



The Royal  
Melbourne Hospital

**Kidney Care Service**

# Your Helpful Handbook for Managing Kidney Disease



The Royal  
Melbourne Hospital

First in Care,  
Research and  
Learning

CARING  
EXCELLENCE  
INTEGRITY  
RESPECT  
UNITY

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## About this Handbook

This helpful handbook for Managing Kidney Disease has been designed to provide general information about a variety of services and resources which may be helpful to you and your family. This handbook includes information for people who are living with chronic kidney disease, kidney transplantation, dialysis and supportive care needs. Our RMH Kidney Care health professionals, including physicians, surgeons, nurses, allied health therapists, technicians and support staff, are all committed to providing you and your family with the best possible care, treatment and support.

This booklet was produced as a communication initiative with significant advice and input from a range of RMH Kidney Care staff, with special thanks to Mary Malandra, and Jenny Beavis.

Most importantly, we acknowledge the generosity of our RMH Kidney Care patients who guided the initial development of this booklet and the advice of various existing specialist and community resources, which have enabled us to collate and share useful information.

The Handbook information is provided in good faith and believed to be correct at the time of printing. Changes to service availability and eligibility may occur over time. Please check websites for updated information and speak with your kidney care team at The Royal Melbourne Hospital if you have any queries or concerns at any time.

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## The Royal Melbourne Hospital Kidney Care Service

### Our Service to You

RMH Kidney Care currently provides care to people with chronic kidney disease and those on dialysis and operates one of the busiest and most successful kidney transplant services in Australia.

The many services offered by RMH Kidney Care are designed to support all people with chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Treatment options that are explained and discussed with people include home haemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, satellite dialysis, transplantation and supportive care. Our aim is to provide patients with the best possible quality of life, so kidney transplantation and other home based treatments are encouraged. Our satellite centres are placed to offer our patients dialysis treatments close to their homes if needed. RMH Kidney Care offers both metropolitan and regional dialysis. Hospital based (also called in-centre) dialysis is only provided for those that need more medical supervision or hospital based care, generally for a limited time.

RMH Kidney Care specialist staff provide regular group and individual education and information sessions about all treatment options for people with CKD in both metropolitan and regional areas of Victoria. This handbook is intended as an additional resource to other written material.

### The Royal Melbourne Kidney Care Service Contacts

RMH Kidney Care Service

The Royal Melbourne Hospital, Grattan Street, Parkville Vic 3050

Telephone: (03) 9342 7058

Facsimile: (03) 9347 1420

CKD Nurse Practitioner	0427 547 383
Dialysis Coordinator	(03) 9342 7167
Dialysis Access and Surgery Coordinator	(03) 9342 7658
Home Dialysis Services	(03) 8387 2097
Transplant Coordinators	(03) 9342 3133
Dietitians and Social Workers	(03) 9342 7440

Please note that all telephone numbers listed above are attended in normal business hours on Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. For any out of hours matters, please call The Royal Melbourne Hospital switchboard on (03) 9342 7000.

Further information can be found on the MH website under RMH Kidney Care.

<https://www.thermh.org.au/patients-visitors/services-clinics/kidney-care>

## The Royal Melbourne Hospital City Campus

The Royal Melbourne Hospital, City Campus is located on Grattan Street, Parkville and provides a range of acute medical and surgical services primarily to Melbourne's Northern and Western communities in addition to broader Victorian and interstate populations.

The information desk is located at the main Grattan Street entrance (open weekdays 8am to 8pm and weekends 10am to 6pm). Our information staff can assist you with any questions about the locations of services or in-patients. If the information desk is unattended, please use the phone beside the desk for assistance. On weekdays, there are also volunteer guides who are happy to escort patients and visitors.

The volunteers' desk is situated opposite the lifts on the ground floor in the main entrance to the hospital. They provide directions and can guide you around the hospital, assist with a wheelchair and escort patients to clinics and other hospital departments. The volunteer service is contactable on (03) 9342 7371.

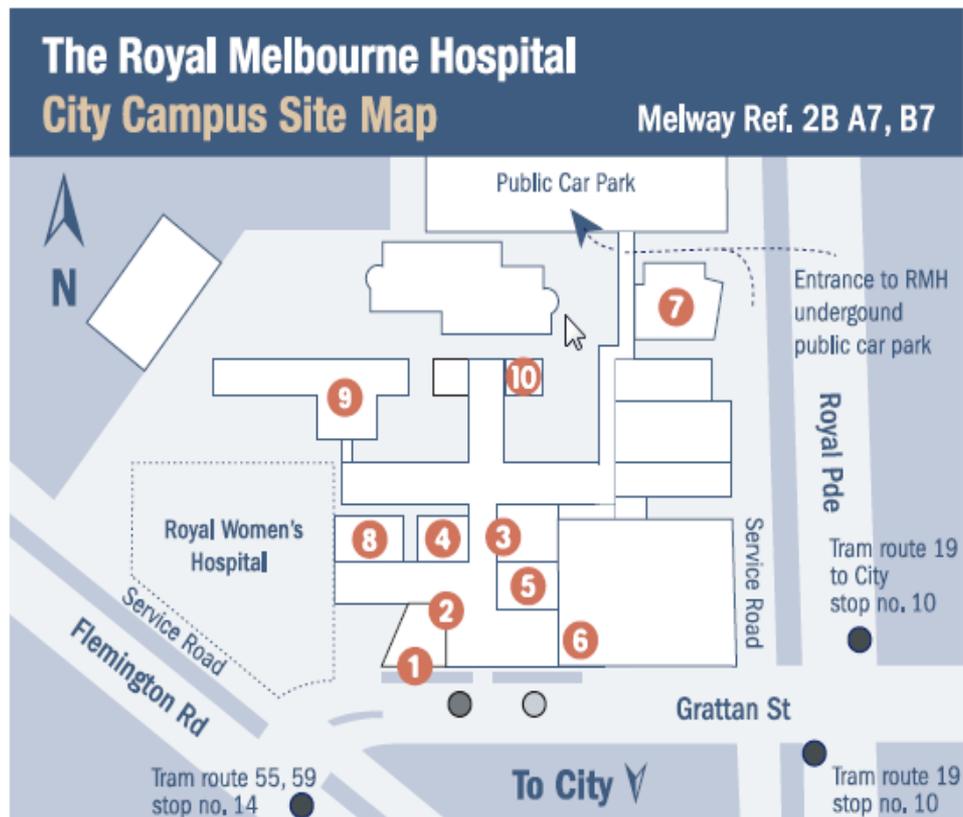
## RMH City Campus

Grattan Street

Parkville Vic 3052

Phone: (03) 9342 7000

Fax: (03) 9342 7802



- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b> Main entrance  | <b>6</b> Emergency Department                   |
| <b>2</b> Enquiries      | <b>7</b> Private medical rooms/private hospital |
| <b>3</b> Lifts to wards | <b>8</b> Retail precinct                        |
| <b>4</b> Café           | <b>9</b> John Cade Building                     |
| <b>5</b> Pharmacy       | <b>10</b> Function Centre                       |

● Tram stop   ● Bus stop   ○ Taxi rank

## Public transport

For information about public transport, call Public Transport Victoria on 1800 800 007

(6am - midnight daily) or visit <http://ptv.vic.gov.au> or <http://www.victrip.com.au> to plan your journey.

