

Travelling to medical appointments

- Travelling to medical appointments in Melbourne can be difficult and stressful
- There are many things you can do, and assistance available, to make this easier

Call our National Help Line on 1800 263 265

Travelling to Melbourne for medical appointments can often be stressful, time-consuming, costly and difficult. Planning your journey, becoming familiar with different types of transport, and potential forms of assistance can make it easier.

This information sheet will provide you with the information, tips and tricks you need to get to your appointments safely and calmly – no matter what form of transport you use.

I'm travelling by car...

If you're travelling to your appointment by car – either as the driver or as a passenger – it's important to plan and be prepared.

Get comfortable in the car

If you're the driver, make sure you can reach and operate all of the controls, pedals, steering wheel etc comfortably and you have good visibility through your windows and mirrors.

Take breaks

Don't drive for more than an hour without a break. Stop, get out of your car, stretch or massage any tight muscles. Build these breaks into your overall trip time so that you have plenty of time to get from point A to point B safely and comfortably.

Know your route

Either have a map or have your GPS set to your destination. It's very easy to get confused or take a wrong turn if you're anxious or worried about an appointment.



Be prepared for public works

Nothing can disrupt your trip like road works, construction and rail crossing removals. Allow some extra time in your journey so that if you encounter any public works and have to change your route, you don't feel rushed or stressed. If you don't encounter any delays, you can use the extra time before your appointment to grab a coffee, read a book or just relax.

Tolls

Be aware of any tollways you may need to go on. If you have an electronic tag, the toll will automatically be added to your account. If you don't have a tag, you'll need to purchase a pass before you set out on your journey, or up to 3 days after you use the tollway.

Parking

Is there parking at the medical centre or hospital you're going to? If you're not sure, call them before you leave. If there is parking available, is it free or do you have to pay a fee to use it?

Check out the list at the end of this information sheet for maps of accessible Melbourne, including disabled car parking spaces and the Melbourne Inner City Hospital Map and Guide.

I'm travelling by public transport...

If you're travelling by public transport, many things are out of your control, so you'll need to be aware of things such as how to use mobility aids on public transport, which form/s of transport to use and the transport routes.

And don't be afraid to ask for a seat if you need one. Most people are happy to give up their seat for someone who needs it.

Plan your trip

Use the very handy Journey Planner on the Public Transport Victoria website www.ptv.vic.gov.au to work out the best way to get from point A to point B (and back).

Simply enter the place you're departing from (e.g. Wodonga) and the place you're going to (e.g. Royal Melbourne Hospital). You then choose the time you want to depart or arrive by, and the date of your journey. You'll then be given several journey options to choose from. The Journey Planner will provide lots of helpful information such as if reservations are required, platform numbers, tram route, bus route, how far you need to walk and if disabled access is available.

Mobility aids and travelling to Melbourne

Travelling with a mobility aid varies between trains, trams, cabs, buses and coaches as each vehicle is different. Before you set out on your journey, contact the relevant operator and check that your mobility aid will fit on their vehicle.

Find out more www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport/mobility-aids

Travelling with V/Line

To check if the service you plan to use is accessible, look for the accessible symbol next to the listing for the service.

You can get help getting on and off the vehicle if you need it, and if you have difficulty carrying your luggage on board you can use V/Line's checked luggage service on most long-distance services up to 30 minutes prior to departure.

Find out more 1800 800 007 www.vline.com.au/Fares-general-info/Accessibility

Getting around Melbourne

Once in Melbourne there are a number of public transport options available to you.

If you're travelling by train - all train routes are wheelchair accessible. If you need help boarding a train you should wait on the platform near the front of the train in order to board the first carriage near the driver. All metropolitan train stations are wheelchair accessible

by lift, ramp or staff assistance.

Find out more www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport

If you're travelling by tram - there are more than 130 low floor trams on Melbourne's tram network. High floor trams aren't accessible for people using wheelchairs and scooters. To find out if the next tram at your stop will be a low floor tram, you can use a free tramTRACKER® app (www.yarratrams.com.au/tramtracker) or call 1300 698726 (1300 MYTRAM).

If you're travelling by bus - most bus services are wheelchair accessible. To find out which services are accessible check your printed timetable - accessible services are shown with an access symbol on the front of the timetable booklet or next to the relevant service. They can be indicated by the letter 'W' (wheelchair) or 'LF' (low-floor). On website timetables, accessible services are indicated by the access symbol above the time of the service. Bus companies will try to schedule a low-floor bus for you, provided you give them adequate notice. It's best to contact the company the day before you travel.

Find out more www.ptv.vic.gov.au

Try Before you Ride

Public Transport Victoria has an annual Try Before you Ride event that's designed to give you the chance to familiarise yourself with the public transport system. You can access a range of stationary vehicles so you can practice how to board accessible bus, tram and train services. Staff are available on the day to answer your questions.

