

**Dear patient,**

**In the event of health problems, the first person you should talk to is your family nurse or family doctor.**

Always contact your family nurse or family doctor first. Out of hours, seek advice from the family doctor hotline (1220).

Your family doctor will assess your problem, decide whether you need treatment and, if necessary, consult a specialist. Your doctor can quickly and conveniently ask for a specialist e-consultation or refer you for a specialist's appointment.

### **What is e-consultation?**

An e-consultation allows your doctor to consult with a specialist, not referring you for an appointment with them right away. The specialist gives the doctor recommendations for continuing treatment or invites you to attend an appointment. The results of the consultation are forwarded to the health information system by the specialist.

The family doctor informs you about ordering an e-consultation. Referrals for such consultations always include your contact details so that you can be contacted, if necessary.

Note: If the specialist feels that you need to be called in for an appointment, you will be contacted within four to six working days in order to agree upon a suitable time. As such, having the right contact details on the referral is very important.

### **What is a digital referral?**

A digital referral is a message sent to a specialist via the health information system. With it, the doctor who refers you submits your health data and justifies the need for the referral. Digital referrals enable you to be referred to the appropriate specialist. They can be sent and received by all family doctors and specialists working in larger healthcare institutions throughout Estonia.

If you wish, your doctor can print you out a copy of the referral. You can also view your digital referrals in the national Patient Portal [www.digilugu.ee](http://www.digilugu.ee).

The need for a referral to a specialist is decided by the family doctor. You are only able to book an appointment with a specialist after your doctor has submitted a digital referral to the health information system. The need for a referral does not apply to ophthalmologists, psychiatrists, gynaecologists or skin and venereal disease specialists.

Your family doctor can recommend a healthcare institution and mark it on your referral. If you wish, you can also go to another medical institution with a shorter waiting time with the same referral. It is important to keep in mind that **each referral allows you to make only one appointment.**

You have three options for making an appointment – on the website of the medical institution, by calling reception or on site. In all three cases, your referral will be reviewed in the health information system.

**If you do not have a referral when you book an appointment with a specialist, the medical institution can only offer you a paid appointment.** It should be taken into account that the costs of a paid appointment are not reimbursed by the Health Insurance Fund and you will be required to pay for your appointment and any additional tests.