For passengers with hearing difficulties there is a TTY (telecommunication device for the deaf) service available. Phone (03) 9619 2727.

Free Sunday Metlink travel applies for Victorian seniors, disability support pensioners and carer recipients. For more information visit <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/free-travel-passes/>

Buying a Myki card for public transport is simple. You can pick up a Myki for immediate use:

- At metropolitan premium train stations.
- At close to 800 metropolitan retail outlets, including 7-Eleven.
- From a Myki machine (full fare Myki only) at all metropolitan train stations and selected accessible tram stops and bus interchanges. Use the online locator tool to find a machine near to you.
- At a regional Myki retail outlet.
- Online <http://ptv.vic.gov.au>
- By calling 136 954.

	Start	Route to	RMH stop	Comment
Tram 19	Flinders Street Station	North Coburg	Corner Royal Parade and Grattan Street	
Tram 58	Toorak	West Coburg	Corner Flemington Rd and Grattan Street	
Tram 59	Flinders Street Station	Airport West	Corner Royal Parade and Grattan Street	
Bus 401	North Melbourne Station	Melbourne University	Grattan Street outside RMH	Prepaid for Zone 1
Bus 402	St Vincents Hospital	Footscray	Grattan Street outside RMH	

Other public transport routes and options can be found at [www.ptv.vic.gov.au](http://www.ptv.vic.gov.au)

The closest train station to City Campus is North Melbourne. Catch the 401 bus just outside the North Melbourne Station, and this will take you directly to the hospital.

## Parking

Limited parking is available in the RMH City Campus car park. The car park is open every day from 6am -9pm. The office is situated within the car park on level 2 and is staffed Monday to Friday from 7am-8.30pm. A 24-hour intercom button is also available at the entrance and exit gates.

Entry and exit to the car park is via Royal Parade.

First 30 minutes are Free

30 mins-1.0 hours costs \$10.00 and this increases up to \$35.00 for 6 hours or more

Sat/Sun/Public Holidays \$10 flat rate

Night rates -\$10 flat fee after 5pm and before 6am

***Please note fees are subject to change***

For more information about fees and car parking spaces, you can telephone (03) 9342 7719 or visit <https://www.thermh.org.au/patients-visitors/coming-hospital/parking-near-city-campus>

Pensioner, long stay and multiple day visit concessions are available. Your ward manager or clinic staff can assist you with more information about concession parking.

There are limited parking spots reserved for people with a disabled parking permit outside the main entrance in Grattan Street. There are disabled parking bays in the underground car park. You can use the drop off point near the car park cashiers window on level 2 of the car park. Depending on availability, wheelchairs may be borrowed from the volunteer's desk in the hospital's central lift foyer.

## Taxi

You can also catch a taxi to the hospital. There is a taxi rank located outside the main entrance on Grattan Street. There is a disability access ramp at the front entrance.

## Transit Lounge

Located on the Ground floor of the City Campus, the Transit Lounge is where patients can wait for appointments in the hospital or transport home or to another facility. The Transit Lounge is staffed by nurses and support staff. There are six designated Transit Lounge parking bays that provide convenient short- term parking facilities for carers and family members dropping off or collecting patients directly from the Transit Lounge.

The Transit Lounge is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday (closed public holidays).

Contact the Transit Lounge on (03) 9342 7296 or (03) 9342 7588.

## The Royal Melbourne Hospital Royal Park Campus

The Royal Melbourne Hospital Royal Park Campus is located at 34-54 Poplar Road, Parkville. Reception and front desk are located in the main entrance of the Robert Campbell Wing, Building 17, adjacent to the car park. A receptionist is on duty from 7:30am to 8:00pm from Monday to Friday and from 10:00am to 6:00pm on weekends and public holidays. Reception staff can assist you with any questions about the location of services and patients. If the information desk is unattended, please use the information phone just inside the entrance and next to the taxi telephone.

Volunteers are available by contacting the volunteer coordinator on (03) 9342 7259.

### Public Transport

Upfield train line to Royal Park station, and then walk 200 metres along Poplar Road to the main entrance (Gate 1).

By tram Route 58 (Toorak – West Coburg) to stop 27 (Royal Park station/Poplar Road) or stop 28 (Park Street).

Please note there is a 5-10 minute walk to the hospital facilities from the tram and train stops.

