

Frequently asked questions

Virtual GP service



Booking a consultation

How will I book a consultation?

You can book a consultation via the My HealthHero App or the HealthHero Web App - <https://my.healthhero.com>. Once you book a consultation, you will receive a booking confirmation via SMS and Email.

Is there a limit on the number of consultations I can have?

No, there is no limit to the number of consultations. As there is no limit, we recommend you book a separate appointment for each issue you wish to discuss.

Will I still need to see a GP?

Most patients receive the advice, reassurance and, where appropriate, diagnosis they need from our clinicians, however, if your symptoms require a physical examination, or a repeat prescription, you may be referred to your own GP. The service is not a replacement for your own GP.

Can I choose to speak to a male or female doctor?

Yes. Where possible, we will always try to accommodate a patient's preference to speak to a male or female clinician.

What sort of things can I ask about?

Anything you would ask your own GP, for example, stomach issues, ears, nose and throat complaints, dermatological conditions, aches and pains and explanations or second opinions on diagnosis or treatment.

We recommend booking a separate consultation for each individual presenting issue you have.

Can I have a consultation for my children too? If eligible, dependants can use the Virtual GP service. Where a patient is under the age of 16, the patient/legal guardian must book the appointment on behalf of their dependant and must also attend the consultation.



Can I use the service in emergencies?

You must not use the service for emergencies or urgent conditions as this may delay necessary treatment. If you believe that you are in an emergency or life-threatening situation you should contact your local emergency services immediately, especially if someone:

- has collapsed
- is suicidal
- is unconscious
- is not breathing
- is fitting continuously
- is unable to speak
- has severe breathlessness
- has severe chest pain
- is unable to move or get up
- has significant breathing problems
- has severe abdominal pain
- has suspected limb fracture
- has threatened miscarriage.

If you believe that your child is in an emergency or life-threatening situation you should contact your local emergency services immediately, especially if you spot:

- persistent fever above 39
- difficulty waking up or unconsciousness
- not breathing or drowsy baby
- rash that does not disappear with pressure in significantly unwell child
- fitting
- severe headache
- significant breathing problems
- severe abdominal pain
- suspected limb fracture.

You may still need to see your own GP or contact the emergency services if the clinician you speak with feels it is necessary.

Who can use the service?

You must be usually resident and/or national of the United Kingdom, its Crown Dependencies or the Republic of Ireland to be eligible to use our services. By accessing and using our services, you are confirming that you are eligible.



Prescriptions

Please see our [Terms and Conditions](#) for a full description of our prescription services.

Can the clinicians issue a prescription?

Where the clinician believes it is clinically appropriate, they can issue a prescription. The medication can either be collected from a pharmacy or delivered to a nominated address. While there is no charge to issue prescriptions for patients, as these are private prescriptions the pharmacy will charge for the medication.

Can the clinicians issue repeat prescriptions?

In line with clinical best practice guidelines for remote prescribing, our clinicians are unable to issue long term, repeat medication. Should you require repeat prescription medication, it is in your best interests to be seen by your regular GP. Our clinicians can offer advice on medication you are taking and may be able to offer short course medication depending on the symptoms presented.

How do I get my prescription?

In the United Kingdom:

If you are in the UK, we will endeavour to provide you with a prescription for collection at the time of your consultation, if the clinician feels this is in your best interest. The clinician will send you the prescription to your phone with a QR code. Using this QR code you can collect your prescription from most independent and large pharmacies in the UK. Alternatively, you'll be offered the choice to have the medication delivered to you in the United Kingdom.

Inside ROI or the European Union:

If you are in ROI or an EU country and if it is clinically appropriate, the clinician will send the prescription directly to the pharmacy from where you can collect it.



Where a private prescription is issued, please be aware that we will have no knowledge or control over the pharmacy fulfilment charges. We are unable to electronically prescribe any controlled medications outside of Ireland or the UK.

Can I have my medication delivered abroad?

Outside the EU:

Due to pharmaceutical laws and regulations we are unable to prescribe if you are outside of the EU or the United Kingdom at the time of your consultation.

What are the prescription medication delivery charges and how long does it take?

If the patient is in the UK at the time of their consultation and is offered a prescription then, provided it is in stock and the prescription is raised before 4pm (UK time), it can be delivered to an address of their choice as soon as the next working day.

Our pharmacy partner will send you a text message shortly after you have chosen delivery. The delivery date will be made clear before you pay for the medication.

There is no charge by us to issue prescriptions. However, you will need to pay for the medication. Prescriptions are private and therefore the cost of medication may vary. You will need to pay the delivery cost of medication if this is sent to you.



How is the medication packaged?

It depends on the size and type of medication, but most smaller items are sent in cushioned, securely sealed packets. Packets or boxes are discrete with no markings.

