



Visiting Australia from Ireland

A guide to eligibility for medical services

Ireland and Australia have a reciprocal health care agreement (RHCA) where residents from Ireland who hold a valid visa are eligible for 'medically necessary' treatment as a public patient, including both inpatient and outpatient care and subsidised prescription drugs through the **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme**.

The RHCA does not entitle the visitor to Medicare benefits for out-of-hospital medical care and does not apply where a person enters Australia for the sole purpose of accessing medical treatment.

'Medically necessary' treatment means any ill health or injury which occurs while the individual is in Australia and requires treatment before returning home. This includes treatment for pre-existing conditions.

Maternity services are normally deemed to be 'medically necessary' and are covered.

If the patient elects to be treated as a private patient, they are **ineligible** under the agreement and will be charged as an **ineligible** patient.

Visitors admitted as a public patient during their visit to Australia should inform hospital staff that they wish to be treated as a Medicare public patient under the RHCA. Admissions staff will request evidence of their Medicare eligibility.

Because Irish visitors are not eligible for Medicare benefits for out-of-hospital services, Medicare does not enrol them or issue them with Medicare cards. A current Irish passport is sufficient proof of eligibility to receive public hospital treatment and **Pharmaceutical Benefits scheme** medicines.

Eligible Irish visitors include all holders of a valid temporary visa including 417 (Working Holiday) and 457 (Temporary Skilled Worker) visas. Visitors from Ireland to Australia cannot access the provisions of the RHCA if they are in Australia without a valid visa. Students from Ireland who are studying in Australia are not eligible for cover under the RHCA and need to take out Overseas Student Health Cover.

Medical services not covered by Medicare under a Reciprocal Agreement

Medicare will not cover:

- medicines not subsidised under the **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme**
- accommodation and medical treatment in a private hospital
- accommodation and medical treatment as a private patient in a public hospital.

Ancillary services not covered

- private patient hospital costs (including accommodation and theatre fees)
- dental examinations and treatment (except for Chronic Disease Management programs)
- ambulance services
- home nursing
- allied health services not listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (private Medicare services)
- acupuncture (unless part of doctor's consultation)
- glasses and contact lenses
- hearing aids and other appliances
- the cost of prostheses
- medical costs for which someone else is responsible (e.g. compensable insurer or employer)
- medical services which are not 'medically necessary'
- surgery solely for cosmetic reasons
- examinations for life insurance, superannuation or membership of a friendly society
- eye therapy.

The Honorary Consulate of Ireland - WA and/or the Department of Health WA is not in a position to provide additional information on the implementation of the RHCA. Individuals who require further information on the implementation of the agreement and their eligibility for cover should contact Medicare directly on 132 011.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.



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