International Health Centre The Hague

PATIENT GUIDE

Welcome to our patient guide for newly registered patients!

We advise all new patients to read this booklet carefully, since it contains important information about our Centre and the Dutch healthcare system.

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INDEX

1) The Dutch Healthcare system 1-2

What is the role of General Practitioners in the Netherlands?

How are GP consultations billed in the Netherlands?

What if I want/need to see a specialist?

2) What should I know before my first appointment? 3-5

Do I need to book an Intake appointment?

What is the role of the GP assistants?

What should I do in case of emergencies?

Cancellation and No-show policy

How can I request or transfer my medical files?

What are the opening hours and official holidays of the IHCH?

Keeping contact details updated

3) Frequently asked questions 6

How can I book an appointment and who will be my GP?

How can I request to repeat a medical prescription?

Why have I received a bill if I haven't seen the doctor?

3) Other sources of relevant information 7

International Health Centre The Hague

THE DUTCH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

If you have any remaining questions after reading the following pages of this Guide, we invite you to check the **'Patient Guide'** section of our website or e-mail us your question at **info@ihch.nl.**

What is the role of General Practitioners (GPs) in the Netherlands?

General practitioners, or *'Huisarts'* in Dutch, are the central part of the Dutch health system. For many newcomers, the central role of the GPs in the Netherlands can be a big difference to how medicine is practiced in their home country.

The GP is your first point of contact for questions about your physical and mental health and can answer most of your general health questions. The GP can also perform minor surgical procedures and it is also normal for children to be seen by a GP in the Netherlands, instead of a paediatrician.

In the Netherlands, medical specialists are only seen in special conditions, with a referral from your GP. Therefore, if you have any (non-life threatening) health or medical related concerns, you are expected to visit your GP. For life threatening emergencies, always call **112**. Should you require specialist care, the GP will refer you to the appropriate specialist or the hospital when necessary. Your Dutch insurance will **NOT** cover your medical expenses for non-emergency care if you have not received a referral from your GP.

How are GP consultations billed in the Netherlands?

To know more about the medical billing of GP consultations in the Netherlands, please click on the picture below to open an explanatory video.

THE DUTCH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

What if I want/need to see a specialist?

If you require specialist medical care and you have **Dutch insurance**, your GP will be the one to refer you to get such care. The billing system for Polyclinic or Hospital care works differently to that of GPs, and is based on a **DBC system**. To know more about the billing of specialist consultations, please click on the following picture to watch an explanatory video:

If you have **International Insurance**, you can choose to book an appointment directly with a specialist at our Polyclinic, even without a GP referral. International insurances usually cover at least a percentage of the consultation with medical specialists, and in most cases, don't require a GP referral. However, depending on your insurance policy, your medical bill might not be reimbursed in full. It is, therefore, **your responsibility** to check with your insurance before your appointment to avoid unforeseen costs that you will have to cover yourself.

For more information about the Dutch Healthcare system, we also recommend the following website: ***https://gpinfo.nl/1-dutch-healthcare***.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW BEFORE MY FIRST APPOINTMENT?

Do I need to book an Intake appointment?

Having an intake appointment is **NOT obligatory**! You are already successfully registered to the departments you selected on the registration form when you receive the confirmation e-mail.
If you wish to have an intake, we currently offer two types of appointments: **Medical intake** and **Patient Relations intake**.

The **Medical Intake** is **only** advised for patients with extensive personal medical history (for example: diagnosed with important chronic diseases). During the Medical Intake that information will be included on your Digital Medical file, and therefore, Medical Intake appointments are billed as a GP medical consultation. Keep in mind that during the Medical intake we are **NOT able** to address **current** health complaints and/or **prescribe or renew** any medication; for those situations you need to book a **regular GP appointment**. If you registered more members of the family, please note that the Medical Intake should only be booked for the member(s) of the family with significant medical history.

For other matters, such as: learning how the GP practice works, insurance questions and other non-medical issues, you can choose to book a **Patient Relations intake**. You can also send any questions regarding those subjects to **ihchinfo@ezorg.nl** or speak to Patient Relations by phone.

What is the role of the GP assistants (*dokterassistent*)?

The first point of contact at your GP practice, whether by telephone or at the front desk, is the GP assistant. They will help you to make an appointment with the GP or other professionals at the IHCH. The GP assistant is a medical professional who works closely with the GP and it's up to them to define how urgent it is for you to see the GP.

GP assistants are also professionally trained to provide advice on a wide variety of illnesses. They can also discuss lab and/or test results with patients (after the GP has evaluated them) and are fully qualified and trained to carry out a variety of treatments and tests, either independently or under the doctor's orders. Treatments and tests they can carry out include cervical smear tests, urine tests, blood pressure checks, injections, glucose testing and ear wax removal. Under the direction of the GP they are trained to carry out ECG tests, visual exams, remove stitches, treat wounds and warts, and many other treatments and tests as recommended by the doctor. All advice and procedures performed by medical professionals at IHCH, including the ones performed by GP assistants, **are chargeable**!

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW BEFORE MY FIRST APPOINTMENT?

What should I do in case of emergencies?

For life-threatening emergencies (acute shortness of breath, severe blood loss, heart attack, unconsciousness, a serious accident, etc.) please call **112**. This number is available 24 hours a day and will give you access to all emergency services: ambulance, police and fire brigade. In a medical emergency, you will also be instructed what to do until the ambulance arrives.