Find out more www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport/try-before-you-ride

Concessions and travel passes

You can purchase concession fares for train, tram and bus passenger services operating in Melbourne and V\Line services if you're:

- a child or a student
- a Pensioner, Disability Support Pensioner, Carer Payment recipient
- a Health Care Card or Seniors Card holder
- a war veteran/war widow(er).

Public Transport Victoria also has travel passes available for eligible passengers and their carers that can be used on Victoria's public transport system.

Find out more www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/fares/free-travel-passes/access-travel-pass

I need help to get to my appointment...

Sometimes travelling by car or public transport isn't an option, or you may need some extra help.

Travellers Aid Australia

If you're anxious about travelling to Melbourne, Travellers Aid provides a volunteer companion service to help Victorians who need to travel to Melbourne for medical appointments. Trained volunteers meet travelers and accompany them by public transport to and from their appointment in metropolitan Melbourne. The service helps you travel independently when you're unfamiliar with Melbourne or if you're anxious about using public transport alone. This is a free service and must be booked in advance.

Travellers Aid also provides a range of other services including: free personal care assistance for people with disabilities, mobility equipment hire, internet access, baby-change facilities, accessible toilets, adult change facilities, luggage storage and tourist information.

Find out more 1300 700 399 www.travellersaid.org.au

Multi Purpose Taxi Program

If you have a severe or permanent disability and can't safely use public transport, you may be eligible to receive a Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) Card. This will entitle you subsidised taxi fares.

Find out more <http://taxi.vic.gov.au/passengers/mptp>

If you don't have a MPTP Card you can still book a wheelchair accessible taxi, which operate in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

To book a wheelchair accessible taxi in Melbourne call:

- Silver Top Taxis on 03 8413 7202
- Yellow Cabs on 13 6294.

If you're in a regional area call the local taxi depot and ask for a wheelchair accessible taxi.

Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme The Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS) is designed to help rural Victorians attend their specialist appointments. The scheme helps cover some of the travel and accommodation costs for eligible Victorians and their approved escort(s) when they have to travel a long way for specialist medical treatment. This is defined as more than 100 kilometres one way or an average of 500 kilometres a week for one or more weeks. For eligibility criteria, guidelines and forms visit www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/rural-health/vptas-how-to-apply.

Red Cross Patient Transport Service

If public transport isn't an option for you the Red Cross operates a transport service to medical appointments. Cars are driven by volunteers, not medical staff, so you may need to have a carer with you if you're unwell.

Find out more 03 8327 7700 www.redcross.org.au/transport.aspx

Angel Flight

This is a volunteer run charity that operates non-emergency flights to help rural and remote Australians get to medical appointments in other parts of the country. All flights are free and people are transported to medical facilities across Australia.

Find out more www.angelflight.org.au

Mobility Allowance

Mobility allowance is available through Centrelink and comes with a Health Care Card but it is not income assessed. It doesn't require people to actually use public transport regularly, they just have to prove that if they did need to use it, they would struggle. The eligibility rules have changed as of 1 January 2017 as this allowance will be rolled into the NDIS. For more information visit: <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/corporate/budget/budget-2016-17/disability-and-carers/mobility-allowance>

Maps and guides

These maps and guides will help you get around Melbourne more easily.

- **Accessible Melbourne**, including a list of accessible public toilets and disabled car parking spaces www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/disability-services/Pages/accessible-amenities.aspx
- **Melbourne Inner City Hospital Map and Guide** www.gettingthere.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Map-Inner_Melb_Hospitals-Large_Print.pdf
- **Mobility map of Melbourne CBD** www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/cbd-mobility-map-2011.pdf

Things to remember

- Travelling to medical appointments in Melbourne can be difficult and stressful
- There are many things you can do, and assistance available, to make this easier.

This information was made possible through a grant from the RACV Community Foundation.

How we can help

Call our National Help Line and speak to our nurses

Phone 1800 263 265 or email helpline@move.org.au

Visit our website move.org.au for information on:

- muscle, bone and joint conditions
- ways to live well with a muscle, bone and joint condition
- our new resource *Managing your pain: An A-Z guide*
- programs and services
- peer support groups
- upcoming webinars, seminars and other events.

More to explore

- **RACV**
www.racv.com.au | 13 72 28
- **Accessible Melbourne**
<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/disability-services/Pages/accessible-amenities.aspx>
- **Angel Flight**
<http://www.angelflight.org.au>
- **Public Transport Victoria**
www.ptv.vic.gov.au
- **Red Cross Patient Transport Service**
<http://www.redcross.org.au/transport.aspx>
- **Taxi Services Commission**
<http://taxi.vic.gov.au/passengers/mptp>
- **Travellers Aid**
<https://www.travellersaid.org.au/>
- **Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme**
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/rural-health/vptas-how-to-apply>

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