



Protocol Department
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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands presents its compliments to all Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations accredited to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and has the honour to inform the Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations as follows.

In view of recent questions raised by various International Organisations, the Ministry informs all Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations about the access to the healthcare system in the Netherlands for your staff members. Please be advised that the information below is relevant for staff members (and relatives) of Diplomatic Missions/International Organisations who are not participating in the Dutch national social security system.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport the Ministry provides the following information:

1. What are the necessary steps to take to get medical care/will there be administrative delays, will an upfront payment be needed etc.?

Every person residing in the Netherlands is obliged to be insured for health care. Depending on the sort of insurance (EHIC for EU residents, or an insurance based on the specific policy of the employer), staff members (and relatives) of Diplomatic Missions/International Organisations will have to go through administrative issues, just as Dutch citizens have to when they go to their health care providers. Please be assured that even if these administrative issues may prevent a person from registering with a General Practitioner (GP), the required care will still be provided. If a person falls ill he or she can visit any GP. The GP or assistant assesses whether acute care is necessary. If this is the case, the proper care will be provided. The GP in question may charge a so-called "passer-by rate" which needs to be paid for after the care has been received. The health insurer will reimburse these costs.

In the Netherlands, the first step to take when people feel sick is to contact a GP. The GP is the gatekeeper to hospital and specialist care – it is the GP who determines whether a person is referred to a hospital or specialist. Outside office hours, you can contact one of the GP cooperatives (*huisartsenposten*). Persons that do not have a GP, can contact a *huisartsenpost* directly. A *huisartsenpost* charges the same fee as a GP. Please note that although a

huisartsenpost is often located in a hospital, it is not to be confused with an emergency ward that is specifically designed for emergency care that requires a medical specialist.

2. What to do in case of an emergency/a complaint?

When you or someone in your vicinity is in mortal danger, you need to call 112 immediately.

In these exceptional times of the new Corona virus, GPs and hospitals are more crowded than normally but in case of an emergency everyone in the Netherlands will receive care whether at a GP, a GP cooperative or in the emergency ward of the hospital. The administration will be handled afterwards.

If you feel that you have been denied proper care at a GP or hospital when you were indeed in need of urgent or acute care, a complaint can be filed at the National Healthcare Report Centre (<https://english.igj.nl/documents/publication/2018/03/20/national-healthcare-report-centre---lmz>). You can file the complaint via the website, by calling +31 88 120 50 20 (available on working days from 9 am to 5 pm) or by sending a letter to: National Healthcare Report Centre Postbus 2115, 3500 GC Utrecht.

3. How will it be determined whether or not someone will be tested?

When an infection with COVID-19 is suspected, a health care professional will decide upon testing for the virus. Health care professionals follow guidelines given by the Netherlands Institute for Public Health (RIVM). Testing will only be carried out if the health care professional in question believes this to be necessary. This can be the case if a person has severe symptoms, or if a person is vulnerable due to age or an underlying illness.

Please take notice of the advice of the RIVM (National institute for Public Health and the Environment). These advices are updated regularly. For more information about the novel coronavirus please visit: <https://www.rivm.nl/en/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/questions-and-answers>.

4. Is there a specific referral hospital that threats staff members of Diplomatic Missions/International Organisations?

No, there is no specific referral hospital. Within the Dutch healthcare system, decisions about tests and treatments are made by medical professionals. The Netherlands has no special referral hospitals or treatments, also not for Dutch institutions with a vital role. The Dutch authorities believe that this is the best structure to realize an efficient and effective deployment of the available resources in the health sector.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations accredited to the Kingdom of the Netherlands the assurances of its highest consideration.

The Hague, 24 March 2020

To the Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations
The Netherlands