

WELL-BEING



**INSIDE
EXPAT
HEALTH**
FRANCE



Welcome to France!

Everybody wants to make the most of their expat experience, but moving abroad can be challenging. That's why caring for your mental health and leading an active lifestyle are so important to stay healthy and happy in your new country.

This guide contains helpful tips about safeguarding your well-being in France.

01

MENTAL HEALTH

Access mental health specialists	5
Coverage	6
In an emergency	7
Other resources	8

02

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, SPORTS AND EXERCISE

Activities	10
Gyms and fitness centres	11

03

HOLISTIC THERAPY

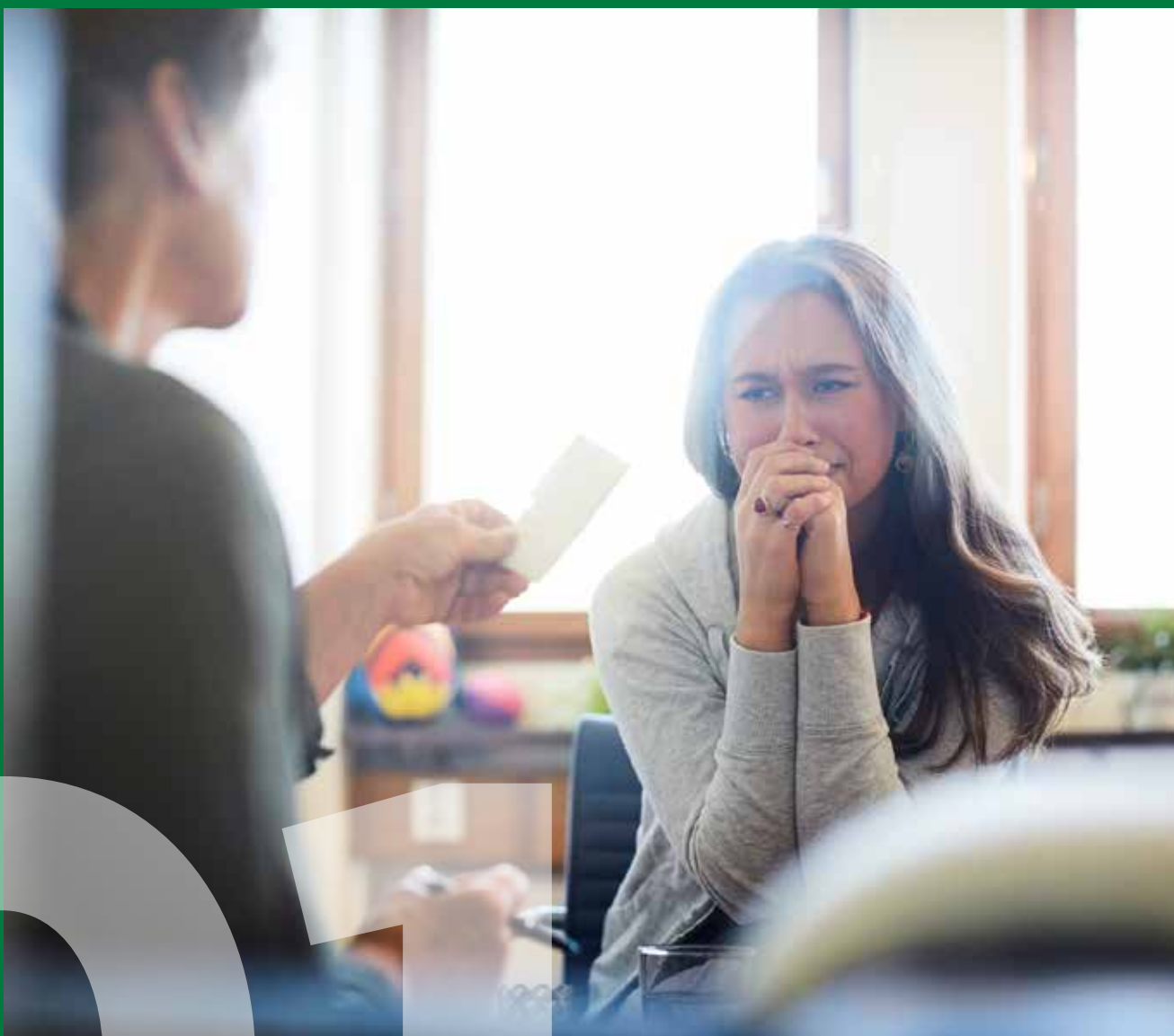
Available therapies	13
Coverage	14

04

FAMILY & CHILDREN

Health care for children	16
Seeking specialist care	17
Vaccination	18
Mental health care for children	19
Health care for pregnant individuals	20

▶ MENTAL HEALTH





ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS

Healthcare is provided through *Centre Médico-Psychologique* (CMP), Medical Psychological Centres located in French hospitals.



