

A Guide to Elective Services at Public Hospitals

Elective Services are hospital services for people who do not need immediate medical treatment. If you are very ill and require emergency treatment you will be treated with minimal delay.

What can I expect?

This guide explains the process for managing your care if you need elective services at a public hospital.

- **Clarity**
You will receive information about assessment and treatment options and whether or not they will be available to you.
- **Timeliness**
You will know within 10 days whether you will receive access to assessment or treatment. If assessment or treatment is offered to you, you will receive it within the next six months.
- **Fairness**
Your level of need will be assessed in comparison with other people with similar conditions.

How do I get an assessment?

If you have a condition that you think may require assessment or treatment you should first contact your primary care practitioner. Your primary care practitioner might include you: general practitioner (GP), nurse practitioner, Maori health provider or physiotherapist. They will assess your condition and discuss the best option with you, including whether to refer you to a hospital specialist.

If you are referred to and accepted by a specialist you should be given an appointment within six months of acceptance. Your primary care practitioner will care for you whilst you are waiting for your specialist appointment. If, during this time, your condition worsens you should contact your primary care practitioner.

What does the specialist do?

The hospital specialist will make an assessment of your condition and determine the best option of care for you.

If, based on your level of need, publicly funded elective services are **not available** to you at this time; your primary care practitioner will care for you. The specialist will provide you and your primary care practitioner with information on the outcome of your assessment.

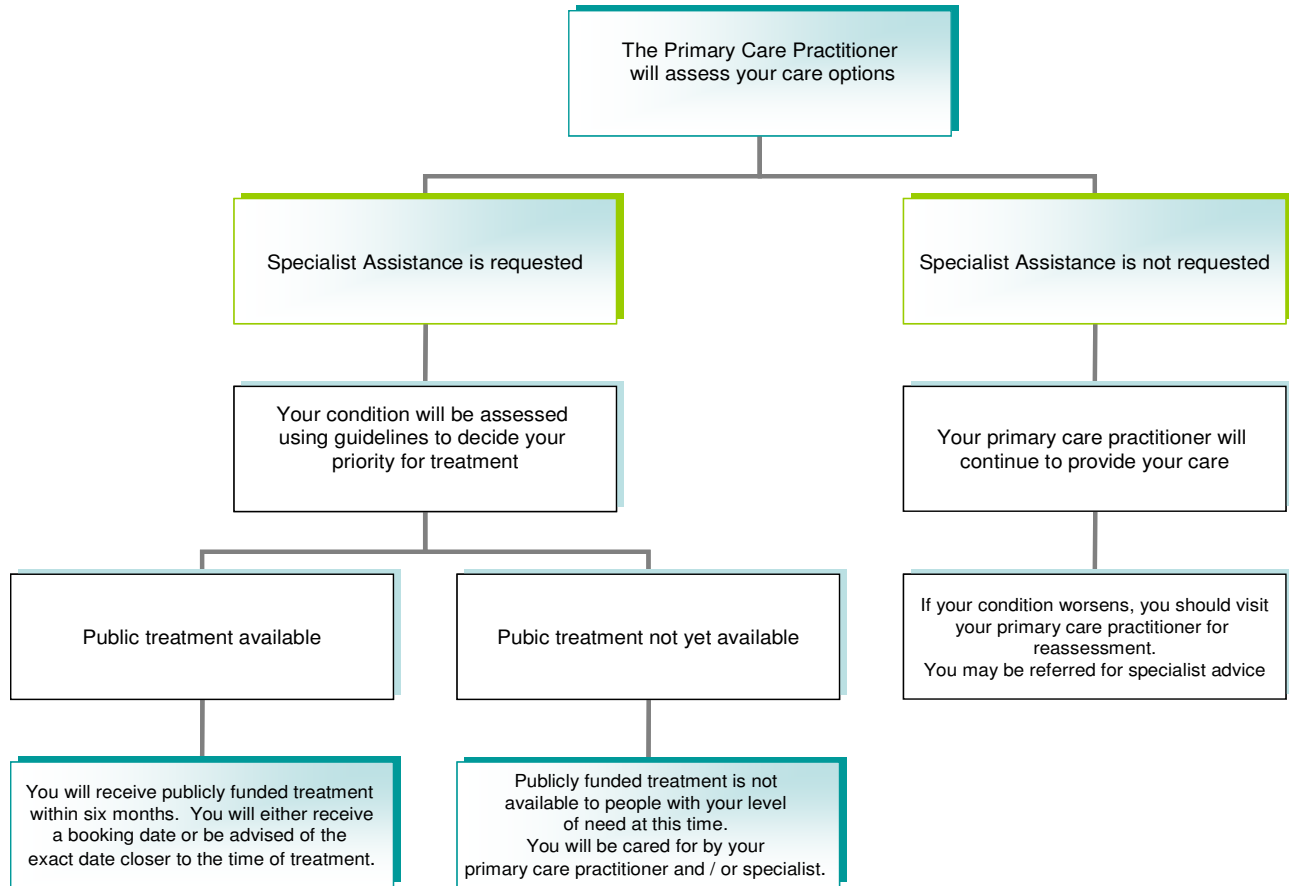
If public treatment **is available** you will be told that you:

- Have a firm treatment date within the next six months
- Or
- Will receive treatment within six months and you will be given the treatment date closer to the time of treatment.

How long will I have to wait for treatment?

Some patients need treatment more urgently than others. For example, people suffering severe pain would generally be treated more quickly than a person with occasional discomfort.

If you are offered publicly funded hospital treatment, you should receive it within six months of it being offered.



Why is treatment not always available?

Spending on elective services in public hospitals has to be balanced with other health priorities such as maternity services, subsidised drugs and accident and emergency care.

Public hospitals have a set amount of funding for elective treatments. Community demand for public hospital services is often greater than the ability of the hospital to meet that demand. Public hospitals need to treat those with the greatest need first. Specialists use guidelines to help decide which patients require treatment first, so that fair and consistent decisions are made within the resources available.

Will my GP know the results of my visit to the specialist?

Yes. Your primary care practitioner will be told of your results and whether you have been booked for treatment.

What other options are available to me?

There may be a range of services available to you, depending on your particular circumstances. This may include returning to your primary care practitioner for advice on suitable alternatives.

What if I (or my primary care practitioner) do not agree with what has been decided?

Talk to your primary care practitioner. You may ask for an explanation or a second option.

What do I do if my condition worsens?

If at any time your condition worsens, you should see your primary care practitioner. They will seek a specialist reassessment if they think your condition has changed. This reassessment may include a review of your priority for treatment.

What are my rights?

Under the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumer's Rights, you have the right to be treated fairly, consistently, and to an appropriate standard. If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or wish to make a complaint, you have rights under the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994.

Information about how to make a complaint is available on the Health and Disability Commissioner's website: www.hdc.org.nz

Where can I get more information?

General information about elective services is available from the Ministry of Health's website: www.electiveservices.govt.nz

If you have any further questions, please contact your primary care practitioner or your local public hospital.

Your local hospital details are:

Bay of Plenty District Health Board
Cnr Clarke St & 20th Ave, Private Bag 12024, Tauranga
Telephone: 07 579 8000
Call Centre 0800 333 477