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Medical Guide Handbook

(For International Patients in China)

2025-4-25

V1.0

A Detailed Guide to Medical Treatment for Foreigners in China

I. Assessment of Your Medical Needs

- **Self-evaluation of Condition:** Judge the severity of your condition. If it's a critical or life-threatening situation, call emergency services immediately. For minor ailments like a cold or mild pain, you can first use over-the-counter medications or visit a pharmacy for advice.
- **Determine the Type of Medical Service Needed:** If diagnosed with a common illness requiring basic treatment, general outpatient services at public hospitals or international clinics will suffice. For specialized conditions like heart disease or cancer, choose large specialized hospitals or comprehensive hospitals with advanced facilities and expert teams.

II. Choosing a Medical Institution

- **Public Hospitals:** These are the primary healthcare providers in China, offering a wide range of services at different levels. Tier 1 includes local clinics; tier 2 consists of county hospitals providing more comprehensive care; tier 3 encompasses major hospitals offering specialized services. Public hospitals have relatively low fees but may involve long wait times and less privacy. Some public hospitals also have international departments that provide better services and facilities, though at higher costs.
- **Private Hospitals:** These cater to those seeking specialized or high-quality medical care. They typically offer more comfortable environments, shorter wait times, better service attitudes, and more personalized care. However, their fees are relatively high.
- **International Clinics:** Often located within hospitals or as standalone facilities, these clinics provide services tailored to foreigners, with English-speaking medical staff and advanced medical equipment. They charge higher fees but ensure smoother communication and higher-quality services.

Note:

* Our website has curated top-tier hospitals across 9 major cities, with over 95% being Grade III, Level A facilities – including public, private and international hospitals.

* Select your ideal hospital based on travel itinerary, medical budget and specific health needs. Click the link to begin your search for hospitals.

III. Making an Appointment in Advance

- **Phone Appointment:** Many hospitals offer phone reservation services. You can call the hospital's appointment hotline to provide your basic information and schedule an appointment.
- **Online Appointment:** Visit the hospital's official website or use medical booking platforms to register online. Some hospitals also offer appointment services via WeChat official accounts or apps.
- **In-person Appointment:** If you prefer face-to-face communication, you can go to the hospital's

registration desk to make an appointment and select a doctor and date.

- **Through Your Employer or School:** If you work for a company or study at an international school, you can inquire with your employer or school about recommended medical institutions and whether they assist with appointment services.

IV. Preparing for the Medical Visit

- **Documents:** Bring your passport, insurance card (if applicable), and any previous medical records to facilitate hospital registration and treatment.
- **Insurance Information:** If you have medical insurance, understand your policy's coverage and reimbursement procedures. Some hospitals offer direct billing services for certain insurance plans, allowing you to avoid upfront payments.
- **Language Preparation:** Although medical staff in international clinics or private hospitals generally speak English, learning some basic medical terms in Chinese, such as common symptoms and body parts, can help improve communication efficiency. Alternatively, you can bring a Chinese-speaking friend or use translation apps to assist with communication.
- **Financial Preparation:** Most hospitals in China require upfront payment, even in emergencies. Prepare sufficient cash or a valid payment method, such as a credit card, debit card, or mobile payment (WeChat/Alipay).

V. The Process of Medical Treatment

- **Registration:** Upon arriving at the hospital, go to the registration desk to complete the process. Provide your passport and other required documents and pay the registration fee. Follow the hospital's instructions to proceed with your appointment.
- **Consultation:** During the consultation, clearly and concisely describe your symptoms, medical history, and any allergies to the doctor. The doctor will ask questions to gather more information about your condition and may recommend further tests or examinations.
- **Tests/Examinations:** If tests are needed, the doctor will issue a request form. Take the form to the relevant department to complete the tests. Some tests may require advance appointments or fasting. Follow the instructions provided by the medical staff.
- **Diagnosis and Treatment Plan:** Based on your symptoms and test results, the doctor will make a diagnosis and propose a treatment plan. This may include medication, surgical treatment, physical therapy, etc. Listen carefully to the doctor's explanation, ask questions if you have any doubts, and follow the treatment plan.
- **Medication Pickup:** If you need medication, the doctor will issue a prescription. Take the prescription to the pharmacy to collect your medication. Ensure you understand the dosage and usage instructions. If unsure, consult the pharmacist.
- **VI. Follow-up and Rehabilitation**
- **Follow-up Appointments:** Follow the doctor's advice for regular follow-up appointments to monitor your progress or address any issues during recovery.
- **Rehabilitation Exercises:** If your condition requires rehabilitation exercises, follow the doctor's or therapist's guidance to perform them regularly and promote recovery.
- **Lifestyle Adjustments:** Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet, regular exercise,

and sufficient rest, to boost your immunity and aid recovery.