Medical professionals available at CMPs include:

- **Psychiatrists**
- **Psychologists**
Licensed doctors who can issue prescriptions
- **Nurses**
- **Social workers**
- **Occupational therapists**
- **Speech therapists**

Unfortunately, most of these services are administered in French. A recent surge in demand for mental health services and a shortage of specialists available has resulted in long waiting lists.

COVERAGE



With referrals from *médecins généralistes*, General Practitioners (GP), some mental health services provided in CMPs are partially or fully covered by the state.

You are eligible for reimbursements if you are:

- **A resident in France for at least three months with an up-to-date *carte vitale*, green card.**
- **A European citizen with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).**
- **A United Kingdom citizen with a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC).**
- **An individual under the age of 26 can seek psychiatric or neuropsychiatric treatment without a referral.**



IN AN EMERGENCY

You can contact the following organisations for help:

- **SOS helpline:**
01 46 21 46 46
- **UK-based Samaritans hotline:**
0044 8457 909090
- **Alcohol hotline (in French, 14:00–02:00):**
0811 91 30 30
- **Cannabis hotline (in French):**
0811 91 20 20
- **Drug abuse helpline (in French, 08:00–02:00)**
0800 23 13 13 or 01 70 23 13 13



You may need the help of a fluent French speaker if you encounter pre-recorded messages on some emergency service lines.

If you urgently need to locate a mental health service in your residential area, contact your local *mairie*, townhall for assistance. You may also head to your nearest hospital in case of psychiatric emergencies.



OTHER RESOURCES

You may use these resources to find out more about mental health in France:

- **Directory for English-speaking counsellors and therapists:**
counsellinginfrance.com
- **Zava, for online consultations:**
zavamed.com/fr
- **Complémentaire Sante Solidaire, Complementary Solidarity Health Fund for those with low income:**
complementaire-sante-solidaire.gouv.fr
- **Ameli, the official website for the French social security system:**
ameli.fr
- **Ameli advice line for information about state insurance in France (in English):**
If you are in France: 3646
If you are overseas: +33 811 70 36 46
- **Federation Nationale des Centres de Sante, National Federation of Health Centres, to find a health centre in your residential region:**
fncs.org/emploi-et-sante/carte-des-centres-de-sante-en-france





OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, SPORTS AND EXERCISE

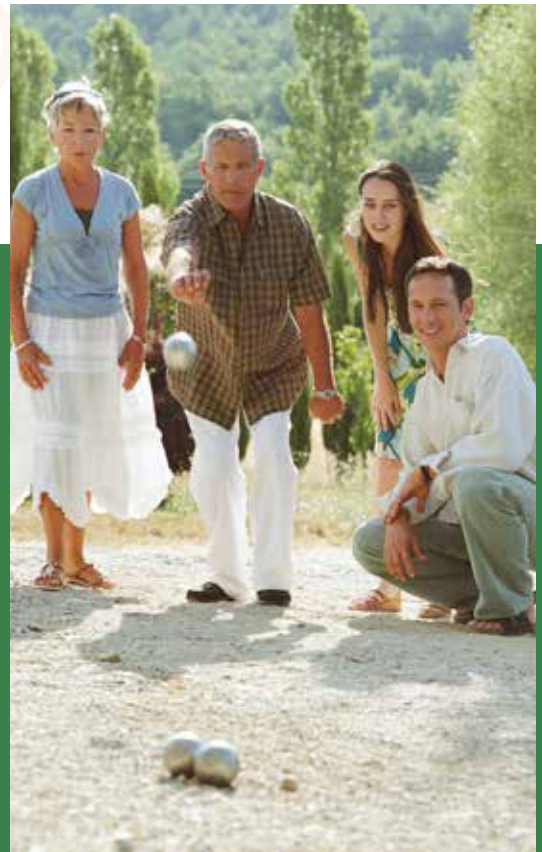




ACTIVITIES

French cities are designed to facilitate all kinds of fitness activities, including:

- **Boules**
- **Cycling**
- **Rugby**
- **Football**
- **Swimming**
- **Mountaineering**
- **Scuba diving**
- **Caving**
- **Combat sports**
Like karate and boxing
- **Shooting**
- **Race car driving**



If you intend to participate in a team sport or a high-risk sport, you are required to obtain a sporting licence from your primary care provider to certify your medical suitability. For some sports, this medical certificate has to be renewed yearly; otherwise, they are valid for three years. Consultations to obtain a licence may not be reimbursed by the state.



GYMS AND FITNESS CENTRES

Gyms are not as popular in France as in many other countries. However, fitness centres and gyms, such as Club Med Gym, can be easily found in nearly every major neighbourhood in Paris. They have different offerings, but most are equipped with modern facilities and the latest courses in fitness trends.

Most fitness classes are conducted in French though some centres have English or English-speaking trainers.

