

Frequently Asked Questions, Public

What is physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy is the health care profession dedicated to improving and restoring mobility. Physiotherapists have advanced understanding of how the body moves, what keeps it moving well and how to restore lost mobility.

Physiotherapists help get you moving after surgery, treat neck and back and other joint injuries, treat sport injuries and give advice on prevention, maximize mobility following a stroke or in neurological disorders, help to manage respiratory and cardiac conditions, treat incontinence, care for physical challenges associated with arthritis, repetitive strain, developmental delays, cancer treatment and many more.

How can I access physiotherapy services?

Physiotherapists are primary care professionals (just like doctors and dentists) and this mean you can go directly to a physiotherapist. You do not need a doctor's referral although some sites may require one in order to be reimbursed for costs. You can find out in advance by contacting the site you wish to attend.

Who pays for the physiotherapy service?

The funding for physiotherapy services varies. Treatments provided in a hospital setting are generally covered by provincial health insurance plans. Many extended health benefit insurance policies cover physiotherapy services but the percentage of coverage and the number of treatments varies from policy to policy. Some insurers allow physiotherapists in private practices to bill the insurer directly rather than billing the client. The best thing to do is check with your own insurer and see what exactly their policy is before you make your first visit. The clinic should have their fees for service posted for you to see.

Who is a physiotherapist?

A physiotherapist is a trained professional who has a university degree in physiotherapy, which includes anatomy, physiology, pathology, biomechanics, exercise physiology and human development. Many physiotherapists have advanced their education in areas such as: orthopaedics, geriatrics, neurology, paediatrics, cardiorespirology and women's health. The terms physiotherapist and physical therapist mean the same thing. A physiotherapist must be licensed in the province with the regulatory board (Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists) in order to practice physiotherapy. The regulator sets and monitors the practice standards and educational requirements for physiotherapy practice in the province. Only licensed physiotherapists are eligible to use the terms physiotherapy, physiotherapist, PT., physical therapy or physical therapist.

What will the physiotherapist do?

The physiotherapist will ask you to describe your condition and ask you questions about your medical history, lifestyle, and goals. They will do a “hands on assessment” as well as a visual assessment of your level of mobility, strength and other physical abilities to determine the impact of your condition on your overall physical function. As a result of the assessment they will form a diagnosis of your condition and develop a treatment plan to restore your function and reduce pain. Together you will agree on a plan that will involve your active participation. The physiotherapist will measure your progress regularly and adjust your treatment according to your needs. The physiotherapist will advise you on how to manage your condition and how to prevent avoidable reoccurrences or complications

What if I don't understand something?

If you don't understand something ask the physiotherapist to explain it to you. If you are uncomfortable or have increased pain tell the physiotherapist so that they can make changes to the treatment plan. Your consent is required for any treatment so be sure that you understand what the treatment will involve.