

Getting help from the Sexual Health Nurse

What is a Sexual Health Nurse?

Sexual Health Nurses are trained to help you with concerns around your sexual and reproductive health. They keep your health issues private and don't be embarrassed to share your concerns. Their services can be either free or at a low cost. This means that seeing a sexual health nurse is a great place to start when you are concerned about sexual health issues.

Your family GP is also a good place to start if you need some help and feel comfortable talking to them. Even if they know your family, they are still required to keep information about you private.

(There is more information about confidentiality over the page).



Melissa Chadwick
is our Sexual Health Nurse

See profile over page...

Our Sexual Health Nurse is here on a

Tuesday

by appointment.

Note: You may want to talk to the nurse on a day she is not here. We are happy to take a message and she will return your call on her next working day.

headspace Mildura is NOT equipped to manage urgent health needs. If your concern is urgent, please phone Emergency Services on '000' or Mildura Base Public Hospital on (03) 5022 3500.

Cost:

Free: just bring along your Medicare card.

There may be some consultations which involve a procedure or treatment. For these, you may need to show a Medicare card or give your Medicare number to be bulk billed. You can use a parent's or family member's card but, if you are an Australian citizen over 15 years of age, you are entitled to have your own Medicare card.

Having your own card means that your parents are unable to review your visits to the doctor. You can apply for your own card by filling out a form available at a Medicare office, or through the Medicare [website](#)

Your GP and some pharmacists might have forms as well.

Talk to us if you are not eligible for a Medicare card.



Making an appointment:

You will usually need to make an appointment to see our Sexual Health Nurse, either by phoning or dropping into the centre. The receptionist doesn't need to know the reason why you want to see the nurse, but you will have to provide your personal contact details when you book an appointment.

If you don't feel comfortable going on your own, consider taking someone else to the appointment; a friend, parent or relative.

Appointments are usually for 30 minutes, but for your first appointment, or if you have a number of issues you want to talk about, may need a longer appointment so that you have plenty of time to cover everything. Often, you may have already had an appointment with an Engagement and Assessment (E&A) Clinician first who can help explain some of the other things going on and also help link you in with the nurse.

It is okay to ask the receptionist or the E&A Clinicians questions about the Sexual Health Nurse to help you feel more comfortable.

What to expect when you come in for an appointment?

At your first appointment with headspace Mildura, the Sexual Health Nurse may ask you a range of questions to help understand how they can help you best.



The Sexual Health Nurse is here to help you. They are not prying into your life for no reason, and they are not making judgments about you. The nurse can provide you with education sessions, contraception advice, sexual health checks and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) screening. Testing for STIs may include peeing into a cup or taking some blood or a physical examination. The sexual health nurse cannot perform any type of physical examination without your permission.

The nurse will then discuss any concerns and what to do next. It is okay to ask questions so that you understand what is going on and what you can do to help. Sometimes, the nurse will ask you to come back for a return visit to check on your progress, discuss the results of any tests, or just to have some more time to explore the problem. For routine test results, the nurse or **GP** may arrange to ring you on the next working day after the results have arrived.

To make sure everything is going okay for you or to monitor other health problems, the nurse may also recommend that you check in with the GP. They may also talk with you about seeing someone like a psychologist or counsellor to support you with your mental health.

Getting Tested

If you are sexually active, you should get tested for STIs once a year, even if you use protection.

Testing is confidential (see right) and there is no need to be embarrassed!

About Melissa...

"I first started working in sexual health while living in London for 6 years in the early 2000's. I'm passionate about providing sexual health advice and support to young people and finding the right fit for them and their lifestyle. I believe that when you're on the right birth control and your sexual health is in order, then you're in a great position to make your lives successful. Come in for a confidential chat, I'd love to meet you."



Changing Practitioners

If you are not feeling comfortable and safe with your nurse or GP, you can change to another practitioner and ask that your medical records get transferred. You are also welcome to provide suggestions/ feedback to any of us or via our anonymous feedback box in reception or our [website](#). For serious concerns regarding your care you can contact: Health Services Commissioner Complaints and Information Telephone: 1300 582 113 , [Online complaint form](#) E-mail: hsc@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Confidentiality

All headspace workers have to keep information about their patients private. This means they cannot discuss your visit with anyone else but there are some exceptions. If a worker thinks you are likely to harm yourself or someone else they have a 'duty of care' to make sure you stay safe so they may need to tell other people. There are also some circumstances by law that require workers to share information. If you want to know more about your rights to privacy and confidentiality, you can ask the nurse to talk it through with you at the beginning of your first appointment.