## RMH Royal Park Campus

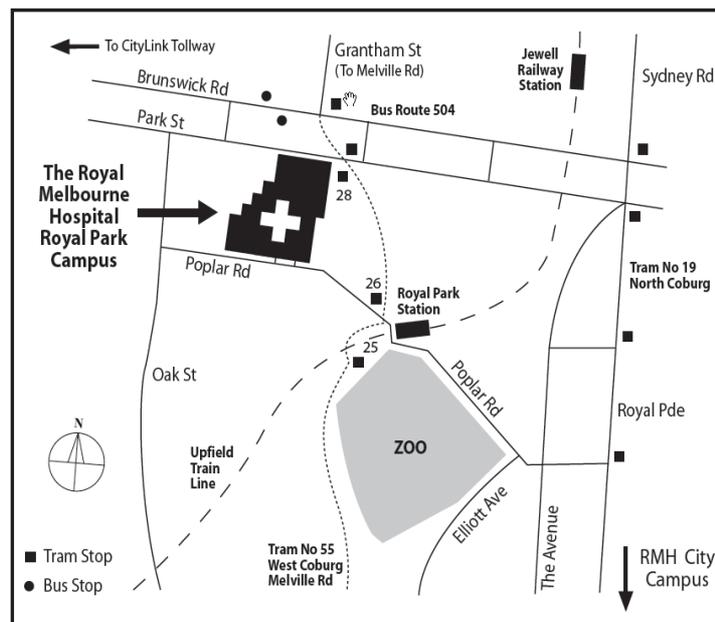
Poplar Road

Parkville Vic. 3052

Melway ref: Map 29, D10

Ph: (03) 8387 2000

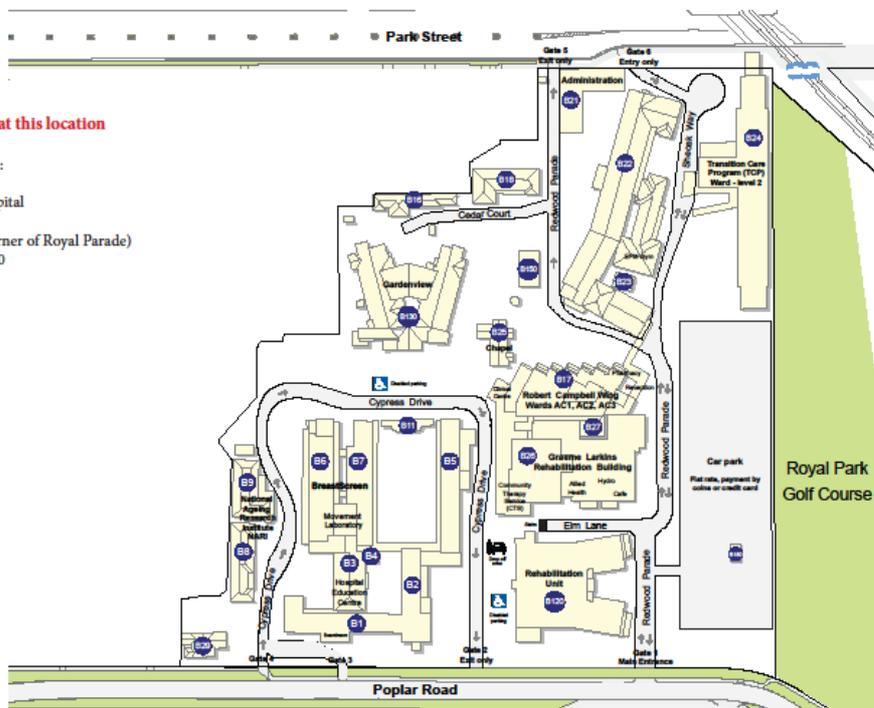
Fax: (03) 8387 2222



**No emergency care at this location**

For emergencies, go to:

Royal Melbourne Hospital  
City Campus  
300 Grattan Street (corner of Royal Parade)  
Parkville, Victoria 3050



Royal Park Campus, 34-54 Poplar Road, Parkville

Last updated September 2016 [www.thermh.org.au/contact-us](http://www.thermh.org.au/contact-us) (03) 8387 2000

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## Parking

Enter at main entrance, Gate 1 in Poplar Road. This is the public car park entrance as well as the main entrance.

A daily parking fee of \$9.00 applies to all cars. There is no hourly rate. There is a ticket machine at the exit that takes coins only, and exact change is required. Parking is free at RMH Royal Park Campus for cars displaying a disabled permit and parked in the marked disabled parking spaces. Dialysis patients attending the Home Dialysis Service have free parking.

***Please note fees are subject to change***

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## Outpatient Clinic Services

RMH Kidney Care offers Outpatient Clinics every day of the week for the management of patients with kidney disorders, including those with chronic kidney disease as well as for patients on dialysis and with kidney transplants.

Wherever possible, each patient is managed by the same Nephrology Consultant at each RMH Kidney Care Outpatient Clinic review. Outpatient clinic letters written by Nephrologists regarding the management of a patient and any changes in treatment are sent to the local doctor (General Practitioner), other relevant specialists and also to patients themselves.

The Home Dialysis Outpatient Clinic is located at the Home Dialysis Service (HDS) for the convenience of people who dialyse at home. Please note that attendance is by prior appointment only. Please speak with the staff at HDS to find out more about how to make an appointment.

### Referrals

Most commonly, the RMH Kidney Care Service receives patient referrals from General Practitioners, other Specialists and health services. Upon referral, information regarding the treatment options that are available for you will be provided by your Kidney Specialist and the RMH Kidney Care team. Our aim is to provide you with the best information so that you can make an informed choice about which treatment option is best for you. Wherever possible, it is important to plan ahead of time so your Kidney Care team will keep in touch with you and your local doctor to support your treatment plan.

### General Practitioner

A General Practitioner (GP) is sometimes called a local doctor. The GP is usually the first person you see for your health care and will work together with hospitals and specialists who may also be involved in your care.

Your GP can help you with physical and mental health problems. This includes short and long term illnesses, injuries, immunization, and emotional issues like stress, anxiety, depression and relationship problems. Another very important role of a GP is preventive care, which might include arranging tests to detect an illness and providing you with advice on how to have a healthy lifestyle.

If your GP's practice is unavailable you can contact the GP helpline after hours for practical medical advice on 1800 022 222.

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## Chronic illness

Many people in our community live with one or more illnesses that are long term.

Chronic illnesses can include a broad range of health issues such as kidney disease, diabetes, lung and heart disease.

Each condition has a different course and different effects. If you have recently learned that you have a chronic illness, it may be that the illness has been longstanding, slowly getting worse and causing permanent changes to your body. It is not uncommon to feel overwhelmed when you are first diagnosed and you should try to learn as much as you can. Learning about your chronic illness and how to manage it, often leads to a greater understanding of yourself and your body. Knowing how your body works may allow you to have more control. Taking good care of yourself may help you maintain a better quality of life and a positive attitude, as you gradually make any decisions and lifestyle changes.

### Chronic Kidney Disease

Healthy kidneys filter the waste chemicals and excess water from your body and also help to control your blood pressure, red blood cells and bone health. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) means that kidney function reduces over many months or years and often people are not aware until about 80% of the function has been lost. The most common causes of CKD are diabetes, glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the kidney), hypertension and inherited disease. As kidney function decreases, planning for future management will need to occur so that your local doctor and kidney specialist team can plan ahead for your care. This is vital for your ongoing health.

### Treatment Options

The many services offered by RMH Kidney Care are designed to support all people with chronic kidney disease (CKD). Treatment options that are explained and discussed with people include home haemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, satellite dialysis, transplantation and supportive care. Our aim is to provide patients with the best possible quality of life, so kidney transplantation and other home based treatments are encouraged. Our satellite centres are located to offer our patients dialysis treatments close to their homes if needed. RMH Kidney Care offers dialysis in both metropolitan and regional satellite centres. Hospital based (also called in-centre) dialysis is provided for those that need more medical supervision or hospital based care, generally for a limited time.

RMH Kidney Care specialist staff provide regular group and individual education about all treatment options for people with CKD in both metropolitan and regional areas of Victoria.

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## Kidney Transplantation

One of the treatment options that may be available for you is kidney transplantation.

