

Accessing Healthcare in Toronto

If you do not have health coverage (OHIP or IFH) during the
COVID-19 outbreak

Developed by:

The Health Network for Uninsured Clients

With support from

**The Toronto South Local Immigration Partnership
(TSLIP)**

Updated April 15, 2020

Online resource will be updated:

www.wellesleyinstitute.com/uninsured

During COVID-19 hospital services should be free for everyone.

Even if you do not have Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), Interim Federal Health Benefits (IFH) or private insurance, you should still get care.

- This resource is up-to-date to the best of our knowledge as of April 15, 2020
- This resource was developed by the Health Network for Uninsured Clients: we are people who work in health care and social service organizations across Toronto.

? *Who you can call if you need help*

- In an emergency, you can always call 911.
- **Telehealth Ontario** is open to everyone. The phone number is **1-866-797-0000**. You can speak with a nurse about your health concerns. The nurses will not diagnose your illness or give you medicine. They will help you decide whether to handle a problem yourself, visit your doctor or go to an emergency room. For more information about Telehealth Ontario visit: <https://bit.ly/3b9pp3B>
- **Telehealth is free and available 24 hours a day**. It may take some time for them to call you back as they are very busy right now. Translation support is available for some languages.
- **Toronto Public Health** provides free services to everyone. The phone number is **416-338-7600**. You can call with questions about COVID-19 and whether you can get tested between 8:30 am and 8:00 pm.



If you need to go to a hospital

- You can go to a hospital Emergency Department if you have an urgent health issue.
- They are open 24 hours a day. **During COVID-19, you should not be charged or receive a bill.**

Why?

All hospitals have been told by the Ontario Ministry of Health that they should be giving medically necessary services to everyone during the COVID-19 outbreak. This should cover all urgent health care.

- **Some hospitals may not know about these new changes.**
- We have heard that some people without OHIP have been asked to pay up front. This should not be happening. Here is the [official government announcement](https://bit.ly/3aamLcw): <https://bit.ly/3aamLcw>

To prepare you can:

- Bookmark the government announcement page on your phone to show to hospital staff: <https://bit.ly/3aamLcw>
- Print out the page to show to hospital staff
- Write the link down on a piece of paper to show hospital staff



When you get to the hospital

The hospital staff may ask for your health card or identification. If you don't have a health card or identification, you should still be able to receive care.



However, if you do have any kind of ID you feel comfortable using, it may be helpful to take it with you.



You may choose to, but you do not have to share any information about your immigration status with the hospital or anyone in the health care system.



Some hospitals have access to phone language interpretation. Ask for this if you would like it or if you feel there is miscommunication between you and hospital staff.



Information about the COVID-19 outbreak

The Government of Ontario has information about COVID-19 in multiple languages. For more information visit: <https://bit.ly/2K6Prc1>

The City of Toronto also has information available. Click on this link to access the latest information and updates: <https://bit.ly/2VqrGB2>



COVID-19 Assessment Centres

- There are special assessment centres to test for COVID-19. Only people who meet certain criteria will be tested.
- For more information about Toronto locations, who can get a test right now, and when you should and should not visit an assessment centre, visit: <https://bit.ly/2K6ELdf>
- **You do not need OHIP coverage to be seen at a Toronto COVID-19 assessment centre.** You will not be asked to pay. If you are tested, ask the testing centre staff how to get your results without an OHIP number.



Other no-cost options: Special clinics for uninsured clients

There are several clinics in Toronto that will see people who are uninsured for free. These clinics are not for emergencies. Call to confirm you are eligible and to ensure the clinics are open as they may change their business hours.

In person:

West End:

(Access Point on Jane), 761 Jane Street, second floor.

Monday and Thursday, 3:00 pm-6:30 pm

Call for more information: 416-760-8677

WOW Clinic

(Regent Park CHC)
465 Dundas Street East

Wednesday 10am-12pm

Call for more information: 416-203-4506

Blue Door Clinic for people with HIV

(Regent Park CHC)
465 Dundas Street East

The second and fourth Monday morning of each month, 10 am-12 noon

Call for more information: 647-730-3222



Other no-cost options

On the phone or online

Canadian Centre for Refugee and Immigrant Health, Community Volunteer Clinic

Call 1-647-267-2176 ext. 1 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 9 am-6 pm OR Tuesday and Thursday, 9 am-8 pm

Muslim Welfare Centre

For more information, email: freeclinic@muslimwelfarecentre.com

Or visit their website: <https://bit.ly/2wAEmN4>

FCJ Refugee Clinic

Call 416-469-9754
Ask for a Health and Well-Being Worker at ext. 230

Or visit their website: <https://bit.ly/3a95gJV>

- If you are currently a patient at a community health centre, you should still be able to access care at no cost, although some services will probably now be on the phone.



If you are not eligible for a health card or you do not have a health card

If you do not have a health card for any reason

Do not let this stop you from seeking emergency or urgent health care.

If you are not eligible for a health card

You can still receive free health care at a hospital during the COVID-19 outbreak.



How to get a health card (if you are eligible)

- If you are eligible, you can apply for a health card to get your health service costs covered by the government's Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP).
- To be eligible, you must be a Canadian citizen or have an eligible immigration status, more information is available in several languages here: <https://bit.ly/2z0g7sE>
- Once you apply, you will have immediate health care coverage. This is because **the government has ended the three-month waiting period** for health coverage during COVID-19. This may change after the COVID-19 outbreak is over.
- **If you applied for your health card before March 19, 2020: you have OHIP coverage, but you should call Service Ontario at 1-866-532-3161 to activate this coverage.**



If you have not applied for your health card

If you are eligible for a health card, but do not feel safe going to Service Ontario in person at this time, you can still receive free health care at a hospital during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- **Visit <https://bit.ly/2z0g7sE> to find out how you can apply for a health card.**
- Some Service Ontario offices are still open. You can call first to make sure they are open.
- If you not able to go to Service Ontario in person, you can call:
 - ✓ The **Service Ontario Info-Line** at **1-866-532-3161** for more information.

About this document:

This document was developed by the Health Network for Uninsured Clients. We are people who work in health care and social service organizations across Toronto. For more information: www.wellesleyinstitute.com/uninsured

If you have questions about the information in this document, you can contact us at uninsuredTO@gmail.com. Please let us know where you live in Toronto.

We may not have the answer, but we will try our best. It may take us up to a week to get back to you. We are not health care professionals. **Do not contact this email in medical emergencies or with medical questions.**

If you have a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room.