

Getting help from the Sexual Health Nurse



 **headspace**
Mildura

Suite 2/125 Pine Ave, Mildura VIC 3500
(cnr of Pine Ave & 10th St)
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headspace.org.au

What is a Sexual Health Nurse?

Sexual Health Nurses are nurses who are trained to help you with concerns around your sexual and reproductive health. They keep your health issues private and they have usually heard it all before so don't be embarrassed to share your concerns. Their services can be either free or at a low cost. This means that seeing a sexual health nurse is a great place to start when you are concerned about sexual health issues.

Our nurse is **Melissa Chadwick**

See profile over page....

Your family GP is also a good place to start if you need some help and feel comfortable talking to them. Even if they know your family they are still required to keep information about you private. (There is more information about confidentiality over the page).



headspace Mildura is open Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.

Our lovely sexual health nurse is here on a Tuesday every month from 1pm – 5pm. See poster in foyer or on website for specific dates

Note: You may want to talk to the nurse on a day she is not here. We are happy to take a message and she will return your call on her next working day. **headspace Mildura is NOT equipped to manage urgent health needs. If your concern is urgent please phone '000' or alternately Mildura Base Hospital on 5022 3333.**

Cost:

Free: Our Sexual Health Nurse is provided 'in-kind', which means it is free for you!

There may be some consultations which involve a procedure or treatment. For these you may need to show a Medicare card or give your Medicare number to be bulk billed. You can use a parent's or family's card but if you are Australian and over 15 years of age you are entitled to have your own Medicare card.

Having your own card means that your parents are unable to review your visits to the doctor. You can apply for your own card by filling out a form available at a Medicare office, or through the Medicare website (www.medicareaustralia.gov.au). Your GP and some pharmacists might have forms as well.



Making an appointment:

You'll usually need to make an appointment to see the sexual health nurse, either by **phoning or dropping into the centre**. The receptionist doesn't need to know the reason why you want to see the nurse but on your first visit you will have to provide your personal contact details. If you don't feel comfortable going on your own consider taking someone else to the appointment; a friend, parent or relative

Appointments are usually for 30 minutes. For your first appointment, or if you have a number of issues you want to talk about, ask for a longer appointment so you have plenty of time to cover everything. First appointments with the sexual health nurse are usually longer so that they can get to know you. Often you may have already had an appointment with a E&A Worker first who can help explain some of the other things going on and also help link you in with the nurse.

It is okay to ask the receptionist or the E&A Workers questions about the sexual health nurse to help you feel more comfortable.

What to expect when you visit a Sexual Health Nurse

At your first visit headspace Mildura the Sexual Health Nurse may ask you a range of questions. They also usually have a good understanding of what is going on for you from speaking with the E&A Worker.



The Sexual Health Nurse is here to help you. They are not prying into your life for no reason, and they are not making judgments about you. The nurse can provide you with education sessions; sexual health checks and sexually transmitted disease screening. Testing for STIs may include peeing into a cup or taking some blood or a physical examination. The sexual health nurse cannot perform any type of physical examination without your permission.

The nurse will then discuss any concerns and what to do next. Ask questions so you understand what is going on and what you can do to help or next time. Sometimes the nurse will ask you to come back for a return visit to check on your progress, discuss the results of any tests, or just to have some more time to explore the problem.

To make sure everything is going okay for you or to monitor other health problems, the nurse may also recommend that you check in the GP. For routine test results, the nurse or GP may arrange to ring you on the next working day after the results have arrived.

Getting Tested

If you are sexually active you should get tested for STIs once a year, even if you use protection. You can just say "I want an STI test" Testing is confidential (see right) and there is no need to be embarrassed – That is what we are here for!!

About Melissa...

I first started working in sexual health while living in London for 6 years in the early 2000's.

I'm passionate about providing great sexual health to young people and finding the right fit for you and your lifestyle. I believe that when you take the right birth control and your sexual health is in order then you're in a great position to make the best success of your life.



Come in for a confidential chat, I'd love to meet you.

Changing Practitioners

If you are not feeling comfortable and safe with your nurse or GP you can change to another practitioner and ask that your medical records get transferred. You are also welcome to provide suggestions/ feedback to any of us or via our anonymous feedback box in reception. Or for serious concerns regarding your care you can contact:

Health Services Commissioner Complaints and Information
Telephone: 1300 582 113 Fax No.: (61 3) 9032 3111
E-mail: hsc@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Confidentiality

All headspace workers have to keep information about their patients private. This means they cannot discuss your visit with anyone else but there are some exceptions. If a worker thinks you are likely to harm yourself or someone else they have a 'duty of care' to make sure you stay safe so they may need to tell other people. There are also some circumstances by law that require workers to share information. The nurse may talk with you about seeing someone like a psychologist or counsellor to support you with your mental health. If you want to know more about your rights to privacy and confidentiality ask the nurse to talk it through with you at the beginning of your first appointment.