For non-life-threatening medical emergencies **during office hours**, first call your GP. On our telephone menu we have a specific choice for emergency calls. You will speak to the GP assistant first, and then the GP if necessary. If you need to go to hospital, the GP will call the ambulance and the specialist at the hospital who will take over your medical care.

Outside of IHCH working hours (from 17:00 pm to 08:00 am, weekends and holidays), please call the **HADOKS number: (070) 3469669**.

***IMPORTANT:** In some cases what is considered an emergency by you or in your home country is not considered an emergency in the Netherlands. At IHCH (like all over the Netherlands) the doctors follow the **Dutch Medical Guidelines**, and therefore, some medical advice can be different than what you are used to.

Late Cancellation / No-show policy

We operate a strict **48h late cancellation / no-show policy** that can be found on our website "**here**". Unless we receive at minimum 48 hours advance notice **by e-mail** regarding the cancellation of your appointment with one of our GP's and/or specialists, you will receive an invoice and be charged a no-show/late cancellation fee.

Keeping contact details updated

It is very important that you keep your contact details updated on our system, such as home address, e-mail address, telephone numbers and insurance information. They are our official way of communicating with you. To do so, simply e-mail us the information that needs to be updated to **info@ihch.nl**.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW BEFORE MY FIRST APPOINTMENT?

What are the opening hours and official holidays of IHCH?

The IHCH is open from **08:00-17:00**. Our Pharmacy is open for a little longer, from **08:00-18:00**. Our on-site laboratory is open from **08:00-12:00** and **14:00-15:00**.

As for our telephones lines:

- For regular GP services, the GP section phone lines are open on weekdays from **8:00-11:00** and from **11:30-16:00**. For emergencies, you can reach us during weekdays from **08:00-17:00** under the emergency option;
- The Polyclinic telephone line is available from **08:00-16:00**;
- The Dentistry telephone line is available from **08:00-16:45**.

To check the official holidays in which the IHCH is **closed**, please "**Click here**". During the holidays (as well as weekends and outside of IHCH working hours) the IHCH is not available, but you can still contact **HADOKS (070) 3469669** in case you have any medical emergencies.

How can I request or transfer my medical files?

To request your medical files please e-mail **info@ihch.nl**. We provide your medical files on a USB stick (which needs to be collected in person). If you are moving to another GP practice in the Netherlands and have Dutch insurance, you can also request your medical files to be sent directly to your new health care provider. If so, please provide us the details of your new GP so that we can arrange an electronic transfer of your medical files. The electronic transfer option is not possible for International insurance users, in that case you need to request the USB stick. An **administration fee** applies.

We require a **minimum of two weeks notice** in order to complete the deregistration process. To transfer your medical files from your previous GP to the IHCH, please contact your previous GP practice.

OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I book an appointment and who will be my GP?

Medical appointments at the IHCH are booked via telephone. We **DO NOT** work with walk-in appointments. You can call us on **070 306 5100** and select which department you would like to speak to. Your phone call will be taken by a GP assistant (for phone calls made to the GP practice) or nurse (for the Polyclinic), who will be responsible for booking your appointment.

At IHCH we **do not** assign a specific GP per patient. You will be booked for the earliest available appointment based on your symptoms and/or reason for the appointment, which means you may see different doctors each time you come to the IHCH. If you have a preference for a specific doctor you can always request the GP assistant to book with them, however, keep in mind that it might not always be possible and that when choosing a specific doctor the waiting times tend to be much longer.

How can I request to repeat a medical prescription?

Patients that are registered to the IHCH who have been previously prescribed a **continuous use medication** by an IHCH doctor can ask for the renewal of those prescriptions via our website. To be directly directed to our 'Prescription request form' **click here**. Simply fill in the form to order the medication, it will be ready for collection after 5 working days (if requested before 15:00).

In case your continuous use medication has been prescribed elsewhere (another country or another GP practice in the Netherlands), you will need to book a physical appointment with one of our GPs to have it prescribed by an IHCH doctor for the first time. After that, you can renew the prescription for a period of **1 year** before having to see the GP again in person for a follow-up.

Why have I received a bill if I haven't seen the doctor?

In the Netherlands it is common to be billed for all types of contact with healthcare professionals. For example: advise provided by GP assistants over the telephone, administrative tasks of doctors (such as repeating prescriptions or making referral letters), administratrive tasks of patient relations (transferring medical files), etc.

To understand better the billing system in the Netherlands, please watch the videos mentioned previously in this document. If you still have any questions, you are welcome to e-mail our financial department at **polybilling@ihch.nl** (for Polyclinic billing) or **admin@ihch.nl** (for GP billing).

OTHER SOURCES OF RELEVANT INFORMATION

To make sure you remain informed of all IHCH news and developments, we recommend the following sources of information:

WEBSITE

Our website (**https://www.ihch.nl/**) is updated frequently and is a great source of information.

SOCIAL MEDIA

IHCH is active on social media! Follow us on Instagram and Facebook (links below) to keep up to date to all IHCH news and relevant medical topics.

- **Click here for Instagram**
- **Click here for Facebook**

E-MAILS

Here is a list of our most relevant e-mails:

- GP (Family doctor): **gp@ihch.nl**
- Polyclinic (Specialist care): **polyclinic@ihch.nl**
- Pharmacy: **pharmacy@ihch.nl**
- Dental Clinic: **dental@ihch.nl**
- Patient Relations: **info@ihch.nl**
- Financial queries - Polyclinic: **polybilling@ihch.nl**
- Financial queries - GP: **admin@ihch.nl**

Patient Guide and FAQ's

Follow **this link**.

IHCH Code of conduct

Available on **this link**.