

Rural health services - Q & A

Women who live in rural and remote areas can find it difficult to get health care information. These questions were posted by visitors to the Better Health Channel and answered by a panel of experts, which includes general practitioners, nutritionists, physical activity professionals and other health and medical specialists.

Q. I live in a rural area – how can I find good health information? Surgery has been suggested to me but I’m not really clear why or what the alternatives are.

Rural women face specific barriers to obtaining quality health information. They have a limited choice of health professionals or alternative service providers. This makes it difficult to get a second opinion and often means travelling long distances to access services. There is also the issue of privacy and confidentiality in small towns.

I can’t guarantee you will obtain all the information you require from these sources and I don’t know if, in fact, you have access to all of these sources. However, below are some suggestions:

- Your doctor - make a long appointment, prepare a list of questions and expect answers. Take a friend with you for support, if necessary.
- Local community health centre - speak with a nurse.
- Local library or hospital library - ask the librarian to help.
- Women’s Health Information Centre - Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm on Tel. (03) 9344 2007, TTY (03) 9344 2849, country callers Freecall 1800 442 007, or e-mail whic@rwh.org.au. Services include information over the phone and written information that can be posted to your address or borrowed resources from our library.
- Your local women’s health service.
- Other community service or support group phone lines - look in the telephone directory or on the Better Health Channel for relevant ones.
- Internet websites - but be wary. It’s best to limit your searches to government or professional organisations.

Want to know more?

Go to More information for support groups, related links and references.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Women's Health Victoria

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