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## Medical treatment in Japan

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**IMPORTANT:** if you require urgent medical assistance in Japan dial **119**.

## **An overview of medical treatment in Japan**

Medical facilities are generally good, but the cost of treatment is high. There is no equivalent of the National Health Service (NHS) in Japan, though you may qualify for discounted treatment if you are resident in Japan. You should speak to your local ward office/employer to clarify your entitlements. Hospitals and clinics are well equipped and staff highly trained. There are very few British doctors practicing in Japan; some Japanese doctors/surgeons and sometimes nursing staff may speak English, though levels vary greatly.

Large general hospitals and hospitals affiliated to universities will have most medical/surgical departments though patients may have to wait to be seen. Furthermore without a referral from a doctor, the costs of treatment may be higher than normal.

### **Language assistance**

English speaking doctors and nurses may be available in the larger hospitals in Tokyo, but this will not be universal, nor will they be available around the clock. Many larger hospitals may also have English speaking Social Workers who can assist you in dealings with medical/administrative staff. In a non emergency if you are unable to find a hospital for your particular need, a medical institution information service such as 'Himawari' (<https://www.himawari.metro.tokyo.jp> - Emergency translation services: 03-5285-8185) or 'AMDA' (<http://eng.amda-imic.com/>) can help you. Please see our [sources of medical information](#) on <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-tokyo> (list of local providers)

### **Medicine**

If you are on prescription medication, make sure you either bring enough with you or have access to a supply once in Japan. Certain medicines may not be available in Japan. The use or possession of some common prescription and UK over-the-counter medicines are banned under Japan's strictly enforced anti-stimulant drugs law. This includes Vicks inhalers, medicines for allergies and sinus problems and even some mild painkillers like those containing codeine. Customs officials may not be sympathetic if you claim ignorance. If in any doubt, check with [the nearest Japanese Embassy or Consulate](#) or [Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare](#) before you travel.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

Many larger hospitals have emergency departments that operate around the clock. If you require emergency medical treatment and you cannot get to your nearest hospital you should call **119** and ask for an ambulance. Ambulances will respond quickly but paramedics are not able to provide emergency treatment as they can in the UK, this includes not being allowed to administer pain relief. There may be some delay in transporting you to hospital as they need to be informed which facility they can take a patient to for treatment.

### **Medical Treatment during evenings and public holidays**

Medical institutions are usually closed on Sundays, public holidays and the end and the beginning of the year. Some hospitals and clinics are also closed on Saturday afternoons. Most large hospitals offer emergency treatment on a 24/7 basis but not all do so; where possible you should check in advance, or in a real emergency call 119 for an ambulance

## **Privacy**

Privacy is secured for patients in Japan. A medical consultation takes place in a doctor's room; however patients may receive less privacy in an emergency medical room.

## **Being admitted to hospital in Japan**

Hospitals in Japan provide round the clock nursing care, most wards are smaller than in the UK. Food is provided as are all your medications, though the cost of these will be added to your bill. Food is based on a Japanese diet, and you should consult your doctor before buying your own food. Allergies and religious requirements are taken into consideration, you may be seen by a nutritionist on admission. You may have to purchase your own bottled water if you do not wish to drink water from the tap. You will be allowed visitors, nursing staff will be able to advise you on visiting times/restrictions. It is unlikely that Wi-Fi will be available on the wards.

You should follow the instructions of the hospital administration staff when being admitted. In general, paperwork will need to be provided, such as an application form, agreement, health insurance card etc . In case of an emergency admission, a representative will be able to submit the required paperwork on your behalf. A deposit may be required (please see deposit section below).

## **Private Rooms**

Many hospitals have private rooms (single occupancy rooms) which offer greater privacy for patients willing to pay for them.

Fees for private rooms may be considerably higher than on a shared ward . Hospital staff may assume that foreign patients require a private room for their stay in hospital without first consulting them. You should make it clear if you do not wish to be placed in a private room. If you do you should first check with your insurer whether this additional cost will be covered under your policy.

## **Payment & insurance**

You will be expected to pay the whole cost of any treatment you receive. There have been cases where treatment has been delayed whilst medical facilities check a patient's insurance is valid for the recommended course of treatment. When travelling in Japan make sure you have comprehensive insurance covering all planned activities, healthcare and medical evacuation/repatriation to the UK or your normal country of residence for the duration of your stay. Please see our guidance on [foreign travel insurance](#), which outlines what your insurance policy should cover you for.

Residents in Japan will be required to enroll in either Employee or National Health Insurance Scheme to qualify for reduced rates of medical treatment.

## **Deposits**

You may be required to make a deposit when admitted to a hospital for treatment. This can be anywhere between 50,000 yen to 100,000 yen but it depends on the hospital. Any deposits made will be deducted from your final bill so you should ensure you keep all receipts.

## **How the FCO can help you if you are in hospital**

- We aim to contact you as soon as possible after being told that you have been admitted to hospital to assess how we can help you. We will then help you according to your individual needs. This may include visiting you if you are particularly vulnerable and you want us to.
- When we assess your vulnerability, we will take account of factors such as your condition, your ability to speak on the phone, whether you have relatives or friends with you, whether you have a tour company representative and the standard of medical facilities. We will then decide whether a visit is appropriate or not. If we believe it is, and we are able to get to you, we will aim to visit as soon as possible.
- If you want, we can contact your family or friends in the UK to tell them that you are in hospital.
- If you want, we can help you to consult your insurance company or medical evacuation company. Remember to keep any receipts or doctors' notes in case you need them to make a claim. We may also be able to help you communicate with hospital staff in certain situations if they do not speak English.
- We do not usually contact or visit people who have travelled specifically for medical treatment and we cannot pay medical bills.
- We do not get you better treatment in hospital that is given to local people.
- We do not act as an interpreter between you and hospital.

## Useful Links

If you need general advice when travelling abroad or want to know how the Embassy can help you or if you have difficulties please see [Support for British nationals: A guide](#). We also publish and regularly update [foreign travel advice](#) with key information for 225 countries and territories around the world.

### **Support for British nationals: A guide**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/324513/FCO\\_Brits\\_Abroad\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/324513/FCO_Brits_Abroad_2014.pdf)

### **Foreign travel advice**

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

### **Japan: Local services list**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/japan-list-of-lawyers>

### **Living in Japan**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-japan>

### **Foreign travel insurance**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance>

### **Japanese Embassy in the UK**

[http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop\\_en/index.html](http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop_en/index.html)

### **Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare**

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/index.html>

### **Psychiatric Emergency Services in Tokyo**

[http://www.byouin.metro.tokyo.jp/matsuzawa/english/important\\_seishinka\\_kyukyu.html](http://www.byouin.metro.tokyo.jp/matsuzawa/english/important_seishinka_kyukyu.html)

### **List of Disaster Base Hospitals**

<http://www.bousai.metro.tokyo.jp/foreign/english/bousai/2000170/2000186/index.html>

### **Foreign Residents Advisory Centre in Tokyo**

<http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/ENGLISH/GUIDE/guide01.htm>

### **Tokyo English Life Line**

<http://telljp.com/>

### **Emergency Assistance Japan**

<https://emergency.co.jp/english/>

### **Medical Excellence Japan**

<http://www.medical-excellence-japan.org/en/index.html>

### **Japan Study Support**

<http://www.jpss.jp/en/>