



## Care

### Exemplary medical care

The healthcare system in Switzerland is very well developed. All residents have comprehensive and compulsory accident and illness insurance. Numerous doctors' surgeries, pharmacies and hospitals ensure patients are well provided for. The system is based around the general practitioner as the first port of call. Only in serious emergencies should you go directly to the hospital or call an ambulance.

### Family doctors/paediatricians

In Switzerland, the relationship between doctors and patients is very important. The doctor knows your personal medical history and is the first point of contact for medical problems. If necessary, patients are referred to specialist doctors or to a hospital. In principle, it is advisable to find a general practitioner as soon as you arrive in Valais, as well as a paediatrician, if necessary. For newborns, you should try to find a doctor several months before the due date.

### Dentistry

Dental treatment usually has to be paid for by the patient. However, it is possible to take out supplementary insurance that covers dental treatment. Children who attend school are entitled to one free dental check-up per year. Information on this is issued by the school.

### Hospitals and emergency wards

If you need to be admitted to hospital, in most cases you will be registered by a doctor. However, in the event of a serious emergency, you should go directly to the accident and emergency ward. If the condition is life-threatening or the patient has to be picked up, an ambulance should be called on emergency number 144. In contrast to other countries, where emergency wards are the first point of contact for all kinds of health incidents or concerns, in Switzerland the general practitioner is responsible for less serious emergencies.

**Hospital Valais / [www.vs.ch](http://www.vs.ch)**

**Emergency Visp / [www.hopitalduvalais.ch](http://www.hopitalduvalais.ch)**

### Complementary medicine

A wide range of alternative medical therapy methods are available in the canton of Valais. These include naturopathic, body therapy and relaxation practices and treatment methods such as homeopathy, osteopathy, kinesiology or traditional Chinese medicine. The costs can be covered by a supplementary insurance policy, depending on your insurance model and whether or not the therapist is recognised. It is worth asking for this information before treatment.

### Pharmacies

In the case of a mild illness, it is best to seek advice from a pharmacy. Pharmacies sell prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Outside normal opening hours, there is usually one pharmacy per region that offers an emergency service. If you want to know which pharmacies offer an emergency service in the larger towns (Brig-Glis, Visp, Naters), call 0848 39 39 39. Outside the larger towns, the telephone number is 0900 558 143 (CHF 0.50 per call + CHF 1.00 per minute from a landline). The service can only be used for urgent prescriptions!

*Prescription medicines: In Switzerland, medicines are divided into five distribution categories. Medicines on lists A & B are regarded as prescription-only products. Medicines on lists C & D are available over the counter in pharmacies, but require a doctor's prescription to be delivered by mail. Category E comprises remedies that are available in shops without specialist advice, such as camomile tea.*

Swissmedic / [www.swissmedic.ch](http://www.swissmedic.ch)

Pharmasuisse / [www.pharmasuisse.org](http://www.pharmasuisse.org)

#### Home care

People who are ill or need home care can make use of the Spitex assistance and care at home service. Specialists visit the patients at home to care for them or help with household tasks. The offer is aimed at people who require support due to illness, accidents, old-age, complications during pregnancy or after giving birth. Some of the costs are covered by basic health insurance.

Spitex / [www.smzo.ch](http://www.smzo.ch)

**Reference:** [www.hallo-aargau.ch](http://www.hallo-aargau.ch)