard examinations. GPs also provide referrals to specialists at hospitals (dermatologist, gynaecologist, psychologist etc.). In the Netherlands you cannot see a hospital specialist without a referral from a GP. Without that referral, the health insurance will also not reimburse the costs.

There are various GPs in Rotterdam, but you don't have to worry if your GP will be qualified enough: all local doctors have the same education (six years of medical school and three years of specialisation afterwards). All Dutch GPs are regularly checked and monitored. The difference between GPs is not their knowledge, but their practice and approach to illness and treatment. Note that doctor's assistants in the Netherlands do triage when you call them; this way they will judge if an appointment with the GP is necessary.

How to find a doctor?

Registering with a GP practice is one of the first things you should do when you arrive in Rotterdam, even before you need to see one. You are free to choose a GP that is based in the neighbourhood (district) where you live. To search for a GP in your area, go to the [kies uw huisarts](https://www.kiesuwhuisarts.nl) website: <https://www.kiesuwhuisarts.nl>. This website is in Dutch, but it is quite easy to understand. Fill in your postal code and click on the banner that says 'zoek' (search). The website will display the GPs that are closest to your home. The best way to find a doctor that suits your needs is to contact them via email or phone and ask for the things that are important to you. Please note that not all doctors are able to take new patients!

Your GP may wish to have a consultation appointment with you to go over your medical history. This is a good opportunity to have any questions about healthcare in the Netherlands answered.

Student Life has a list of GPs in Rotterdam where students are welcome to register (see: *External Medical Network Codarts Performing Arts Health Centre*).

GP out-of-hours service (Huisartsenpost, HAP)

If you need medical assistance after office hours or during the weekend/public holidays, you should contact the GP out-of-hours service (HAP). The HAP also includes a pharmacy. Always make an appointment before going to the HAP. Just like the GP doctor's assistants, HAP assistants also do triage to judge if it is really necessary to visit the HAP.

Hospital (Ziekenhuis)

If immediate medical assistance is needed, you can get help 24 hours a day at the First Aid (EHBO) or Accident & Emergency (*spoedeisende hulp, SEH*) at any hospital.

Emergency

If you need the police, fire and/or ambulance services in a serious life-threatening situation, call the (European) emergency telephone number: 112

Medication

Medication is bought from pharmacies (apotheken) with a prescription from the GP or another doctor. For non-prescription medication such as aspirin or cough medicine, you can purchase them directly off the shelf at pharmacies, or drugstores (drogisterij). Health food stores (e.g. De Tuinen) sell alternative/herbal medications and other nutrition supplements.

Tips

- If you already know some people living in your neighbourhood, it is smart to ask them about their experiences with their local GPs.
- Before making an appointment with any healthcare practitioner, check your insurance policy to inquire which treatments are fully or partially covered by your insurance to avoid unexpected costs afterwards.
- Healthcare in the Netherlands is never for free (even if Codarts has made arrangements for students). Be aware that you will often have to pay the costs yourself before it gets (partially) reimbursed by your health insurance company. So always have cash and/or a bank pass or credit card with you when you visit a medical practitioner.
- Always ask for an original receipt/bill of your medical expenses (treatments, medicines etc.). You will need this receipt to file a claim with your health insurance company.
- See the *External Medical Network Codarts Performing Arts Health Centre* for an overview of GPs, hospitals and HAPs in Rotterdam.