VII. Payment of Medical Expenses

- **Cash or Bank Card:** You can pay for medical expenses in cash or with a bank card. Most hospitals accept major credit cards like VISA, MasterCard, etc.
- **Mobile Payment:** Using WeChat or Alipay is highly convenient for payments. Simply scan the QR code generated by the hospital to complete the transaction.
- **Insurance Reimbursement:** If you have medical insurance, keep all medical records, receipts, and related documents to submit to your insurance company for reimbursement. Some insurance plans offer direct billing with hospitals, allowing the hospital to settle claims directly with the insurance provider, sparing you the need to pay upfront.

VIII. Tips for Medical Treatment in China

- **Learn Basic Chinese Medical Terms:** Familiarize yourself with common medical terms in Chinese, such as symptoms, disease names, and medications. This can help you better communicate with medical staff and understand your condition and treatment plan.
- **Bring a Translator or Use Translation Apps:** If your Chinese proficiency is limited, bring a Chinese-speaking friend or family member to assist with communication. Alternatively, use translation apps to facilitate interactions with medical staff.
- **Choose the Right Medical Institution:** Based on your medical needs, budget, and location, select a suitable medical institution. For minor issues, consider community clinics or pharmacies to save time and costs. For serious conditions, opt for large public or private hospitals.
- **Understand Hospital Working Hours:** Hospitals in China typically operate on weekdays, but some also offer weekend and holiday services. Emergency departments are open 24/7. Before visiting, confirm the hospital's working hours to plan your visit accordingly.
- **Stay Calm in Emergencies:** If a medical emergency arises, remain calm and immediately call emergency services (120) or contact your embassy or consulate for assistance. While waiting for help, take basic first aid measures if possible.

Visiting doctors

in China's hospitals

Before going to a hospital



Telephone number for emergency: 120

- ☎ Know your exact address before dialing.
- ☎ The operator will immediately connect to a multilingual third-party operator upon receiving a call from a non-Chinese speaker.

Here are the things you should normally take with you:

👛 Passport or ID card

👛 Bank card

👛 Cash

👛 Cellphone

In the hospital

⚠ Pay attention to the hospital navigation map that may be shown like the photo below:



1. Registration

Advanced reservation

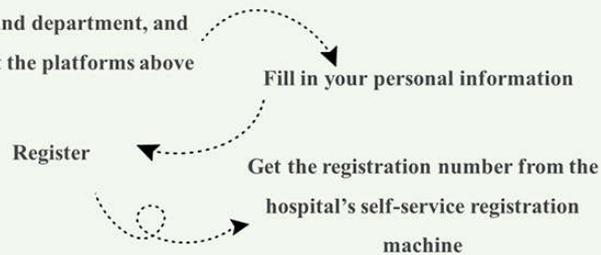
Channels for making an appointment in advance:

- Website of the hospital
- Official WeChat account of the hospital
- Local unified reservation platform
- Call 114



How to make an appointment in advance:

Select a hospital and department, and maybe a doctor, at the platforms above



Advantages of advance reservation:

- Reduce queuing time and risk of failing to register
- More choices of doctors and appointment time

Registration at the hospital



Registration for emergency :

- » Go to the emergency registration section

General registration:

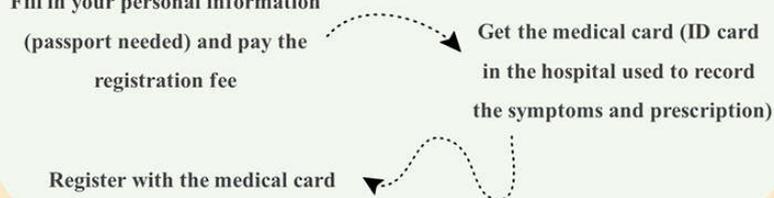
- » Go to the ordinary registration section or use the self-service registration machine

How to register:

Fill in your personal information (passport needed) and pay the registration fee

Get the medical card (ID card in the hospital used to record the symptoms and prescription)

Register with the medical card



2. Waiting to see the doctor

Find the waiting room

Check your registration number with the screen or get the information from the staff

Enter the consulting room when it's your turn



3. Seeing the doctor

 Describe the symptoms

 Diagnosis and treatment

Diagnosis

-  For minor ailments, the doctor may give you a prescription
-  The doctor will record the prescription on the medical card
-  Pay the fee for the prescription and go to the hospital's pharmacy

