



## What health services are required for HD care?

**People living with HD will require a variety of health and social services. It is important to engage with services on offer to self-manage your condition and keep well and active for as long as possible.**

Our Local Health Office provides access to community health and personal social services. Services provided through Local Health Offices and from Health Centres include: general practitioner (GP) services, public health nursing (PHN), community welfare, speech therapy, social work, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropody, psychiatric services and home help.

See: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/llst/>

**GP** - It is important to talk to your GP about any changes to your health or any worries you may have relating to the onset of symptoms. If you have a diagnosis of HD your GP can help you manage symptoms and can make referrals to other specialists such as physiotherapists and dieticians. If you believe that you have HD symptoms but do not have a diagnosis you can ask your GP to refer you to a neurologist. HDAI can provide information on neurology services.

**Public health nurses** - (PHNs) provide a range of health care services in the community. They provide advice and assistance in accessing other care services. You may be referred to your local PHN by your family doctor (GP), or you may contact the service yourself through your local health centre or Local Health Office. Info at: <http://www.citizensinformation.ie>

**Dietician** - A dietician will assess your nutritional needs and give advice. Many individuals with HD require a high calorie intake to maintain their body weight. You can be referred to a dietician by your GP, PHN or through a neurology clinic.

**Physiotherapists** show you how to keep as active as possible to maintain muscle strength and minimise potential problems of falling. You can ask your GP, PHN or Neurologist to refer you to a physiotherapist.

**Occupational therapists** (OTs) can advise on equipment or alterations to your home that may help you carry out normal everyday activities and do the things that matter to you. This might include specialist seating and eating aids, for example. You can ask your GP or PHN to refer you to an OT.

**Speech and language therapists** (SLT) help people who have difficulties with communicating, eating, drinking or swallowing. You can ask your GP or PHN to refer you to an SLT

**Social workers** can work with individuals and families to support and advocate for services.

**Neurologists** provide medical care for people with neurological illnesses at hospital based clinics. A neurologist will assess your symptoms and talk to you about ways to manage and treat them including both medication and support from other professionals.

**Neuropsychologists** can help with the cognitive and behavioural challenges of HD. You can ask your GP or neurologist for a referral.

**Neuropsychiatrists** can help when the behavioural or emotional side of HD is causing challenges by looking at symptom management, including the possibility of medication and lifestyle adaptations.

**Mental Health Services** can include support from community mental health nurses, counsellors, psychiatrists and psychologists. They provide people with opportunities to talk through difficulties relating to mood and emotional wellbeing and help find ways of coping better. You can ask your GP to refer you to a mental health professional.

**Dental Care** - It is very important to keep up good dental hygiene. Your dentist can talk to you about how best to care for your teeth and offer guidance on toothbrushes and toothpastes. If you have any problems with swallowing or sudden movements it is important to let your dentist know and ask them to adapt the work they do for your safety and comfort.