

Healthcare at Cornell: Information for International Students

Q: How do I see a doctor at Cornell?

STUDENT 1:

Students have their own health center – Cornell Health – right on campus.

All students are assigned their own medical provider, called a “Primary Care Provider,” when they start at Cornell. You’ll see your Primary Care Provider — or a member their team — if you get sick or injured, or just want a general checkup.

You can talk to your PCP about anything. They’re your central point of contact, who can always connect you with specialists or other providers, when needed.

STUDENT 2:

With over 220 employees, Cornell Health offers lots of great services. You can get x-rays and lab work done, or see a physical therapist, or a nutritionist.

They also have their own pharmacy if you need to pick up medications or self-care supplies.

If there’s anything you need that Cornell Health *doesn’t* offer, they’ll help you find specialists in the area where you can get the care you need.

Q: How do I make an appointment?

STUDENT 3:

You can call Cornell Health, or log into their secure patient portal — “myCornellHealth” — to find an appointment time that works with your class schedule.

During the academic year, Cornell Health is open Monday through Saturday, with evening hours Monday through Thursday.

If it’s easier to communicate with your provider in your native language, you can request to use Cornell Health’s “language line” during your appointment – it’s a telephone-based language translation service with more than 200 languages offered.

Q: How much does it cost?

STUDENT 4:

As an international student, you’ll be enrolled in Cornell’s Student Health Plan – or “SHP” – which is the university’s health insurance plan for students.

More about health insurance later ...

But when you go to Cornell Health, being enrolled in SHP means that visits cost just \$10, and most prescription medications cost \$12.

Your visit or pharmacy charge will be go directly onto your Bursar bill, unless you prefer to pay in person at the time of care.

Q: What else does Cornell Health offer?

STUDENT 1:

Many students go to Cornell Health for sexual healthcare — including sexual wellness exams, birth control, and screenings and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (or STIs).

I've gotten STI screenings myself – they're actually free! They have a special team of sexual health nurses who provide these services.

You can even get free condoms at Cornell Health. Prescription birth control methods and other sexual health supplies are available at Cornell Health's pharmacy.

STUDENT 5:

All of your care at Cornell Health is confidential, which means that your private health information isn't shared with anyone else.

After an appointment or a trip to the pharmacy, your parents may see a generic Cornell Health charge on your Bursar bill. But it's up to you how much you want to tell them about what the charge is for.

STUDENT 3:

Lots of students *also* go to Cornell Health if they want to talk with a counselor. Cornell Health's Counseling & Psychological Services department — known as CAPS — has more than 40 counselors, from diverse backgrounds.

Their job is to meet with students who are struggling – with anything from homesickness, culture shock, and feeling like they don't fit in, to stress, sadness, and depression – and to help them feel the best they can so they can focus on their studies and enjoy life. Individual counseling is offered, as well as group counseling.

STUDENT 2:

Students who want to meet with a CAPS counselor can call or go online to schedule an appointment ... or stop by a "Let's Talk" site, where they can speak informally with a counselor any day of the week, Monday-Friday, at different campus locations. Let's talk is free and confidential, with no appointment necessary.

Q: What happens if I need help when Cornell Health is closed?

STUDENT 4:

Any time you have an urgent concern – or just aren't sure how to deal with a medical or mental health situation – you can also Cornell Health, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When Cornell Health is closed, you'll reach an on-call medical or mental health provider who can help you figure out what care is needed, and – if necessary – can refer you to an urgent care provider nearby, or to the local hospital.

STUDENT 5:

In a life-threatening emergency, always call 911 first, to call an ambulance or alert the police. This includes alcohol and mental health emergencies.

For very serious injuries or illnesses, you would be taken by ambulance to the local hospital. Ambulance transports are for critical situations when care needs to be administered on the way there.

Q: What about health insurance, anyway?

STUDENT 2:

Insurance in the United States is very complicated. Luckily, being on the Student Health Plan makes paying for care easy at Cornell Health, with a \$10 visit charge for nearly all services.

STUDENT 3:

But if you need to see a doctor or counselor *outside* of Cornell Health — anywhere in the United States — you'll pay the least amount if you go to a SHP “participating provider” — also called an “in-network” provider — which just means that the provider accepts your SHP insurance.

You can find SHP participating providers — and learn about associated costs — by visiting Cornell's Student Health Benefits website. You can also contact Student Health Benefits for help, or come in to Cornell Health to speak with a Student Health Benefits representative.

Q: What else should I know?

STUDENT 1:

The healthier you are — physically, mentally, and emotionally — the more you'll get out of your time at Cornell.

Develop healthy habits to help support your academic success. For example

STUDENT 4:

Make sure you get enough sleep — try to aim for 8 hours each night.

STUDENT 2:

Eat well, and find time for some exercise — it's good for your body, and great for your mind.

STUDENT 5:

Find ways to connect with others. Join a team or a club. Feeling connected socially is an important part of taking care of your mental health.

STUDENT 3:

Enjoy the natural beauty of the campus. Studies show that spending time in nature improves your mood and reduces stress.

STUDENT 4:

Lots of students at Cornell don't drink, and most don't use other drugs either. But if you *do* drink alcohol, stick to beer to minimize the risks. And if you smoke or use e-cigarettes and want to quit, Cornell Health offers cessation supplies.

STUDENT 1:

Get your flu shot every year — they're free at on-campus clinics each fall!

STUDENT 2:

Learn to meditate! Meditation is an excellent stress-reducer, and can help you learn to focus and calm your mind. There are free guided meditation sessions on campus, every day, Monday through Friday, called "Let's Meditate."

STUDENT 5:

Cornell Health's website has lots more tips and information to help you stay healthy so you can feel and do your best. Check out their webpage especially for international students for more details about how to get care while you're at Cornell.

health.cornell.edu