If checkups (X-ray, blood tests, etc.) are needed



-  Find the examination room according to the doctor's indication
-  Remember to ask when you can get the checkup report (sometimes next day or two days later)
-  Get the report
-  Go back to the doctor you visited with the report

If hospitalization is needed

-  Doctor will give an admission notice
-  Bring the notice to the cashier, fill in the information, pay the security deposit
-  Register at the in-patient department
-  Hospital discharge: pay all the fees to the cashier, leave the hospital



4. Pay the fee



Give the medical card to the cashier

5. Get the medicine



Show the pharmacist the prescription or the medical card, wait for the medicine

After hospital discharge

-  Further consultation: make an appointment with the previous doctor
-  Bring the medical card when seeing the doctor again

Extra tips

Here are extra tips for you:



Ask for the doctor's business card for follow-up consultation



Use language service apps like Youdao, Google Translation



Transportation:

- ✧ Taking a taxi is a good choice: provide the Chinese name of the hospital to the driver
- ✧ You can use taxi-hailing apps like Didi Chuxing as it might be difficult to hail a taxi in big cities like Beijing
- ✧ Get the exact English name of the hospital before using the English edition of Didi Chuxing

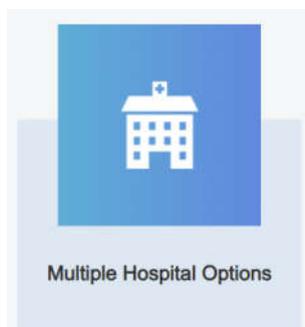
Cai Yongxin contributed to this infographics content and design

en.nhc.gov.cn

Medical Guide for International Patients in Beijing

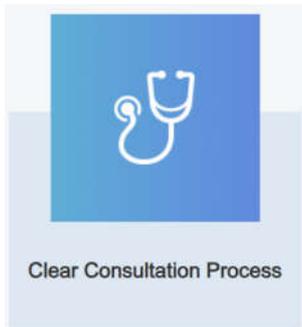
Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. As the national political and cultural center, a world-famous ancient capital and a modernized international metropolis, Beijing owns abundant and high-quality medical resources. Till the end of 2022, Beijing has 12,211 medical institutions, including both non-profit public medical institutions run by the government and non-public medical institutions run by social forces. All kinds of medical institutions have complete functions and their own features as well. Foreigners can choose different medical institutions according to their needs. To facilitate foreign patients' access to medical services, Beijing encourages public medical institutions to set up international medical departments to pay more attention to foreign patients in terms of international-standard medical procedures, religious beliefs, ethnic customs, lifestyles, languages and communication, dietary habits, etc., to provide patients with comfortable medical experiences.

I. Major Medical Institutions Providing Full-process Foreign Language Services in Beijing



- [International Medical Services \(IMS\) of Peking Union Medical College Hospital](#)
- [International Department of China-Japan Friendship Hospital](#)
- [International Medical Center of Beijing Friendship Hospital](#)
- [International Medical Center \(IMC\) of Beijing Tiantan Hospital](#)
- [Beijing United Family Hospital](#)
- [Sanfine International Hospital](#)
- [International Medical Department \(IMD\) of Guang'anmen Hospital](#)
- [General Administration of Customs \(Beijing\) International Travel Health Care Center](#)

II. Clear Consultation Process



1. Emergency Hotlines

The “120” emergency medical centers can be found all around the Chinese mainland. In case of emergency, you can call (+8610) 120 in Beijing to request pre-hospital emergency medical services. Almost all hospitals have emergency departments which can provide emergency medical treatment for patients.

[International Medical Institutions with Emergency Departments in Beijing]

