

FIRST PUBLICATION  
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# Saħħtek

Useful information about Health Services  
in Malta and Gozo.



At the Directorate for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, our mission is to protect, promote and support the health and wellbeing of the Maltese population for a longer and healthier life.

The Directorate offers free programmes and support to individuals and families to help them adopt healthy habits throughout their lives. Reduce your risk of chronic illness by:



Staying physically active



Maintaining a healthy weight



Eating a healthy, balanced diet



Reducing alcohol consumption



Quitting smoking

Join our free services to acquire practical skills and improve your health and wellbeing through:

- Weight management programme: 'Healthy weight for life'
- Smoking cessation support
- Mental health resilience programme
- Self-management programme: 'Take Control'

We help you take the first steps towards a healthier future for you and your loved ones.



## What is the 112 Emergency medical service?

112 is the free European emergency number that you can call from any mobile or landline. In Malta, calling 112 connects you to trained dispatchers who assess the situation and send the appropriate response team in case of an emergency.

The main objective of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) 112 is to provide immediate pre-hospital medical assistance to individuals facing serious health emergencies. In 2024, ambulances handled 47,700 emergency cases. This means that an ambulance was dispatched every 11 minutes.



## Do all 112 calls involve life-threatening situations?

While every 112 call is taken seriously, not all medical emergencies are immediately life-threatening. Calls are categorized into three priority levels:

**Blue Code:** The patient has a serious condition that is not life-threatening.

**Orange Code:** The patient's condition is serious and could worsen if not treated immediately.

**Red Code:** The patient is in a life-threatening condition.



## Do you send an ambulance for every call?

Yes, for every call, patients are taken to the hospital by ambulance. However, in some cases, a rapid response team may be dispatched to assist before the ambulance arrives.

## What type of assistance is provided to patients in the ambulance?

- Sedation for seriously injured patients
- Severe pain relief
- Blood transfusions
- On-site ultrasound to diagnose life-threatening conditions.



## When should you call 112 for an emergency medical response?

Call in cases of:

- A person becomes unconscious and is not breathing
- Someone has severe chest pain, which could indicate a heart attack
- Severe shortness of breath
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- A person is choking and unable to breathe
- Signs of stroke (sudden confusion, difficulty speaking, unilateral weakness)
- A person experiencing seizures (especially lasting more than five minutes or occurring repeatedly)
- Severe pain with symptoms of a life-threatening condition.



## When should you not call 112?

Do not call in case of:

- Mild fever, colds or flu symptoms
- Minor cuts, bruises, or incomplete fractures
- Chronic conditions requiring routine medical check-ups
- Prescription refills or general medical advice
- Non-urgent transport to hospital
- Non-medical issues (e.g., calling an ambulance for convenience)

For minor medical issues visit your family doctor (GP) or health centre.

## If I arrive by ambulance, can I skip the queue at the Emergency Department?

While our teams respond promptly when patients do not have life-threatening conditions, we strongly discourage misuse of the 112 service. Unnecessary calls take time away from those who truly need urgent medical help.



## What should you do when calling 112?

When calling 112, provide clear and accurate information to help emergency responders act quickly.

Follow these steps:

1. Stay calm and speak clearly
2. Provide the exact location
3. Explain the nature of the emergency
4. Answer the dispatcher's questions
5. Follow the given instructions
6. Do not hang up until told to
7. Ensure your house number is visible from the street.  
If possible, send someone outside to guide the emergency team.

## The 1400 Helpline

A new way to get medical care best suited to your case!

### What is the 1400 Helpline?

The 1400 Helpline offers a new telephone service designed to help people in Malta get guidance on where to seek the most suitable medical care with the least possible delay.

### Why should you use it?

There are cases where people go to the Emergency Department for medical treatment, but in fact could have been treated at other facilities. When this happens, waiting times increase, leading to a less satisfactory patient experience and added pressure on Emergency staff.

### The 1400 Helpline was created to:

- Help patients be seen sooner by guiding them to the most appropriate and/or closest facility
- Reduce long waiting times at the Mater Dei Hospital Emergency Department
- Improve the patient experience by providing timely and suitable care
- Support staff at the Emergency Department at Mater Dei by allowing them to focus on complex and/or emergency cases



## How does the system work?

A person can call the 1400 Helpline and speak with a professional team member who guides them to the most appropriate place for their medical case. This considers the caller's location as well as the waiting times at hospitals or clinics that can provide care.

In addition, a person can also visit a family doctor, whether private or at a health centre, and the doctor can also use the 1400 Helpline on their behalf. This is the only exception where a team member may speak with someone other than the person experiencing the symptoms.

## What happens when someone calls the 1400 Helpline?

- After considering the person's symptoms and location, guidance is provided to them or to the doctor calling on their behalf about which medical facility is most appropriate for the care they need.
- A unique code is generated for each case, allowing the person to access private hospitals free of charge (if the patient is offered the choice to attend one of the private hospitals). This code is sent via SMS, and the person does not need to wait for the message before attending the designated private hospital.
- It is important that the person brings official identification to present upon arrival at the designated hospital/clinic.



## What happens if someone is offered private care?

If a person accepts care at one of the private hospitals/clinics, if and when given this option, a person does not pay anything, as the costs are covered by the Government of Malta.

### The person must:

- Arrive at the designated facility within two hours of calling 1400
- Present official identification.



### The 1400 Helpline is intended for:

- Maltese citizens and non-Maltese residents entitled to free healthcare
- Patients aged 16 to 69
- Patients without mobility issues who do not need transport or an ambulance
- Patients calling about symptoms they are experiencing themselves

### The 1400 Helpline does not cover:

- Complicated or serious medical emergencies
- Children under 16
- People with mobility issues who require transport
- Patients not entitled to free healthcare
- People calling on behalf of someone else
- Calls seeking general medical advice.

## Important Distinction

What is the difference between the 1400 Helpline, 112, and the Primary Healthcare Telemedicine Service 21 231 231?

These are three free lines that, although distinct, complement each other:

**112:** The European and National emergency number. Call in cases where life or health is at risk.

**21 231 231:** Provided by the Primary Healthcare Department, this line offers advice from a doctor via telephone. Callers can discuss medical problems, ask for blood test results, or request appointments.

**1400:** Provides guidance on the most appropriate location for the caller's medical case, which could be the Mater Dei Hospital Emergency Department, a Health Centre (Polyclinic), or a private hospital (with costs covered by the government), among others.

## Why is the 1400 Helpline important for everyone?

- It helps patients receive care faster by guiding them to the appropriate facility.
- In critical situations, such as heart attacks, strokes, major accidents, and other emergencies, patients get timely attention without delays caused by cases that could have been treated elsewhere.
- Emergency professionals can focus their attention on patients who need it most.
- The healthcare system operates more efficiently and openly, benefiting the patient.



## Contact information



Contact us or follow us on our social media pages:

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Quit Smoking Line



80073307

Nutrition Support



For sexual health questions, email:

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For general enquiries and appointments, patients can contact the Primary Healthcare Client Support Centre.

**Phone:** 21231231



**Email:** [clientsupportadmin.phc@gov.mt](mailto:clientsupportadmin.phc@gov.mt)

**Website:** [www.primaryhealthcare.gov.mt](http://www.primaryhealthcare.gov.mt)



[primaryhealthcaremalta](https://www.facebook.com/primaryhealthcaremalta)



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