Kidney transplantation is currently the best form of treatment that we have for end-stage kidney disease. The RMH commenced kidney transplantation in 1964 and, with now over 140 transplants per year, our highly experienced Transplant team are committed to provide the most advanced treatment options available. Our team of transplant physicians, surgeons and nurses specialise in complex kidney transplantation and are able to provide opportunities for people who have special needs or particular challenges, like high antibody levels or different blood groups.

If kidney transplantation is of interest to you, the first step is to speak with your Kidney Specialist to see if you are medically suitable for kidney transplantation. For further information:

<https://www.thermh.org.au/patients-visitors/services-clinics/kidney-care>

<http://kidney.org.au/your-kidneys/support/kidney-transplant>

## Home Dialysis - Kidney Health Australia

Information about home dialysis and other services can be found on this website:

<http://kidney.org.au/your-kidneys/support/dialysis>

## Home Dialysis Concessions

*Life Support Machine Electricity and Water Concession:* home dialysis recipients who hold a Pensioner Concession Card, Centrelink Healthcare Card or Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card, receive from the Victorian Government a discount which is deducted from personal bills by energy and water retailers. For further information and to apply: contact the Concession Information Line on 1800658521 (toll free) or visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions) and search for life support concessions or visit the Kidney Health Website for <http://kidney.org.au/search?query=concessions>

*The Essential Medical Equipment Payment* helps eligible households with any impact from the carbon price on everyday expenses. For further information please see: <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/essential-medical-equipment-payment>

For General Information, please call Concessions Information Line 1800 658 521 or the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services 1300 650 172 <http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/>

## Supportive care

Supportive care is another treatment option for some people with end-stage kidney disease. Conservative care, supportive care, palliative care and no treatment are all descriptions of the “I don’t want to have dialysis or transplant option”. It is about letting nature take its course. Supportive care aims to manage your symptoms of end-stage kidney disease. Depending on other illnesses it may or may not lead to shorter life. It is about enjoying what time you have left. If you choose supportive care you will continue to receive ongoing treatment of your kidney disease from your renal team, along with specialised support and symptom management.

## Renal Websites

- The Royal Melbourne Hospital Kidney Care Service  
<https://www.thermh.org.au/>
- Resources for information about kidney disease, dialysis and transplantation.  
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/kidney-failure> Phone 1800 022 222
- Kidney Health Australia (KHA) has staff in most capital cities across Australia  
<http://www.kidney.org.au> and for resources visit  
<http://kidney.org.au/about-us/resources-library> or phone Kidney Health Information Service 1800 454 363
- Indigenous Renal Resources <http://kidney.org.au/your-kidneys/support/indigenous-resources> and <http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/chronic-conditions/kidney>
- Dialysis and Transplant Association of Victoria (DATA)  
DATA offers information, a resource library, holiday homes, social functions, a newsletter - ‘shoestring’, student education grants, social welfare program and information sharing.  
<http://www.datavic.org>
- Big D and Me  
Greg Collette writes the BigDandMe Blog. This blog is about living with dialysis from the recipient’s point of view. It is very informative and is well worth a look.  
<http://www.bigdandme.wordpress.com>
- Transplant Australia  
Works in the areas of advocacy, awareness and support: <http://www.transplant.org.au>
- DonateLife  
Discover all about organ donation, discuss and decide: <http://www.donatelife.gov.au>

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## Nutrition and Kidney Disease

A healthy kidney plays a very important role in the removal of waste products and excess fluid from our body. When you have chronic kidney disease, these waste products build up in your body and could make you feel unwell.

Diet can be an important part of managing your kidney disease and recommendations may change over time depending on the level of your kidney function, medical treatment and other illnesses you might have. There is no one special diet for everyone with kidney disease. Regular blood tests will help to guide your treatment. Your kidney specialist, local doctor and renal dietitian can help you to choose the right amounts and type of foods to keep you as healthy as possible.

### Protein

Protein foods from animal (meat, fish, chicken, eggs, dairy products) and plant (legumes, soy products, nuts) sources, is needed to build muscles, repair tissues, fight infection and heal wounds.

You may need to control the amount of protein in your diet to help control the amount of waste product (urea) in your blood and also help slow the progression of kidney disease. When you start dialysis however, you will need to increase the amount of protein in your diet to meet the increased protein need for dialysis.

### Energy

Getting enough energy (or calories) is important to keep you feeling well and as active as possible. If you need to decrease the amount of protein in your diet, it is important to make sure that you are getting more energy from carbohydrates and fats. If your appetite is poor, have trouble eating certain foods or are losing weight without trying, speak to a renal dietitian.

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## Sodium (salt)

Too much sodium can lead to fluid retention and difficulty controlling blood pressure. Sodium is a mineral found naturally in some foods but is high in table salt (added to cooking or at the table) and in foods with added salt, especially processed foods.

Foods with a high amount of sodium include

- Processed meats like ham, bacon, sausage and sliced deli meats.
- Canned or packet soups, sauces like soy, fish, tomato sauce.
- Seasonings including rock salt, vegetable salt, onion or garlic salt.
- Salted snacks like chips.
- Most take away foods.

Fresh foods are the best choices. Fresh or dried herbs, ginger, garlic, chilli can be used in cooking to enhance the flavour of foods instead of adding salt to your cooking and try adding fresh ground pepper to your cooked meals.

## Potassium

Potassium is a mineral in your blood that helps your muscles and heart to work properly. Too much or too little potassium in your blood can cause problems. If your blood tests show that your potassium level is high, you may need to make some changes to your choice of foods.

Potassium is found in most foods but the amount in fruits and vegetables can be variable.

High amounts of potassium are found in foods like:

- Potato, pumpkin, parsnip, tomato, vegetable juices
- Banana, avocado, cantaloupe, dried fruits, stone fruits like nectarines and apricots
- Chocolate, potato crisps, nuts and liquorice.

Salt substitutes are high in potassium and should not be used if your blood potassium level is high.

Choose lower potassium foods like apples, pears, berries, green beans, peas, silverbeet and carrots. Ask to see a renal dietitian if you need more information to help reduce your potassium intake have trouble working out safe choices.

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## Phosphate

Phosphate is a mineral that helps to keep bones strong and healthy. When your kidneys are not working well, they cannot remove phosphate from the blood, causing your blood phosphate level to go up. A high blood phosphate level can result in weak bones by causing the loss of calcium from your bones and can also lead to hardening of blood vessels because of deposits of calcium and phosphate.

Phosphate can be found in protein foods and in high amounts in foods like dairy products, dried beans and nuts. However, phosphate is also found in large quantities in processed foods from added preservatives and these are best avoided. Your dietitian can guide your choice of foods to reduce your intake of phosphate while ensuring you have adequate amounts of protein for your needs.