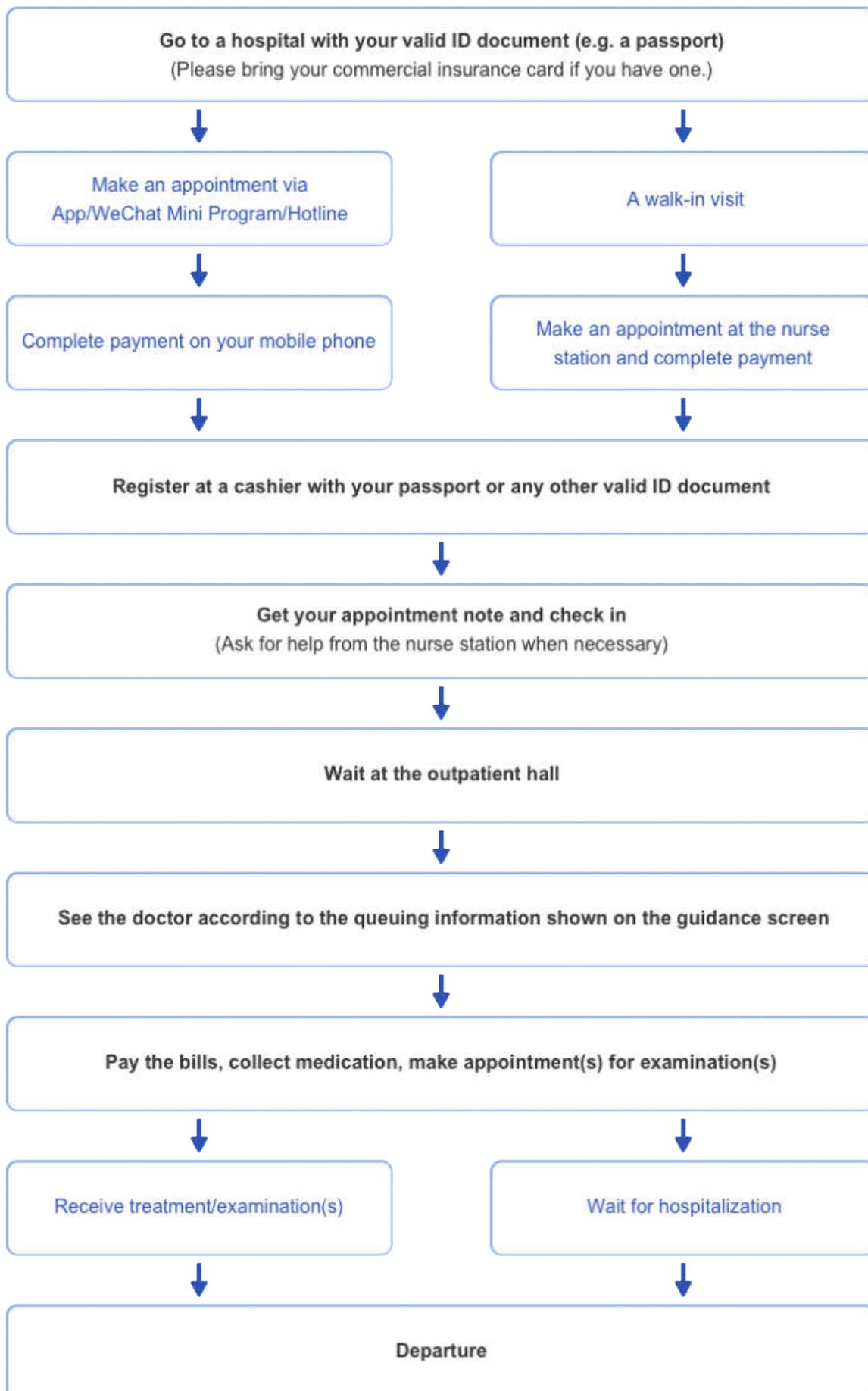
> [International Medical Services, Peking Union Medical College Hospital](#)

24-hour Emergency Hotline: (+8610) 69155288

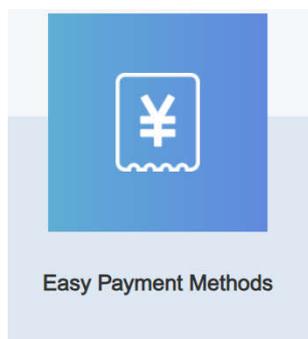
> [Beijing United Family Hospital](#)

24-hour Emergency Hotline: (+8610) 59277120

2. Outpatient Visiting Process for a Foreign Patient



III. Easy Payment Methods



1. Methods of Payment

Foreign patients can choose the following methods of payment. When paying in foreign currency through a bank card, the money will be converted to CNY based on the exchange rate of that day.

- > Cash (in CNY)
- > Credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover Global Network, Diners Club, JCB)
- > UnionPay debit card
- > WeChat/Alipay



2. Direct Billing Service

The cost standards for foreign patients seeking medical services are the same as those for Chinese residents. Patients can choose to pay for medical treatment at their own expenses or buy commercial medical insurance to cover their medical expenses.

A foreign patient who has bought a high-end commercial health insurance product can enjoy direct billing service when seeking medical treatment at the medical institution his/her insuring company cooperates with on direct billing service, after having his/her identity information verified

by presenting his/her insurance card and passport. The patient does not need to pay for medical expenses as the hospital will have the claims settled with the insuring company directly.

MSH, Ping An Health, Cigna & CMB, Allianz Partners, AIA, BUPA, etc., are common commercial health insurance companies that cooperate with medical institutions on direct billing. Please refer to the signed insurance company list of each medical institution.

