



onemedifund[®]

onemedifund newsletter - March 2019

Public wait times reveal private value

It's nice to be reminded every now and then why we think you should have and retain a quality hospital cover like the one provided by *onemedifund*.

One of the biggest drivers of Australians taking up private hospital cover is the health of the public hospital system – specifically planned (elective) surgery waiting times.

A key advantage of having private hospital cover is that you can get your planned surgery done in a private hospital with the doctor of your choice as soon as your doctor is ready (it's usually very speedy).

Private health cover is designed to take the planned surgery load off the public system and it does this pretty well.

Planned surgeries in public hospitals as a public patient naturally aren't as urgent as emergency admissions and are prioritised accordingly (although planned surgeries do have clinically recommended timeframes to operate under). The private system is generally much faster.

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- Quick health quiz
- How to care for your teeth during pregnancy
- Optical benefits give you great choices
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Waiting times for planned surgery in public hospital

There's plenty of public hospital data to explore.

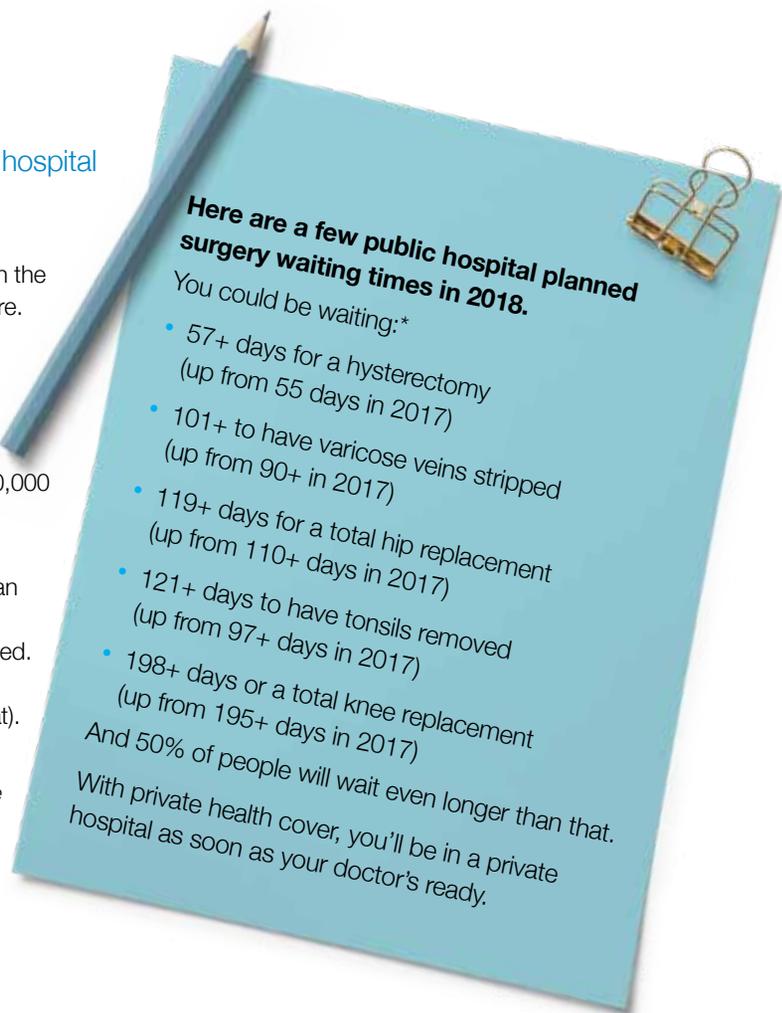
The overall median (the midpoint) waiting period for planned surgery in public hospitals rose to 40 days in the year to 30 June 2018, up two days on the year before.

NSW residents may not be surprised to learn that their median waiting times are the highest in Australia, at 55 days (a rise from 54 days in 2017).

This wait can be hard for patients to bear, especially if their quality of life is not what it could be. In fact, 20,000 odd patients in Australia left public waiting lists to be treated in private hospitals in 2018.

Cataract surgery, removing cloudy eye lenses that can occur in older people, was the most common public planned surgery in 2018 with 72,000 patients admitted. The median wait time for cataract surgery in public hospitals is 86 days (with half waiting longer than that).

**Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Elective surgery waiting times 2017-18; Australian hospital statistics'*



Quick health quiz

1. Don't get enough exercise?
2. Are you overweight?
3. Do you have an unhealthy diet?

If you answered yes to all three, you could be at risk of heart disease (the biggest single killer of Australians), diabetes and more.*

We all let our health go for periods, but you can take action today by joining our Strive for Health program at no cost you. Strive for Health is complimentary on your hospital cover.

Slash your risk of preventable health conditions, taking a weight off your shoulders, stomach, hips and thighs. Sound alright?

Check your risks and if the program is right for you by completing a quick 15-minute Health Risk Assessment here onemedifund.com.au/healthprograms

**Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, Causes of Death, and The Heart Foundation*



How to care for your teeth during pregnancy

Did you know that caring for your teeth can help your baby's health?

Well, now that you know that, you'll be keen to learn how to stay on top of your dental health while pregnant.

