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What a medical card covers

If you have a medical card you don't have to pay to see your GP (doctor) or for most medicines they prescribe.

A medical card also covers:

- public out-patient and in-patient services
- eye and ear tests
- dental checks

[Prescription charges](#) may apply.

Blood tests

Routine blood tests should be free of charge if you have a medical card.

But your GP may charge you if they think your blood test is not routine or if they think the blood test is not required for your condition.

If you have a medical card and think that you have been incorrectly charged for a blood test, contact your [HSE Local Health Office](#).

They will be able to advise and may investigate further, if necessary.

Check if you can apply

Anyone who lives in the Republic of Ireland and plans to live there for at least 1 year can apply for a medical card.

Being eligible for a medical card depends on your circumstances. If you do not automatically qualify for a medical card, we will carry out an assessment.

You must provide information about your:

- income
- expenses
- marital status
- dependants

If you're not eligible for a medical card, we will then automatically assess you for a GP visit card.

People who automatically qualify

You may automatically qualify for a medical card if you:

- are participating in certain government schemes
- have been affected by the drug Thalidomide
- have had a surgical Symphysiotomy
- are a child diagnosed with cancer within the last 5 years
- are in foster care
- live in direct provision
- [qualify under EU Regulations](#)

For any of these you will not be subject to a financial assessment. But you will still need to apply.

[Read about the Redress Scheme for Women Resident in Certain Institutions.](#)

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[GPs who accept medical cards or GP visit cards](#)

[Contact medical cards service](#)

HSE Live - we're here to help

Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm

Saturday: 9am to 5pm

Sunday: Closed

Bank holidays: Closed

Freephone: [1800 700 700](tel:1800700700)

From outside Ireland: [00 353 1 240 8787](tel:0035312408787)

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