

# Accessing Victorian Public Dental Services

## General, emergency and denture care

A quick reference guide for professionals

This guide outlines access to Victorian public dental services as determined by [Department of Health](#) policy.

This guide covers **general, emergency, and denture care**. See page 2 for information on specialist care. The criteria apply to Victorian residents only, with cross-border arrangements in place.

Before people access public dental services, there are 3 aspects to consider:

- 1 Eligibility** Meets the criteria to use Victorian public dental services
- 2 Priority access** Some eligible people are not placed on a general waiting list, but are offered the next available appointment
- 3 Fee exemption** Some eligible people will not be charged out-of-pocket costs. Refer to information on page 2 for fee schedules.

| ELIGIBLE GROUPS  | PRIORITY ACCESS   | FEE-EXEMPT  |
|--|---|---|
| Children and young people  | Offered the next available appointment for general care or denture care | Note: Anyone receiving care from a dental or oral health student is fee-exempt                          |
| All Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples   | ✓   | ✓   |
| All refugees and asylum seekers  | ✓   | ✓   |
| All ages in youth justice custodial care   | ✓   | ✓   |
| All ages in out-of-home care (including kinship and foster care) provided by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) | ✓   | ✓   |
| <b>Attending a government school</b><br>Government primary, secondary, and specialist school students                                |   |   |
| All ages are eligible through Smile Squad  | ✓   | ✓   |
| <b>Not attending government school</b>   |   |   |
| All 0-12 years   | ✓   | ✓ With concession card, <b>no</b> out-of-pocket costs<br>✗ Without concession card, out-of-pocket costs |
| 13-17 years – <b>must</b> hold a healthcare card, or be a dependent of a concession card holder                                      | ✓   | ✓   |

Children aged 0-17 years who are eligible for the **Child Dental Benefits Schedule** can access general dental care at any public dental service and will receive the next available appointment. See page 2 for more details.

## Types of services

### Public dental services

Eligible Victorians can access free or subsidised dental care at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne or Community dental agencies across Victoria. Services include general, emergency, denture, and specialist care.

### Community dental agencies

Community dental agencies are located throughout Victoria and are typically part of a multi-disciplinary community health service that offers a wide range of care.

### Private dental clinics

Privately owned clinics set their own fees, which vary by clinic and type of care.

## Types of care

### General care

General dental care includes things like oral examination, x-rays, oral health advice, scale and cleaning, extractions, fillings and fissure sealants.

### Emergency care

A dental emergency could be swelling of the face, trauma to the face, bleeding from the mouth that will not stop, an ulcer or sore in the mouth that has not healed, severe mouth pain that prevents sleep, tooth fracture or an exposed tooth nerve.

Eligible Victorians can access emergency dental care at public dental services at any time. Non-eligible Victorians can also access emergency care at RDHM if they meet specific clinical criteria.

### Denture care

Denture care includes complete or partial upper and/or lower dentures.

### Specialist care

Specialist care includes paediatric dentistry, special needs dentistry, oral medicine, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, periodontics, endodontics and prosthodontics.

To access public dental specialist care, a general course of care *must* have been completed and a written referral provided by the treating dental practitioner.

## Types of care offered at each service

|   | General care | Emergency care | Denture care | Specialist care |
|---|--------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne</b> | ✓            | ✓              | ✓            | ✓               |
| <b>Community dental agencies</b>          | ✓            | ✓              | ✓            |                 |
| <b>Smile Squad regional hubs*</b>         |              |                |              | ✓               |

\* For students of government primary, secondary, and specialist schools only (excludes orthodontics)

## Fee schedule

Fees are set by the Department of Health, but they may vary between community dental agencies. Contact your local community dental agency for details. Fees are updated **annually**.

Fees for *specialist* services depend on the treatment. They will not exceed \$378 for a course of care.

Below is the approximate fee schedule for different types of care in public dental services. Some people are exempt from paying fees. Refer to fee-exempt section of the guide (page 1).

People facing financial hardship may be eligible for fee exemptions, as assessed by dental agency staff.

|                                    |                |   |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---|
| <b>Children</b><br>0-12 years      | General care   | free if patient or parent/guardian holds a concession card; \$38 flat fee per child for course of care to a maximum; \$152 per family if no concession card |
|                                    | Emergency care | free  |
| <b>Young people</b><br>13-17 years | General care   | free if patient or parent/guardian holds a concession card  |
|                                    | Emergency care | free if patient or parent/guardian holds a concession card; \$266 if no concession card*  |
| <b>Adults</b><br>18+ years         | General care   | \$31.50 fee per visit to a maximum of \$126 for a course of care  |
|                                    | Emergency care | \$31.50 flat fee with a concession card; \$266 if no concession card*   |
|                                    | Denture care   | \$76 per denture, capped at \$152 for full upper and lower dentures   |

\* Non-eligible Victorians can access emergency care at RDHM if they meet specific clinical criteria

## Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)

The CDBS covers the cost of basic dental services for children aged 0–17 years. Children are eligible if their family receives Family Tax Benefit Part A or other relevant payments.

CDBS can be used at all public dental clinics and there are no out-of-pocket costs. Not all private dental clinics offer CDBS and those who do may also charge additional gap fees.

The CDBS covers check-ups, cleaning, fissure sealants, fillings, x-rays, extractions, and root canal