Why does pregnancy affect teeth?

Pregnancy changes women's usual hormonal levels, affecting teeth and gums.

Common dental problems during pregnancy

- Irritated and inflamed gums
- Bleeding gums
- Bad breath

It's important to see your dentist if you have these symptoms. Firstly because the earlier gum disease is treated, the better. The reality is that gingivitis, the early form of gum disease, can lead on to periodontitis – a speedy retreat of the gums, bad breath, plaque deposits, loose teeth and potential tooth loss.

Secondly, gum disease is linked to premature birth and low birth weight. Given that a healthy baby is your aim, your oral health is top priority.

Dental treatment you can have while pregnant

- Preventative dental and fluoride treatments
- Some non-urgent elective procedures in the first trimester (speak to your dentist)
- Urgent dental surgery (speak to your dentist)

Tip: Let your dentist know you're pregnant before any treatment, so that they can take all the recommended precautions for you.

Dental treatment you and your dentist might avoid

- X-rays (although these can be accommodated if necessary)
- Non-urgent elective surgery during your 2nd and 3rd trimesters

Good oral hygiene at home

Being pregnant doesn't mean you get to put your self-care on hold. Quite the opposite. Healthy habits are more important than ever in keeping your mouth clean.

Your normal dental regimen should apply: brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, floss your teeth and keep your dental appointments (every 6 months is a rule of thumb).

Pregnancy teeth myths

The following tales are decidedly false. Consider yourself informed.

- Calcium transfers from mum's teeth to the baby
- It's normal to lose a tooth during pregnancy
- Using fluoride on your teeth is bad for your baby

Visit **BetterHealth.vic.gov.au** for extra tips and tricks for tooth brushing while pregnant

Sources: Australian Dental Association, Department of Health (pregnancybirthbaby.org.au), BetterHealth Channel & Dental Health Services Victoria



Optical benefits give you great choices

As a *onemedifund* contributor, you get the freedom to use your optical benefits wherever you please - you are not locked in to the limited choices of a preferred provider.

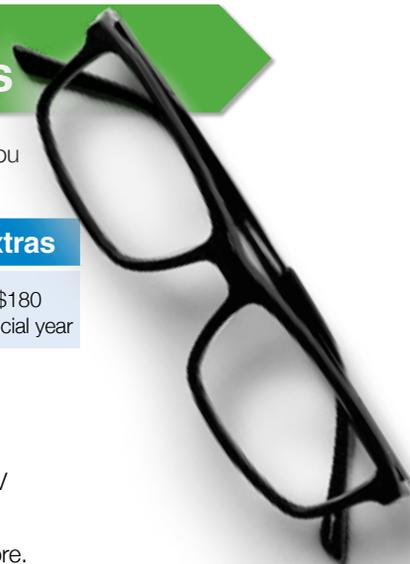
	Extras	Economy Extras
Glasses, frames & contact lenses (6 month waiting period applies)	100% of cost to \$275 per person, per financial year	100% of cost to \$180 per person, per financial year

Don't like paying a gap for glasses? We have an option for that too.

VSP Australia gives contributors with extras cover gap-free frame and lenses.

The deal includes single vision, bifocal or multifocal lenses, scratch resistant coating and UV coating.

Visit **onemedifund.com.au/eyecarediscounts** for details and search for your nearest store.



Can you eat your way to happiness?

You may be surprised to learn that eating can have a positive effect on your brain chemistry, and that's ultimately the release anyone wants under the stranglehold of depression or anxiety.

And no, ice cream isn't one of the good ones, so put that tub back in the freezer.

Food for happiness

• Folate

Low folate levels are linked to depression. So, there's no harm in getting on top of recommended folate intake. Also, folate improves the effectiveness of antidepressant drugs.

Folate can be found naturally in vegies such as leafy greens,



• Water

While technically not food, hydration is important too. Apparently even minor dehydration causes us to lose some mental control.

Take a water bottle to your next meeting to keep a lid on your worsening mood, irritability and restlessness.



legumes, rice, avocado, fruit and, strangely, liver.

One in 12 Australian women don't eat enough folate according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in 2015, while folate deficiency is less common in men.

• Reducing sugar

Sugar comes with its own false highs and lows that can interfere with your life. Stick to low GI foods that keep your blood sugar levels steady.

• Amino acids

Tryptophan is an amino acid that is used by nerve cells in the brain to make serotonin, the happy chemical, and melatonin, a hormone that increases sleep quality and length.

As tryptophan is present in proteins, these protein-rich foods are good sources: eggs, milk, fish, meat, poultry, dairy, seeds and legumes.

beyondblue recommends two to three servings of oily fish a week for your omega-3s too.

• Limiting caffeine

Caffeine-rich drinks are more popular than ever. They're not without their risks however.

beyondblue recommends limiting yourself to 2 coffees per day or zero for people with anxiety.

Unfortunately some of the side effects of going cold turkey on a caffeine addiction are depression and headaches. Luckily, these symptoms are usually temporary and most people who kick the habit are over the worst of it in 3 days.



Source: beyondblue