Your doctor might prescribe a medication called a “phosphate binder” to decrease the amount of phosphate absorbed from the foods you eat. The binders combine with the phosphate while the food is still in the gut to stop the phosphate from going into your blood. It is important that you take the phosphate binders with every meal and choose low phosphate foods (plain dry or sweet biscuits, low potassium fruit) as snacks between meals (if you are not taking binders with snacks).

## Fluid

Fluid intake is usually not restricted while your kidneys are still making lots of urine. Your doctor will let you know if you need to control your fluid intake especially if you have fluid retention or when your urine output decreases.

When you commence dialysis, your diet requirements will change. Your needs are individual and based on the type of dialysis, your blood test results and your progress on dialysis. The renal dietitian will help you to work out an eating plan that meets your specific needs. To speak with one of the renal dietitians, please call Allied Health reception on (03) 9342 7440. You may also be referred to the dietitian if you are an inpatient. Self-referrals are accepted.

General information is available from Kidney Health Australia <http://kidney.org.au/your-kidneys/support/dialysis/dialysis-and-wellbeing>

An Accredited Practising Dietitian can be found on the Dietitians Association of Australia website: <http://www.daa.asn.au>

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## Holidays and Chronic Kidney Disease

If you are planning to travel, you need to let your local doctor and your hospital team know before you leave and make sure you have enough medication to take with you.

If you are on peritoneal dialysis, the Home Dialysis Service team will help you to arrange delivery of your stock to your holiday address. This will need to be arranged a few months in advance of your planned time away from home.

If you are on haemodialysis, please talk with your dialysis manager before you book and pay for your holiday as availability of holiday haemodialysis is sometimes limited and arrangements may need to be made many months in advance. If you have private insurance, this may provide additional opportunities as there are private dialysis facilities in some popular tourist areas. Some units have limitations on accepting visitors, depending on results of special tests that need to be done beforehand.

Australia has reciprocal agreements with some countries and although overseas holidays can usually be arranged, there may be a high cost involved for dialysis. For further information go to: <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/reciprocal-health-care-agreements>

Kidney Health Australia website is a must see before travelling:

<http://kidney.org.au/your-kidneys/support/dialysis/dialysis-and-travel>

Also see holidays for dialysis patients around the world at: <http://Globaldialysis.com> and for a personal experience see: <http://travellingwithdialysis.wordpress.com>

### Holiday Dialysis in Victoria

A number of Regional and Rural Health Services work in partnership with The Royal Melbourne Hospital to provide haemodialysis to patients across Victoria. In recognition of the importance of holidays to people with end-stage kidney disease who require regular haemodialysis, these services are pleased to provide holiday dialysis when a vacancy exists in their service. Please note that advanced notice is required and that these services can sometimes be full.

Be sure to speak with the Home Dialysis Service team if you are on peritoneal dialysis as they will help you arrange delivery of your stock to your holiday address. This will need to be arranged a few weeks in advance of your planned time away from home.

It is essential to speak with your regular dialysis staff when you are thinking about organising a holiday.

Australian Dialysis Units can be found on the Kidney Health Australia website <http://kidney.org.au/your-kidneys/support/dialysis/dialysis-unit-guide>

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## Additional Health Information

### HEALTHinsite

This website includes an A to Z guide on health topics and information about various conditions, and includes links to Australian State and Territory Health Services and other services. <http://www.healthinsite.gov.au>

### Vision

Vision Australia services for people who are blind or vision impaired. Tel: 1300 847 466. <http://www.visionaustralia.org>

Victorian Eyecare Services provide subsidised eye care for permanent residents of Victoria who are pensioners or health care card holders. To see if you qualify please call: (03) 9349 7000 <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/services/ves.htm>

### Hearing

Free hearing services via Australian Government Hearing Services is targeted at Australian Citizens or permanent residents 21 years of age or older who meet eligibility criteria. To find out if you qualify phone visit <https://nhc.com.au/hearing-tests> or phone 1800 705 262

Australian Hearing is an Australian Government agency helping people manage hearing impairment. Subsidised hearing services for eligible people including those holding pensioner concession cards. For more information phone 1300 412 512 <http://www.hearing.com.au>

### Dental

The Department of Health Vic provides services for dental health. To have your name placed on a waiting list for dental check-up, advice and treatment call 1300 360 054 or visit <http://www.health.vic.gov.au> to find your closest community dental clinic.

The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM), is located at 720 Swanston Street, Carlton, and provides emergency, general and specialist care for concession cardholders and dependents. Phone: (03) 9341 1000 or 1800 833 039

### Well-being and Mental Health

Well-being is a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors. Well-being is linked to how you feel about yourself and your life – for more information visit Better Health Channel: <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

If you think that meditation or tai chi may be for you or someone you care about, consider looking on the internet for websites.

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## Dementia

Dementia Australia Website: <http://www.dementiacareaustralia.com>

The National Dementia Helpline is a Government initiative, run by Alzheimer's Australia. Phone: 1800 100 500 <http://www.fightdementia.org.au>

Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service VIC. Phone: 1800 699 799 (24 hour free call)

The Caring Experience is a guide for families and carers of people with dementia. It contains information that you may need and ideas you could use, while at the same time recognising that family and carers will have different experiences of caring for a person with dementia.

<https://dementiameds.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/dementia-the-caring-experience.pdf>

## Counselling and Support Services

There are a range of Australian Government Services for people who may be experiencing mental health issues including access to psychiatrists, psychologists, GPs and mental health services including arranging a mental health plan. The following websites may be helpful if you are seeking assistance and information:

Australian Government Health and Ageing Website: <http://www.health.gov.au>

The Mental Health Foundation of Australia Tel: (03) 98261422 <http://www.mentalhealthvic.org.au>

For assistance and in case of a crisis contact:

- Lifeline 13 11 14 (24 hour crisis hotline) <http://www.lifeline.org.au>
- Mens Line 1300 789 978 (24 hour crisis hotline) <https://www.mensline.org.au/>
- Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800 <http://www.kidshelpline.com.au>
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 46 36 (cost of local call) <http://www.beyondblue.org.au>
- Drug and Alcohol Direct Line: 1800 888 236 <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/aod>
- 1800RESPECT - 1800 737 732 National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Service for people living in Australia  
<https://www.1800respect.org.au/contact/>

## Social Work Service (RMH) for hospital patients

The Social Workers provide counselling, education and support to assist with personal, emotional, psychological and practical concerns which may arise as a consequence of health issues or hospitalisation. To speak with one of the Renal Social Workers, call Allied Health Reception (03) 9342 7440. You may also be referred to the Social Worker if you are an inpatient. Self-referrals are accepted.

