

What is the NHS Number?

Everyone registered with the NHS in England, Wales and the Isle of Man has a unique patient identifier called NHS Number. Most GP practices will send you a letter containing your NHS Number when you register with them.

Your NHS Number helps healthcare staff and service providers identify you correctly and match your details to your health records. This will ensure you receive safe and efficient care within the NHS.

Each NHS Number is made up of 10 digits shown in a 3-3-4 format, usually as follows (example only):



Your NHS Number is unique to you. The number will appear on most official documents and letters you receive from the NHS, including prescriptions, test results or hospital appointment letters. You don't need to know your NHS Number to receive care, and you should not be denied care on the basis you do not know, or do not have, an NHS Number.

However, having an NHS Number does not mean you are automatically entitled to the free use of all NHS services. Patients in England are required to pay patient contributions towards some NHS services they receive. Read more about paying NHS charges.

You will need your NHS Number to book hospital appointments online through the NHS e-Referral Service or to register for the Electronic Prescription Service.



If you can't find your NHS Number at home, your GP practice should be able to help you. When you register with a GP practice, you may receive an NHS medical card. This is also known as form FP4, which provides basic details such as a patient's name, address, NHS number, registered GP practice (or the name of an individual practitioner) and details of your NHS England regional team.

NHS Choices puts you in control of your healthcare

NHS Choices has been developed to help you make choices about your health, from lifestyle decisions about things like smoking, drinking and exercise, through to the practical aspects of finding and using NHS services when you need them.

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You do not need a medical card to receive NHS treatment, and the cards are used everywhere in England. Some regional teams don't issue them at all, while others do so only on request. If you don't have a medical card, it is a good idea to keep a note of your NHS number.

If you have an old medical card, it may have an old-style NHS Number made up of both letters and numbers. However, in recent years this has been replaced for all patients with an NHS Number made up entirely of numbers (as shown in the example above).

Is my NHS Number the same as my National Insurance (NI) number?

No, your NHS Number is different from your National Insurance number, which is used for tax, benefits and pensions. For more information about National Insurance or how to apply for a National Insurance number, visit the [GOV.UK website](http://gov.uk).

How can I find out my NHS Number?

You should be able to find your NHS Number on any letter or document you have received from the NHS, including prescriptions, test results, and hospital referral or appointment letters. If you have a medical card, your NHS number should be printed on it.

If you cannot find your NHS Number at home, you can ask your GP practice to help you. They should be able to provide the number for you as long as you are registered with them. To protect your privacy, you may be asked to show a passport, driving licence or some other proof of identity.

If you are not registered with a GP practice, you should do so as soon as possible. They will be able to provide you with your NHS Number once you're registered.

What if I have never registered with a GP practice?

Anyone who has registered with a GP practice in England, Wales or the Isle of Man will have an NHS Number. Since 2002 all babies born in England, Wales or the Isle of Man automatically get an NHS Number.

If you were born before October 2002 and have never registered with a GP practice or received NHS treatment, it's unlikely you will have an NHS Number. In that case, you should register with a GP practice as soon as possible. You can [find a local GP practice](#) on this website and you'll also be able to find out if the GP practice is accepting new patients at the moment. Your [NHS England regional team](#) may also be able to help.

Learn more about:

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- [GP services](#)
- [choosing a GP](#)
- [patient choice](#)

What if I am visiting the country for less than three months?

If you're a visitor to this country and require NHS care, you may be allocated an NHS Number. In cases where the organisation is unable to allocate an NHS Number directly, you will be given a local number (for example, a hospital number).

Having an NHS Number does not entitle you to free NHS treatment. For more information, see our [guide for visitors to the UK](#).

Will my new baby have an NHS Number?

If your baby was born in a hospital in England, Wales or the Isle of Man, they should have been given an NHS Number through the hospital system shortly after they were born.

If your baby was born at home, the health visitor will usually tell you the baby's NHS Number when they next see you and the baby at your home or the clinic.

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<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/records/nhs-number/Pages/what-is-the-nhs-number.aspx>

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