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Doctor's Visit — Visiting a Doctor in Germany

A guide to visiting a doctor in Germany: how to find a Hausarzt, book an appointment, and what costs patients with public insurance incur.

Deutsche Begriffe: Arztbesuch | Hausarzt | Termin | Überweisung | Praxis | Terminservicestelle | Facharzt | Versichertenkarte | Hausarztprogramm

How to Book an Appointment

In Germany, the foundation is the **Hausarzt** (family doctor) — your first contact for most health issues. Steps:

1. choose a **Hausarzt** in your area (you don't need an **Überweisung** for them or a pediatrician),

2. book a **Termin** by phone or through an app (Doctolib, Jameda, 116117),

3. bring your **Versichertenkarte** (eGK) — without it you'll pay privately,

4. to see a specialist (**Facharzt**) you usually need an **Überweisung** from your Hausarzt — exceptions are ophthalmologists and gynecologists.

The system covering your visit is described in Health Insurance (Krankenversicherung).

Terminservicestelle — When There's No Appointment Available

If you can't get an appointment, call **116117** (Terminservicestelle) or visit 116117-termine.de. With an **Überweisung**, you have the right to see a specialist **within 4 weeks**. The same number **116117** also provides evening and weekend medical on-call services (ärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst). In case of life-threatening emergency, call **112** or go to Emergency Room (Notaufnahme).

Card, Costs and Language

If you don't have your **Versichertenkarte** with you, the practice will issue a private bill — you typically have until **the end of the quarter** to bring your card and reclaim the money. You can bring a translator to your appointment; some practices accept English. Many doctors offer a coordinated care program (**Hausarztprogramm**), which organizes referrals and treatment.

After Your Visit

Your doctor may issue a prescription (Rezept) for medication — you fill it at a pharmacy (Apotheke). If you're unable to work, you receive a sick note (Krankschreibung), which your insurance company and employer now receive electronically (eAU).

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