## GP Management Plan or Team Care Management Plan

Patients with chronic conditions and complex care needs are eligible for Medicare rebates for up to 5 allied health services per calendar year upon referral from their local doctor (GP). These services are bulk billed. See your GP for more information and to discuss your situation.

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## Community Health Centres

Community Health Centres are located throughout Victoria and interstate. Services may include: dental health, allied health services such as physiotherapy, podiatry, audiology, occupational therapy, social work, speech therapy. Some Community Health Centres offer free or low cost counselling sessions.

Contact your local Community Health Centre directly to find out what is available in your area. To locate Community Health Centre in Victoria, go to the website listed below:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/commhealth/directory.htm>

## Local Councils

Your local Council provides a range of services and support for people within their communities. This may include home help, shopping assistance, and community transport. You may contact your local council directly or ask for a referral from your Local Doctor, Social Worker or other Allied Health Professional to access services. Please refer to the following website to find your local Victorian council:

<http://www.vic.gov.au/government-economy/local-councils.html>

## National Disability Insurance Scheme Australia

The national disability insurance scheme provides individualised support for people with permanent and significant disability, their families and their carers. To find out more about its introduction or to see if you are eligible go to website:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/what-ndis> or call 1800 800 110

## Seniors and Aged Care Information Victoria

Seniors Information Victoria offers free information on health and wellbeing, home based and community services, general information on financial and legal services, housing options, retirement and new learning opportunities. <http://cotavic.org.au/info/siv/> Tel:1300 135 090

Senior's Card - any permanent resident of Victoria who is aged 60 years or over, who is retired and not working more than 35 hours per week, is eligible to obtain a senior's card. The Victorian Seniors Card program has been expanded to introduce the Seniors Business Discount Card, specially developed for working Victorian seniors who do not qualify for the Victorian Seniors Card. Phone: 1300 797 210, or follow the link for more information

<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/seniors-card>

**Aged Care Information** My Aged Care website aims to provide older people, their families, and carers with information on aged care and service providers, access to interpreter services and translated information. For further information go to My Aged Care website: <http://www.myagedcare.gov.au> or call and the national contact centre 1800 200 422.

## Advance Care Planning

We all have the right to make our own decisions. However, there may be a time when you are unable to make decisions for yourself and need someone else to make certain decisions for you. This is especially true if you experience an illness or injury that means you are unable to make medical treatment decisions, whether temporarily or permanently.

Sharing your thoughts about what's important to you about your future health care is called Advance Care Planning.

Would you be reassured if someone knows you well enough to speak on your behalf if you can't? Some things in life are easy to put off perhaps because they don't affect us right now, we feel well or maybe some things are too hard or upsetting to think about. It doesn't bring bad luck to think about, or talk about what's important to you. It's better than having decisions made on the run or in a crisis. You can make sure that your loved ones don't have to guess your wishes about your treatment decisions. Sometimes your loved ones have different ideas about what they think you want.

Sometimes, we think that our families know us well enough to make decisions for us and its okay to leave it to them, but this is not always the case. It can be hard for family members to make important decisions in times of illness or injury if they're unsure of our wishes.

Have you thought about asking your family this question? It can be an interesting conversation.

**Have you spoken to your family about things that are important to you?** For example:

To be able to live and manage in your own home independently

To be comfortable and feel safe

To have pain managed

To be treated with respect

To have family around you

To have quality of life

To have personal input into funeral arrangement

To discuss end of life and a good death – at what point you do not want your life prolonged?

Are they open to hearing what you have to say?

Ask them – “If I was very unwell, or had a serious accident where I could not speak for myself, would you know what I would, or would not want to have?”

Who would you trust to make these decisions?

What will they need to know about you to make decisions?

Will they listen carefully and understand your preferences?

Do you know that you can appoint a Medical Treatment Decision Maker, someone you trust to be your voice when you can't speak for yourself?

You can also choose to write your values and/or your instructional directives in an Advance Care Directive and share it with your loved ones, your Medical Treatment Decision Maker and the doctors and hospital responsible for your care, so that your wishes will be known.

It is your choice whether you complete an Advance Care Directive. No one can force you to write things down, this is up to you, but it can certainly help to make your preferences for medical treatment clear.

You can change your Advance Care Directive at any time by completing a new Advance Care Directive Form. If you had already completed an Enduring Power of Guardianship or a Medical Enduring Power of Attorney before the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018, these are still legally effective.

Appointing an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA) may give you peace of mind knowing that someone is acting according to your wishes if you could not attend to this yourself. A Medical Enduring Power of Attorney (MEPOA) is a legal document where you (the patient) appoint someone (the agent) to make medical decisions for you. These may include agreeing to medication, surgery and other medical procedures. Enduring means it continues (endures) only when you are unable to make these types of decisions for yourself.

For more information follow the links below:

- RMH Advanced Care Planning - <https://www.thermh.org.au/health-professionals/clinical-services/advance-care-planning>
- Office of the Public Advocate <http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au>  
or call: 1300 309 337
- <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/advance-care-planning>
- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/advance-care-plans>

Please note that there are various programs with Victoria and interstate. Search the internet or speak to your local doctor or kidney specialist if you would like more information.

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## Carer Support Services

Carers are people who provide support to their family or friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail and elderly.

### Commonwealth Respite and Carerlink Centres Australia

Commonwealth Respite and Carerlink Centres are information centres for older people, people with disabilities and those who provide care and services. Centres provide free and confidential information on community aged care, disability and other support services available locally, interstate or anywhere within Australia. Phone 1800 200 422

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/>

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/caring-someone/respice-care>

### Carers Australia Victoria

Work closely with government and other support organisations to improve the lives of caring families throughout Victoria <http://www.carersvic.org.au>

Carers Advisory Line 1800 242 636 call from anywhere in Victoria. Free call from local phones, mobile calls at mobile rates. Equivalent service can be found Australia wide via internet.

Access metropolitan and regional based details via the website:

North 9495 2500

Southern 9076 6111

West 9396 9550

Eastern 9239 2580

### Carer Support Programs

Victorian Carer Card - eligible carers may apply for a Carer Card. Discounts and benefits are available at participating businesses.

For information phone: 1800 901 958 or visit website: <http://carercard.vic.gov.au>

If you reside outside Victoria please contact your State Government to find out whether there is a similar card available.

Financial Support for Carers - if you provide care for someone, you may be eligible for Carers payment and/or allowance. Please visit Centrelink webpage for further information:

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au>.

