

What is HealthPathways?

HealthPathways is an online health information portal for GPs, to be used at the point of care.

It provides information on how to assess and manage medical conditions, and how to refer patients to local specialists and services in the most timely way.

The portal can be found at:
hne.healthpathways.org.au

The name '*HealthPathways*' reflects the referral lines or 'pathways' which link patients to the best treatment, local service or specialist.

HealthPathways is aimed at General Practitioners (GPs), but can also be used by hospital specialists, practice nurses/managers, and community and allied health providers.

HealthPathways is dynamic - with new pathways constantly under development and existing pathways regularly reviewed in light of changing evidence, technology and local circumstances.

HealthPathways is the first online health information portal of its kind in Australia.

Who is creating HealthPathways?

HealthPathways is a dynamic collaboration between Hunter New England Local Health District and Hunter Urban Medicare Local.

General Practitioners, hospital specialists, and community and allied health providers are all involved in creating *HealthPathways*.

Clinicians – including medical, nursing and allied health professionals, and health scientists - are invited to be a part of the continuing development of *HealthPathways*.

HealthPathways is based on a highly successful model

of collaboration developed in New Zealand by a group called the Canterbury Initiative.

How will HealthPathways benefit GPs?

Using *HealthPathways* is quick and easy.

It helps GPs and primary care providers manage a condition, or to accurately refer a patient to local specialists and services in as little as a few seconds.

In summary, GPs simply:

- log-in to the *HealthPathways* portal
- enter a patient's condition or suspected illness
- assess symptom outlines and management options
- if needed, access information about how to refer to the most appropriate local services and specialists

HealthPathways will complement eHealth, the Australian Government's personally controlled electronic health record system.

How will HealthPathways benefit patients?

HealthPathways is designed to make a real difference to patients. It is designed to help more patients get the right treatment or specialist care, with less waiting time.

HealthPathways will enable GPs to better help patients by outlining:

- the best management and treatment options for common medical conditions
- information on how to refer to the most appropriate local services and specialists
- educational resources and information for patients

What's included on HealthPathways?

By June 2012, there will be around 80 health conditions and their pathways included on the HealthPathways portal.

Examples of some of the pathways currently featured are:

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Chronic pain
- Paediatrics (ie food allergies, UTI)
- Maternity (i.e Routine Antenatal care and Asthma)
- Preventative health (ie SNAPIFs)
- Immunisation
- Liver Conditions

Over time more work will be done to create extra pathways, according to demand.

Who can use the HealthPathways portal?

Only GPs and health practitioners can access HealthPathways. The portal is NOT designed to be used by patients or general community members.

GPs and health practitioners can only use the online portal by using a secure login and password.

Currently, HealthPathways can be used by GPs and health practitioners located in the same catchment area as the Hunter Urban Medicare Local. This area includes the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens and Maitland Local Government Areas.

There are plans to extend HealthPathways, so that GPs and health practitioners from throughout the whole Hunter and New England region can benefit.

Can health practitioners suggest improvements to HealthPathways?

Yes. HealthPathways will continue to develop and improve.

Over time more work will be done to create extra pathways, according to the demand and suggestions made by GPs and health practitioners.

A HealthPathways wiki contains details about pathway development, the progress of pathway teams, and important meetings and dates.

On the wiki, GPs and health practitioners can register interest in participating in the development of a health pathway/s. They can also suggest a pathway/s.

The wiki link is: <http://hneproject.healthpathways.org.au>