What safeguarding measures are in place for prescriptions?**Experienced, qualified, practising clinicians:**

All HealthHero clinicians adhere to the best guidelines on remote prescribing and we review the prescribing of our clinicians.

A full medical history is taken:

During the consultation, the clinician takes a full medical history including any current medication and dosages, allergies, etc. These details remain on the patient management system, including data relating to any medication prescribed by the HealthHero clinician, so in future consultations, clinicians can see previous prescribing history.

Consultation notes are sent to the patient's own GP:

When a prescription is issued, the consultation notes are sent to the patient's own GP with patient consent. In the rare case that there is a safeguarding or emergency issue, patient data can be shared without consent.

What happens if I don't have internet, can I still have a private prescription issued over the phone?

Yes, our telephone consultation service provides telephone access to a clinician 7 days a week 8am to 10pm, and should the clinician feel it is necessary, they can remotely issue private prescription medication and open referrals.



Private fit notes and referrals

Can the clinicians issue fit notes?

If it is clinically appropriate and if the service is available to you, the clinician can issue a private fit note. HealthHero does not charge for issuing private fit notes, but you will need to check with your employer to confirm that they will accept one. Private fit notes cannot be used to access state funded sick pay or benefits.

Fit notes are issued at the discretion of the clinician.

For acute problems that the patient is consulting about, the clinician may, at their discretion, issue a fit note for up to 14 days from the date of consultation (in exceptional cases up to 21 days).

We do not issue extensions of fit notes, whether these were initiated by a HealthHero clinician or any other clinician. Extensions, if needed, will need to come from the patient's usual GP. In exceptional cases a short bridging extension may be issued while the patient waits to consult their usual GP.

Under limited circumstances fit notes can be back dated.

Can the clinicians issue referrals to specialists?

Should the clinician feel that you would benefit from seeing a consultant or specialist, they can provide you with an open private referral letter. This referral letter cannot be used to access NHS services in the UK. Referral letters can be posted or emailed directly according to your preference.

If you have private medical insurance you will need to contact your insurer before engaging a consultant or specialist, or accessing any diagnostic or treatment services, unless you are self-funding. The referral letter is not a private medical insurance claims authorisation.



Data protection and confidentiality

How are data and records stored?

All patient data and records are stored on our patient management system, in a secure data centre which is only accessible with multi-factor authentication by authorised personnel.

Is the service confidential?

Yes. Patient confidentiality is very important, any records remain confidential. Our clinicians follow clear guidelines about sharing clinical notes with the patient's own GP; when appropriate and with patient's explicit consent, we send any relevant medical notes, including consultations notes for any prescriptions or referrals issued, to the patient's own GP.

How long will my personal data be held on the systems?

Clinical records are held in accordance with the NHS recommended retention periods for general practice and telemedicine records. In all cases, records would be maintained for a minimum of ten years.



Our clinician and quality control

How do you recruit your clinicians? What qualifications do the clinicians have?

Our clinicians are recruited via a rigorous two-stage interview process overseen by our Medical Director and HR vetting procedures, which ensure that clinicians are qualified, experienced, and knowledgeable to an equivalent standard to your own GP. Our minimum criteria requires that our clinicians:

- are currently practising in the NHS as a GP
- GPs must be on the GMC register and if they qualified as a GP after 2007 they must be Members of the Royal College of GPs
- GPs must be on their National Performers List
- complete an annual NHS appraisal
- Other clinicians must be registered with their professional regulator
- have an enhanced DBS background check
- provide complete document evidence that they are suitably qualified
- provide at least 2 references to support their skills and experiences

How do you ensure the clinicians are vetted on an ongoing basis?

Once recruited, the clinicians are continuously monitored to ensure they maintain their skills to the highest standards.

All our doctors complete an annual NHS appraisal to review their practise and performance. Other clinicians must comply with the annual appraisal process for their regulator. Our Quality Management System incorporates policies and procedures, consistent with best NHS practice, and each clinician's performance is continually audited. This auditing includes reviewing their prescribing, clinical records, consultations and patient feedback.

We hold annual clinicians' meetings with our clinical team to maintain good engagement, share best practice and help to continually raise our standards of care and service.



Does HealthHero meet Clinical Quality Commission standards?

Yes, our service in the UK is regulated by the Care Quality Commission for the delivery of medical services, in the “Digital Healthcare” category. We govern our services in Ireland to the same standards.

Our most recent CQC inspection took place in August 2022. The service was rated as Good overall.

What is the CQC?

The Care Quality Commission monitors, inspects and regulates hospitals, care homes, GP surgeries, dental practices, and other care services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety.

To get to the heart of patients’ experiences of care and treatment, CQC evaluates service providers across five categories relating to safety, effectiveness, caring, responsiveness to patient need and leadership.



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