## Palliative Care and Bereavement

### Victoria's Palliative Care Program

Palliative care is specialised care provided to people with advanced, life-limiting illness, where cure may no longer be possible. The 'palliative approach' aims to achieve the best possible quality of life for people with advanced illness. Palliative care responds to physical, spiritual and cultural needs, from diagnosis, to the end-of-life and bereavement.

Specialist palliative care services support people with a life-threatening illness in a number of ways including:

- Direct care for people requiring specialist palliative care interventions.
- Advice and/or shared care arrangements with other health care teams providing end-of-life care.

Palliative care services are delivered in a number of settings - from people's homes through to acute health services and highly specialised settings.

For further information:

Health Vic. <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/palliativecare>

Palliative Care Victoria <http://www.pallcarevic.asn.au/>

Royal Melbourne Hospital <https://www.thermh.org.au/patients-visitors/services-clinics/palliative-supportive-care>

### Bereavement

Even when a death is expected, it may come as a shock. It's difficult to know how we should feel when we lose someone dear to us. It's important to have support and to allow others to be there or to do things for you, especially in the first few weeks. If you are offering support to a bereaved family member or friend, we suggest that you just be yourself. 'I am sorry that this has happened' 'I feel really sad for you' 'What can I do to help?' Sometimes offering some help can go a long way. Staying in touch is really important especially in the weeks after a person's loss. See the following website for additional information and resources:

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Grief\\_support\\_service](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Grief_support_service)

### Centrelink - Bereavement Payment or Bereavement Allowance

If you are in receipt of an eligible pension, benefit or allowance, the Bereavement Payment may help you adjust to changed financial circumstances after the death of someone you know or cared for. If you are recently widowed, have no dependent children and have not been getting a payment from Centrelink, Bereavement Allowance helps give you an adequate level of income while you make funeral arrangements, settle financial affairs, look for work and find out whether you are eligible for a longer term payment from Centrelink.

For more information <http://www.humanservices.gov.au> or call 132 300.

State trustees may be able to assist with burials for those with insufficient means. For more information call the State Trustees on (03) 9667 6444 or <http://www.statetrustees.com.au>

## Financial Assistance and Money Matters

### Centrelink

Employment Services	132 850
Family and Parent Line	136 150
Older Australians Line, Retirement	132 300
Disability, Sickness and Carers	132 717
For help in other languages	131 202

Access Centrelink online at <http://www.humanservices.gov.au> to find general information and information about payments. You can also begin the registering process online. For a number of payments you will need to register via telephone or the internet. You will be contacted by telephone by a Centrelink representative for interview within one to two weeks. Centrelink will tell you what information you will need for this but it is likely to include payslips and bank account information. Centrelink has Social Workers who are able to assist you both in their offices as well as by telephone. To make an appointment or to speak to a Centrelink Social Worker directly call 132 850.

Bereavement payment and Bereavement allowance information can be found under the Palliative Care Section of this guide.

### For financial information the following contacts may also be helpful:

Doing it tough? Financial health check: <http://www.doingittough.info>

Money help – tools and advice to help you manage your money and debt.

Phone 1800 149 689 (9.30 to 5pm) Monday to Friday: <http://www.moneyhelp.org.au>

Money Smart – helps create a budget and provides basic advice:

<http://www.moneysmart.gov.au>

State Trustees provides a range of financial and legal service

Phone: 9667 6466 <http://www.statetrustees.com.au>

Financial Counselling Australia (FCA) - You can talk to a phone financial counsellor from anywhere in Australia by calling 1800 007 007 between 9.30 am – 4.30 pm Monday to Friday, or visit <http://www.financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au>

Department of Human Services - Manage Your Money

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/manage-your-money>

## Taxation

If you need to lodge your tax returns, there are several places that can assist you with this free of charge. Tax Help is available by appointment at community-based facilities such as senior citizen, indigenous and ethnic community centres until the end of October each year. To see if you are eligible visit: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Lodging-your-tax-return/Tax-Help-program/> or call the Tax Office on 13 28 61 for further details.

## Early Release of Superannuation

Please contact your superannuation fund directly for information about accessing superannuation on the grounds of:

- Severe financial hardship
- Total and permanent disability
- Temporary incapacity
- Terminal illness
- Permanent departure from Australia

Refer to the Department of Human Services website:

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/early-release-of-superannuation>

## No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)

This program is run by the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service. It provides interest free loans to low income individuals and families for essential household items and the amount is usually between \$200 and \$1200. A loan may also be provided to help meet other essential needs like health aids. See the home page: <http://www.goodshepvic.org.au> or <http://www.goodshep.org.au/search/?query=no+interest+loans> or call (03) 9270 9700

## Paying Loans or Credit Cards

You may be able to apply for hardship variation if you cannot pay your loan because you are facing significant hardship, such as an illness or you have lost your job. You can often negotiate with your provider to reduce or post pone payments for a short time. Contact your bank or provider and ask for the paperwork to apply for a hardship variation or a Legal Service.

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## Legal Services

Inner Melbourne Community Legal provides free legal advice for patients.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital collaborates with Inner Melbourne Community Legal (IMCL) to deliver a Health Justice Partnership, bringing about better outcomes for Victorians.

IMCL can assist with a range of legal issues including:

- Housing problems
- Debts and Centrelink
- Intervention orders
- Family law and family violence
- Work and employment
- Victims of crime
- Criminal law
- Consumer disputes

### How do I make an appointment?

Appointments can be made by calling **Inner Melbourne Community Legal**

03 9013 0495 or 03 9342 7566

- **City Campus** A lawyer from IMCL is on-site at the City Campus every Wednesday afternoon
- **Royal Park Campus** Appointments are available at the Royal Park Campus when necessary

### Other Legal Services

Consumer Action Law Centre on 9629 6300 or 1800 466 477: <http://www.consumeraction.org.au> or

Victorian Legal Aid Call 1300 792 387, weekdays from 8.45 am to 5.15 pm for free information about the law and receiving help: <https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/>

Everyday-Law website published by Victoria Law Foundation, an independent, not-for-profit organisation funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner.

<https://www.everyday-law.org.au/about-everyday-law> Contact: (03) 9604 8100

## Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV)

Consumer Affairs aims to help Victorians be responsible and informed businesses and consumers. They advise and assist on topics including renting and accommodation, estate agents, building, shopping and trading.

For any consumer issues visit <http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au> or call 1300 55 81 81

## The Disability Discrimination Legal Service (DDLS)

DDLS is a state wide independent community legal centre that specializes in disability discrimination legal matters. They provide free legal services in several areas including information, referral, advice, casework assistance, community legal education, and policy and law reform. Phone 1300 882 872 <http://www.communitylaw.org.au/ddls>

## Your Rights at Work

Phone 1300 362 223 or <http://www.rightsatwork.com.au>

## Alcohol and other addiction treatment services

People who require treatment, information or advice for alcohol and drug-related issues should contact DirectLine on 1800 888 236.