From monthly packages to comparatively cheaper year-long subscriptions, there are many fitness options for you to consider. Ask if there are residential discounts available for you and do ensure you understand the terms of these subscription contracts. Some may include a clause that you must issue a three-month cancellation notice or you will be subject to automatic renewal on the anniversary of your signing.



HOLISTIC THERAPY





AVAILABLE THERAPIES

Complementary and alternative medicine is recognised by the French health authority, and its practitioners are registered with the Professional Society of Physicians. Many French GPs offer them as an alternative treatment option for various ailments.

Alternative holistic therapies are utilised by over half of all French patients alongside conventional medicine. The most popular forms of therapy include:

- **Homoeopathy**
- **Acupuncture**
- **Herbal medicine**
- **Water cure**
- **Chiropractic**





COVERAGE

These forms of alternative therapies are covered by the state if administered by qualified or licensed professionals:

- **Homoeopathy**
- **Osteopathy**
- **Acupuncture**
- **Chiropractic**



Other forms of alternative therapies like reflexology are not usually covered by the state. You may have to arrange for private health insurance or pay out of pocket to access the full range of holistic therapies available in France.





FAMILY & CHILDREN





HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN

All children below the age of 18 years old have access to free health care under their parents' name, regardless of their nationality. They can request their own *carte vitale*, green card, from *Protection Maladie Universelle* (PUMA), the French public health care system when they turn 16 years old.

What is covered:

- **20 free compulsory health screenings from birth to six years old.**
- **Yearly follow-up health screenings after six years old.**
- **Free dental check-ups until the age of 18 years old.**
- **80% reimbursement rate for short-term hospitalisation.**
Their *mutuelle*, private health insurance covers the remainder.
- **100% reimbursement rate for hospitalisations of over a month.**

Paediatric screenings are done to screen children for potential health issues such as:

- **Genetic diseases**
For example, sickle cell disease and cystic fibrosis
- **Visual disorders**
- **Language and learning problems**
- **Hearing disorders**
- **Diabetes**

Certificats de Santé de l'Enfant (CSE), Child Health Certificates, will be issued after health screenings when the child hits these milestones:

- **Within eight days of birth**
- **After nine months**
- **After 24 months**





SEEKING SPECIALIST CARE

Paediatricians are doctors who specialise in children's health. Children currently outnumber paediatricians in France by 5,300 to one. It can be a long wait to book an appointment, so it is important for you to register your child with a paediatrician or a local GP as soon as you have moved to France.



GPs and paediatricians will assess and determine on a case-by-case basis whether to refer your child to dedicated paediatric health centres like *Centre Médical Infantile (CMI)*, *Établissement Public de Santé Mentale Lille-Métropole (EPSM)* or *Centre Médical Spécialisé de l'Enfant et de l'Adolescent (CMSEA)*.

Protection Maternelle et Infantile (PMI) are local centres that offer social and health care support to pregnant women, and children six and below. They are usually staffed by paediatricians, midwives and gynaecologists.



VACCINATION

France mandates certain vaccines for children from birth to the age of 13 years old.



Children born before 2018 must be vaccinated for the following diseases to attend schools in France:

- **Diphtheria**
- **Whooping cough**
- **Tetanus**



Children born after January of 2018 have to be vaccinated for the following diseases:

- **Diphtheria**
- **Tetanus**
- **Polio**
- **Whooping cough**
- **Haemophilus influenzae B**
- **Hepatitis B**
- **Meningococcus C**
- **Pneumococcus**
- **Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)**

These vaccinations enjoy a 65% reimbursement rate from the French social security, with the remaining 35% covered by your child's *mutuelle*. Certain vaccines offered are 100% covered by the state.

Compulsory vaccinations for travel purposes like yellow fever and cholera are not covered by health insurance.



MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN

Individuals under the age of 26 can seek psychiatric or neuropsychiatric treatment without a referral from a GP.

Centre Médico-Psychologique (CMP), the department in French hospitals dedicated to mental health care, hosts *pédopsychiatre*, psychiatrists specialising in the mental health of younger children. These are accessible with a referral from a GP.



Aside from hospital-based CMPs, *Centres Médico-Psycho-Pédagogique* (CMPP) provides free services to help children with developmental issues or dyslexia.



HEALTH CARE FOR PREGNANT INDIVIDUALS

Gynaecologist services are generally covered by the state and do not require a doctor's referral. But to receive coverage, you do need to register a new pregnancy with *Caisse d'Assurance Maladie* (CAM), the Health Insurance Fund, and *Caisse d'Allocations Familiales* (CAF), the Family Allowance Fund within the first 14 weeks.

You can begin your search for a suitable gynaecologist on:

- **Ameli, the official website for the French social security system:** annuaire.sante.ameli.fr
- **Gyn&Co, a feminist-run resource website for pregnant individuals:** gynandco.wordpress.com





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