

## I. Medical Care System in Korea

### i. Medical Care System

Korea has 78,126 medical institutions across the country, including 353 general hospitals, 2,234 regular hospitals (including dental and oriental medicine), and 1,362 skilled nursing facilities. Among all medical institutions, 228 are public healthcare facilities. (as of December, 2023)

Level	Primary care center	Secondary care center	Tertiary care center
Type	Clinics and Community health centers	Hospitals and general hospitals	Tertiary general hospital
Subjects	Mostly outpatients	Mostly inpatients	Mostly patients with severe diseases
Major Tasks	Basic medical services for common diseases	Hospitalization and surgical patient care	Medical care for serious illnesses which requires high levels of expertise including surgical and medical procedures
	Comprehensive medical services including disease prevention and medical consultation	Treatment for patients requiring specialized care for different specialties	Treatment for patients with diseases with high rates of lethality or complication
	Healthcare services for publichealth promotion	Treatment for inpatients with chronic diseases in need of long-term care	Treatment for patients requiring care from multiple specialties and utilization of specific medical facilities and equipment

To receive medical treatment at a tertiary general hospital, a patient should submit a referral issued by a primary(clinic) or secondary care center. If a patient goes directly to a tertiary care center without a referral from a primary or secondary care center, he/she may pay higher initial medical expenses.

However, emergency patients, patients going through childbirth, hemophiliacs, and patients who visit the dentist, rehabilitation medicine centers, or family medicine clinics can receive medical treatment at a tertiary care center without a referral.

## **II. National Health Insurance System**

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Most pharmacies do not open on Sundays or during holidays. However, you can purchase medications at a drug store designated as a holiday pharmacy. Visit the website for holiday pharmacies ([www.pharm114.or.kr](http://www.pharm114.or.kr)[Korean]) for further information on business schedules, hours, addresses, etc.

### **ii. Foreigners Eligible for Health Insurance**

Any foreigner who has stayed in Korea for over 6 months is subject to mandatory subscription to health insurance(From July 16, 2019), and receive the same health insurance benefits as Korean citizens. Foreigners who enter Korea from April 3rd, 2024 must stay in Korea for 6 months to be eligible for national health insurance as dependents.

### **iii. Type of Health Insurance**

**(The employee insured)** Foreigners whose status of stay is acknowledged under the relevant laws are obligatorily entitled to the employee insured. However, short-term foreign workers with an Industrial Trainee(D-3) or Work and Visit (H-2) visa may be excluded from payment of long-term care insurance premiums for older persons, as they will return to their country after the period of stay ends.

**(The self-employed insured)** Foreigners who have stayed in Korea for more than 6 months are automatically registered as a self-employed insured by National Health Insurance Service(NHIS). NHIS will send an NHI Card and a bill to their residential address.

*Reference) Dependent Registration*

Under the revised National Health Insurance Act, foreigners must reside in Korea for at least six months to qualify as dependents, similar to the self-employee insured. However, children under 10 and the spouse of an insurance subscriber can be registered as dependents and receive health insurance coverage, regardless of residency.

※ Required Documents : Dependent qualification report, Alien registration card or domestic residence report card, Family relationship certificates, etc.