



## Health Centres

Each municipality has at least one health centre. All residents should be registered at a health centre, which is where you go first if you require healthcare.

At the health centre there are doctors and nurses who specialise in assessing medical conditions of a general nature. They examine, diagnose and treat both simple and more complicated complaints and chronic illnesses. They are assisted by other health professionals such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dieticians and counsellors.

Most health centres have an automatic telephone system called TeleQ. This means that an answering machine will answer in Swedish when you call. You need to be prepared to key in your area code and telephone number. You will then be given a time when you will be phoned back.

If you do not know enough Swedish you have the right to an interpreter when you speak to the health services. Ask for an interpreter when you make an appointment.

When you visit your health centre you should be prepared to show identification if you are not known to the health centre. This increases security for you and simplifies things for healthcare staff.

### Selecting a health centre

As soon as you are registered in the county and have received the last four numbers of your personal identification number you can contact a health centre to register yourself and your family. Asylum seekers are also welcome at their nearest health centre, but cannot register.

From September 1, 2009, you can choose your own healthcare provider in Östergötland. "Vårdval," or healthcare choice, means that you are free to choose which health centre to register with and have as your permanent health centre. It does not have to be the health centre closest to your home.

Any contact with the child health clinic or home nursing is always through the health centre with which you have chosen to register. You cannot register at a health centre outside Östergötland County.

You can change from one health centre to another. You need to inform the county council of this in writing. The form for changing health centres is available on the county council's website at [www.lio.se/vardval](http://www.lio.se/vardval) or at health centres.

Most health centres in the county are owned and run by the county council, but some are private. These health centres have an agreement with the county council, and there is no difference in fees and the care offered for you as a patient.

### If you become ill

If you become ill and it is not an emergency you should first contact your health centre or phone the Medical Advice Phone Line on 1177. The Medical Advice Phone Line is staffed by Swedish-, and sometimes English-, speaking nurses. They can advise and help you if you need to contact a doctor.

All health centres are open until at least 5 pm on weekdays. If you become ill in the evening or a weekend, first call 1177 to speak to the Healthcare Advice Phone Line, which is open 24 hours a day. There are emergency clinics in Linköping, Norrköping, Motala and Finspång that are open in the evening and on weekends. You book appointments to these emergency clinics through the Healthcare Advice Phone Line.

If you become seriously ill call 112 if you require an ambulance or visit a hospital casualty department.

### At the health centre

The health centre is staffed by specially trained doctors, often in general practice, and nurses and district nurses.

District nurses are able to help you quickly. District nurses have a broad knowledge of medical care and child health, and work closely with doctors.

#### **District nurses can:**

- Provide healthcare advice
- Make an initial assessment of your illness and advise whether you need to see the local doctor.
- Provide healthcare treatment: dress wounds, remove stitches, take blood pressure, and give injections.
- Provide child healthcare.
- Write prescriptions for some medicines and treatments.
- Provide health advice about diet, exercise, obesity and help with giving up smoking.

The district nurse hold clinics for a few hours a day, which means you can get an appointment quickly. Book an appointment in advance during the relevant telephone booking hours. If necessary, a home visit can be arranged. The county council and the health centres are responsible for home nursing.

#### **Child health clinics – BVC**

If your child is ill you can call the child health clinic for advice. It is often located in or next-door to the health centre. The child health centre offers health checks of children at certain ages and you can also get advice about your child's health and development and issues relating to breastfeeding, food, vaccinations, sleep, accidents, etc.

#### **Maternity clinics**

There are maternity clinics in every municipality, sometimes located next-door to health centres. See the information brochure on Women's Healthcare and Women's Health.

#### **Physiotherapy**

Physiotherapists have a broad knowledge and experience in a number of areas such as back and neck complaints, headaches, tension and stress, shoulder problems, neurological and rheumatic conditions, as well as long-term pain. They make an individual assessment of your condition and provide you with advice. Where necessary the physiotherapist works with your general practitioner or other health providers to provide patients with the best possible rehabilitation.

#### **Counsellors**

Counsellors carry out psychosocial assessments and offer counselling therapy. People who visit counsellors are usually suffering different states of crisis or have mild anxiety problems or depression.

**Occupational therapists**

If you are suffering from an illness or injury you can receive help from an occupational therapist to help you cope with activities at home, work or in your free time. Occupational therapists can make home visits and hold clinics for which you can make an appointment.

**Dieticians**

Dieticians work with dietary treatment, and dietary advice and information. For chronic conditions such as diabetes, allergies, obesity or eating disorders patients may be referred to a dietician by their doctor. You may also see a dietician in connection with parenthood education at maternity and child healthcare centres.

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