

FIELD OF WORK OF HEALTH VISITORS IN CYPRUS

Current Health visitors' Services in Cyprus.

The main objectives of the Health visitors' Services in Cyprus is the protection and promotion of health as well as the prevention of illness. Currently the following Health visitors' Services are available in Cyprus:

i. Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics

- The main objectives of this service is to offer preventive services to mother, infant or child and generally to the whole family in order to preserve and promote health and to prevent illness.
- Children attend a clinic several times during their first year of life, gradually reducing the visits to one appointment every six months and then once a year.
- The Health Visitor meets the parents and their children at the clinics or even at their homes.
- The Health Visitor assesses the child's normal growth by measuring their weight, height and head circumference. Measurements are always marked on percentile charts to give an indication of how a child compares at one particular time with other children of the same age. Also to give a longitudinal representation of the child's growth.
- The Health Visitor monitors the child's physical, mental and social development and refers them for further investigation and treatment to other professionals (specialists) if necessary.
- At the clinic the child also receives all routine vaccinations according to the Cyprus Ministry of Health vaccination schedule.
- Offering support to the parents in regards to child raising is one of the most important tasks of the clinic.
- Counseling the families is also another task of the Health visitors at the clinics, e.g. on nutrition, breast-feeding, family planning, normal growth and development of children, etc.

- At the clinic children can have a Vision Acuity Test at the age of 3-4 years and a Hearing Test at the age of 8-9 months and 4 ½ years old.

**In order to arrange an appointment for a child to have
VISION ACUITY TEST or HEARING TEST
Visit or call the nearest Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic.**

Table 1: Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics in all Districts

DISTRICT	MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CLINICS	FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL
NICOSIA	Arch. Makarios III Hospital Strovolos Aglandjia Ag. Dometios Kaimakli Latsia	22405070-1-2-3 22305131 22305240 22302174 22347780 22482422
LIMASSOL	Limassol Old General Hospital	25305333 (ext. 234)
LARNACA	Larnaca Old General Hospital	24828768 (ext. 207)
PAPHOS	Paphos General Hospital	26803144 26803231
AMMOCHOSTOS	Ammochostos General Hospital	23200188

ii. Vaccinations and Prevention of Communicable Diseases

Health visitors bear the responsibility of giving vaccinations based on the vaccination schedule of the Cyprus Ministry of Health.

They bear the responsibility of investigating certain communicable diseases such as Meningitis and Tuberculosis.

One of the major tasks of the Health Visitor is to offer health education to individuals, families or communities to prevent communicable diseases.

iii. Epidemiological Studies

Health visitors carry out epidemiological studies on communicable and non-communicable diseases, prevention of accidents and vaccinations either alone or in co-operation with other professionals.

iv. Health Education

Health visitors design, apply and evaluate health education evidence based programs.

Common areas of health education:

- schools (Pre-Elementary, Elementary, Gymnasium (Secondary) and Higher Schools)
- Individuals or groups of people (elderly people, diabetics, etc.)
- Communities
- Health care centers
- During home visits

The Health visitors co-operate with other professionals and carry out health education programs for parents to be and for pregnant women.

Health education is also carried out for the elderly people related to problems of ageing and also targeted to Primary or Secondary prevention of disease.

Health education is also carried out in the community for certain groups of people such as teenagers, scouts, parents, etc.

Health visitors involve the community authorities in planning and implementation of their health education programs.

v. Services for parents and pregnant women

Health visitors visit the Maternity wards of the Public Hospitals and inform women about the operation of Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics and the services which are offered there by the health visitors.

In co-operation with other professionals health visitors carry out health education programs for parents to be and for pregnant women.

The main topics of health education which are included in these programs are shown on the table below.

➤ **Main Topics of Health Education Programs for future parents and pregnant women.**

- 1. Operation of Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics and the Ante Natal Care Clinics.**
- 2. The Human Reproductive System: conception, pregnancy symptoms and the development of the foetus.**
- 3. Physical and psychological changes of the pregnant woman. How to face the common pregnancy problems.**
- 4. Hygiene and nutrition rules for the pregnant woman.**
- 5. Natural and other methods of childbirth.**
- 6. Breastfeeding and its pros. Care and preparation of the breasts.**
- 7. Mouth and teeth hygiene during pregnancy.**
- 8. Harmful factors during pregnancy, which affect the development of the foetus.**
- 9. The Pap Test and its importance in the prevention or the early treatment of cancer of the cervix/uterus.**
- 10. Family Planning – Methods of Contraception.**
- 11. Child birth with the use of epidurals.**
- 12. Positive and negative affects of the environment during the first stages of child development.**
- 13. Psychokinetic development of the baby**

- 14. Nutrition of the baby. Report to the artificial nutrition.
- 15. Minor ailments during the babyhood and childhood.
- 16. Dealing with fever. Looking after a sick baby and child.

**Breathing and Relaxation Exercises lessons follow each lecture.
The lessons are given by a trained Midwife.**

Table: Health Education Program for parents and pregnant women in all Cyprus' Districts.

DISTRICT	PLACE	DATE AND TIME
NICOSIA	Archbishop Makarios III Hospital Outpatients Department	Every Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. For information call: 22405070-1-2-3
LIMASSOL	Limassol Old General Hospital Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic	Every Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. For information call: 25305333 Ext. 234
LARNACA	Larnaca New General Hospital Lectures Room Maternity Unit	Every Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. For information call: 24828768 Ext. 207
PAPHOS	Paphos General Hospital Amphitheatre (2 nd floor)	Every Tuesday 9:00 a.m. For information call: 26803231

vi. School Health Services

The main target of this service is the prevention of illness as well as the promotion of health and well being of the students.

The role of the Health Visitor at school:

- To carry out various screening tests in order to detect disease at an early stage or to prevent it.
- To offer health education and health counseling to promote health and prevent illness.

Health education is handled by the Health visitors

1. During their daily contacts with students or other school personnel.
 2. During applied health education programs which aim at giving knowledge and/or promoting the adaptation of healthy behavior or even changing an unhealthy behavior.
- To care for the ill or injured students or co-ordinate the care given by other professionals.
 - To carry out, at school, the vaccinations according to the Cyprus Ministry of Health Vaccinations Schedule.
 - To prevent and investigate communicable diseases at school.

vii. Services offered to special groups of people e.g. Cypriots living in the occupied areas of Cyprus

In co-operation with other civil services the Health visitors apply a preventive program for all Cypriots living in the occupied area of Cyprus. This program covers everybody. Special care is taken for women, children and the elderly.

viii. Education of students of the Nursing School

The Health visitors involve in the education of the students of the School of Nursing. They give lectures at the School of Nursing in topics related to their work such as: The role of the Health Visitor and Vaccinations. They also observe and guide students during their practice in the community field.