

January 2023

Dear whānau and rangatahi,

Welcome to the University of Otago.

This letter introduces you to the University of Otago Student Health Services. We also make some recommendations and requests to support your health. We encourage students to be actively involved in managing their health, and we also value whānau involvement, support and guidance.

Services

Student Health comprises a large team of skilled doctors, nurses and mental health and wellbeing clinicians supported by an experienced team of reception and administrative staff. We aim to provide comprehensive, holistic primary care.

General practitioners

Our GP team provides a full spectrum of general practice care. We offer routine appointments for issues such as contraceptive advice, repeat prescriptions or long-term conditions. We also provide urgent appointments for students who are acutely unwell, or those with cuts, burns, sprains or suspected fractures.

Practice nurses

Our registered nurses offer a range of services, including sexual health consultations, contraception, immunisations, wound assessments and dressings without the need to see a doctor. In addition, the team includes nurse prescribers who are able to independently prescribe a range of medications.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Team (MHWB)

Support for our students' mental health is a focus for the whole service. Our Mental Health and Wellbeing team (MHWB) can help with a range of concerns, from homesickness, relationship break-ups and stress, to more serious mental health issues. Mental health support appointments can be booked directly by students via Student Health reception. The MHWB team offers individual mental health support appointments, brief intervention counselling and clinical psychology. The team can also make referrals for specialist or longer-term mental health support. Our psychiatrist provides specialist oversight and treatment of more complex mental illness.

After hours

When Student Health is closed, or there are no appointments available, students can access the Dunedin Urgent Doctors and Accident Centre, which is open from 8am until 10pm daily. This will involve cost to the student. More information can be found at: dunedinurgentdoctors.co.nz

In case of serious medical or mental health emergency, students are encouraged to attend the Emergency Department at Dunedin Hospital.

Continuity of care for longer term medical conditions

We support students with on-going medical conditions, such as diabetes, asthma or depression. We encourage new students with on-going health needs to make an appointment with us to discuss continuing care and repeat prescriptions soon after arrival in Dunedin. We may request a copy of the home GP record to be sent to Student Health with the student's consent.

Students should be able to maintain registration with their family GP and see them as required over university holidays and the summer break.

Help us to help you

Since starting university is often a young person's first experience of caring for themselves away from home, Student Health has a few suggestions to consider before coming to Dunedin:

- › Obtain a Community Services Card: this will reduce the cost of GP consultations (for domestic students) at Student Health from \$25 to \$10.
- › Bring a basic first aid kit: digital thermometer, paracetamol/ibuprofen, antiseptic liquid/cream, band aids, etc.
- › Medication: bring at least a month's supply of any long-term medication, and book a routine appointment soon after arrival to arrange continuity and review of prescriptions.

Immunisation

Living in a community environment, such as a residential college, can increase the spread of disease. The University of Otago is a strong advocate of vaccination to reduce the risk of infectious diseases.

We suggest that all students have details of their childhood immunisations, in case of injury or outbreak of infection. For those students who did not receive their routine childhood vaccinations, we are happy to advise on "catch up" regimes.

- › Meningococcal infections are extremely serious and can prove fatal. There have been several cases in Otago in recent years. We strongly encourage all students to consider meningococcal vaccinations **before** coming to Dunedin. The meningitis ACWY vaccine is fully-funded for New Zealand residents aged 13–25 years entering college accommodation. The meningococcal B vaccine is likely to be funded for some students in early 2023 and we will provide vaccination clinics. We highly recommend this vaccine, as this has been the predominant strain in the majority of our cases in recent years.
- › There have been measles and mumps outbreaks in several New Zealand localities in recent years. Full vaccination includes two recorded MMR vaccines. These are fully funded (free) from your local practice nurse.
- › Student Health also recommends an annual flu vaccination for students, particularly those in residential colleges. We provide special flu clinics which are publicised throughout the University.
- › The HPV (Human Papilloma Wart Virus) vaccination is now funded for all NZ residents up to the age of 27, and is available for those who may have missed out at school.

For further details of vaccinations in general, please refer to our website otago.ac.nz/vaccinations

Scabies

Scabies has been an issue for many students during the past year. We recommend early treatment (and treating the whole flat at the same time), to prevent a cycle of transmission. Treatment can be bought directly from pharmacies. Further information can be found at healthinfo.org.nz/southern/scabies.htm

COVID-19

COVID-19 is an ongoing issue and Student Health Services adapts its service delivery based on Ministry of Health recommendations.

We **strongly** encourage all students to be fully immunised and boosted before arriving at the University of Otago. Mask wearing is required when entering Student Health Services.

Privacy

All students are entitled to confidential medical care. This means that our team at Student Health are not able to disclose health information, to parent or partner, without the consent of the student, unless there are serious safety concerns.

We look forward to a productive and healthy year ahead for all Otago students.

For more detailed information please refer to otago.ac.nz/studenthealth

From all of the team at Student Health Services.