

FAMILY PAEDIATRICIANS OF CHOICE

Family paediatricians of choice are part of the National Health Service and work under agreement with the Reggio Emilia Local Health Authority-IRCCS.

Through regular check-ups (well-child assessments), screening, medical examinations, prescriptions for treatment, and, where necessary, consultations with specialists and referrals for diagnostic tests, **the paediatrician helps to keep children in good health, up to the age of 6 or 14, and up to 16 in the case of chronic conditions or special circumstances.**

THE DUTIES OF THE PAEDIATRICIAN

The paediatrician provides free care for children registered on his or her patient list:

- preventive care and health education through scheduled well-child assessments;
- surgery and home visits for acute and chronic conditions;
- referral for diagnostic and laboratory tests;
- consultations with specialists and with other professionals involved in child health;
- referral for specialist examinations and therapeutic spa treatments;
- medical certificates for a child's illness (to enable a parent to request leave from work);
- fitness certificates for school sports, issued on written request from the school or from sports clubs affiliated with official bodies;
- statutory certificates required for readmission to school or nursery.

The paediatrician also keeps each patient's health record up to date.

THE PRACTICE: OPENING HOURS AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

The paediatrician's practice is a private facility accredited with the Local Health Authority (*Azienda USL*), open at least **five days a week** and closed on days before public holidays (except the day before the patron saint's day) and on public holidays. Opening hours are displayed in the practice waiting room and on the Local Health Authority's website.

Consultations at the practice are normally carried out **by appointment**, except in emergencies. In all cases, it is advisable to contact the paediatrician before bringing the child to the practice.

The paediatrician cares for hundreds of children, so the parents must be considerate and avoid arriving at the practice without notice.

Healthcare is guaranteed throughout the year; in the paediatrician's absence, a locum paediatrician will look after the patients.

Paediatricians who are **members of group practices** are available for urgent consultations with the patients of their associated colleagues. Specific information on procedures and on which doctors to contact can be found in the waiting rooms of paediatric practices.

Home Visits

The paediatrician makes **free home visits** when deemed necessary, particularly when the child cannot be transported. Home visits requested by 10 a.m. will be carried out on the same day; requests made later will be carried out by 12 noon the following day.

Out-of-Hours Care

During the night (8 p.m.–8 a.m.), on the days before holidays and on public holidays, assistance is provided by the out-of-hours care service (formerly the medical emergency service, tel +39-0522/290001).

Prescriptions for medicines, laboratory tests and specialist consultations

The paediatrician prescribes the medicines, laboratory tests, and specialist consultations considered necessary to safeguard the child's health, in line with his or her contract with the National Health Service.

Vaccinations

In our province, the **Community Paediatrics** service provides children's vaccinations, in collaboration with family paediatricians of choice to ensure optimal vaccination coverage for the health of both individuals and the community.