Screening and assessment determines the correct referral pathway for each person to youth, adult, residential and non-residential, state and Commonwealth-funded alcohol and other drug treatment services.

There are two ways people can be assessed and referred to treatment. The first is to contact DirectLine on 1800 888 236 or via the DirectLine website. DirectLine provides 24-hour, 7-day counselling, information and referral. Website: <http://www.directline.org.au/service-finder>

The second is through local intake and assessment providers. As the primary entry point to the treatment system catchment-based intake and assessment services work closely with DirectLine and other treatment providers. They facilitate client intake, screening, assessment and referral for people aged 16 years and older.

Gamblers Help - every year Gambler's Help assists thousands of Victorians with free and confidential advice 24/7 for those with gambling problems as well as those close to them who are affected by their gambling: <http://www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/getting-help> or

Call Gambler's Help 1800 858 858 or Gambler's Help Youthline 1800 262 376

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## Travel and Accommodation Rebates

Country patients may be eligible for travel and accommodation rebates under the various states assistance schemes. You can find all information and forms via the Social Work Department RMH City Campus or on the Department of Health websites corresponding to the state in which you live. A number of them are listed below:

### Victoria - Victorian Patient Travel Assistance Scheme (VPTAS)

VPTAS is intended to subsidise the unavoidable financial costs for Victorian residents that have no option but to travel to receive essential medical specialist services from an approved medical specialist.

To be eligible, patients:

- Need to travel more than 100 kilometres one way or an average of 500 kilometres per week for a minimum of five consecutive weeks and must live in a rural zone. This may be retrospectively paid.
- Must be receiving specialist treatment as per the specialty treatment codes. Allied health is not one of these claimable services (e.g. social work, physiotherapy, podiatry).
- Must hold a concession card, otherwise they must pay the first \$100 per annum of services and then claim after this.

For information and application forms <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/vptas/patients.htm>

### New South Wales - Isolated Patient's Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS)

To qualify for this, a patient must:

- Be an Australian citizen/permanent resident.
- Live more than 100 kilometres away from the nearest treating specialist.
- Receive treatment from recognised medical specialist that is claimable under Medicare.
- Have claimed the maximum available benefits from your private health fund first.
- Not to be eligible for assistance under any other government assistance scheme.

More information can be found at <http://www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au/services/iptaas>

## Tasmania - Patient Travel Assistance Scheme (PTAS)

To be eligible for this, patients must:

- Be a Tasmanian resident.
- Travel by normal transport (PTAS does not cover Ambulance costs).
- Receive treatment from a recognised medical specialist that is claimable under Medicare.
- Not be entitled to financial assistance through any other scheme e.g. Motor accident insurance board (MAIB), Department of veteran affairs (DVA), workers compensation, or other compensable schemes.
- Have a PTAS form signed by an approved medical specialist.

Financial assistance is available towards air/sea and road travel, and accommodation (where applicable) expenses. You can either organise your own travel and/or accommodation arrangements, and to claim reimbursement on your return home from the specialist treatment, or organise with your local PTAS Coordinator to pre-book your travel and accommodation prior to departure.

You can find additional information and application forms at <http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au>

## Accommodation in Melbourne

The Handbook for Patients and Carers travelling to The Royal Melbourne Hospital is available via the Social Work Department by calling (03) 9342 7440 or found at

<https://www.thermh.org.au/patients-visitors/coming-hospital/country-and-interstate-patient-information>

This information has been developed for the convenience of those travelling to Melbourne however it is not a recommendation of facilities. Please note that prices are subject to change and are seasonal. Please enquire direct with the accommodation providers. It also contains extensive information about travel and accommodation subsidies.

Also, Medistays is a website that aims help people locate accommodation vacancies close to the hospital they are attending. Click on the website for further details:

[www.medistays.com.au](http://www.medistays.com.au)

Please note demand for accommodation in Melbourne is at its peak during:

- Formula one Grand Prix – Mid March.
- AFL Finals – Late September.
- Spring Racing Carnival – Early November.
- Boxing Day Test (Cricket) – Late December.

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## General Transport Information

### Travellers Aid (Medical Companion Project)

Travellers Aid is a not for profit organization providing travel and support services to travellers who need to attend medical appointments. To be eligible you must live in Victoria and travel to medical appointments in central Melbourne. Additionally, you must:

- Depart from Southern Cross (SCS) or Flinders Street Station (FSS).
- Be able to travel independently.
- Be able to walk unassisted or negotiate at least a few steps with the help of a walking frame.
- Be able to comfortably enter and exit a taxi, tram or train.
- Be able to safely secure yourself via a seatbelt (exemptions apply, a certificate is required) if travelling by taxi.
- Be over 16 years of age unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Not require medical treatment, intravenous therapy, oxygen or monitoring whilst using the service.

Bookings must be made **at least** 24 hours in advance by calling 1300 700 399 between 7.15am and 9.45pm (7 days per week). You can also leave a message on the Travellers Aid answering machine with your name, contact number and stating that you would like to book a medical companion. A Travellers Aid staff member will return the call to finalise the booking. If hearing impaired, please email [scs@travellersaid.org.au](mailto:scs@travellersaid.org.au) for a booking form or call the relay service on 133 677 before calling 1300 700 399 to make your booking. Please allow 48 hours for confirmation of email bookings. For further information: <https://www.travellersaid.org.au/>

### Multi-purpose taxi program (Half Price Taxi Card)

If you live in Victoria and you have a severe and permanent disability that prevents you from using public transport by yourself, you may apply for a Multi-Purpose Taxi Card. To become a member you also require one of the following:

- Use a wheelchair all the time.
- Hold a Department of Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card or gold Repatriation Health Card.
- Hold certain Pensioner Concession or Health Care Cards from Centrelink.
- Be able to show you have financial hardship by providing financial information.

You will need to see your Local Doctor to have the necessary forms completed. For more information please see: <http://taxi.vic.gov.au/passengers/mptp>

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## Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

The Booked Car Scheme is available to eligible DVA clients when they attend a health provider for approved medical treatment. Under this scheme, which focuses on a high quality and reliable service, local taxi and car hire providers are contracted to DVA to arrange suitable vehicles to transport DVA clients to their medical appointments on time.

Call 133 254 (metropolitan areas) or 1800 555 254 (regional areas) to make transport bookings.

For more information please see <http://www.dva.gov.au>

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## NOTES

For further information, please contact

RMH Kidney Care Service  
(03) 9342 7058

Revised January 2019

