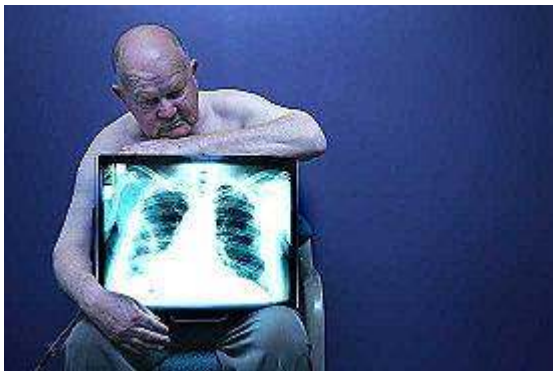


## What Happens if I Get Sick When in China?

There are hospitals in almost every city where patients can get treatment without having to travel too far.

Foreign experts may have the special treatment of Chinese traditional medicine.



Foreign experts can buy the necessary medical insurance abroad. Some particular issues concerning foreign experts' medical care may be covered in the contract.

Basic health care is provided by the clinic or hospital nominated by the employer and they will usually ensure you are covered for the costs of unexpected medical expenses should you suddenly take ill or have an accident at your place of employment.

If you require comprehensive insurance, it is suggested you take out private cover before leaving home.

**Emergency Evacuation Insurance** is suggested. Domestic health cover does not (usually) extend to overseas residency, albeit temporary.

### Miss Li's Handy Medical Care Tip

Sometimes foreigners are hesitant to use Chinese health care facilities. You shouldn't be afraid, because as a foreigner you will usually be given very special treatment - if you need it.

The standard of medical services in China is very high, while also very cheap when compared to Western services. I suggest that you have evacuation insurance and maybe general health cover.

An intensive care private ward at a foreign joint-venture hospital in Beijing is about 1000 RMB (\$US125.00) per day

## Health and Medical Care in China

In Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing and other large cities, various specialized hospitals of tumor, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, ophthalmologic and dental diseases, traditional Chinese medicine and infectious diseases can be found, in addition to general hospitals. Medium-sized cities in all the provinces and autonomous regions have general and specialized hospitals equipped with modern facilities.

Today medical, prevention, and health-care networks at the county, township and village levels have taken shape in the countryside.

The improved living conditions and health care in China are reflected in a change in major health problems: Today cancers, cerebrovascular diseases and heart disease have become the top three health-related killers of China's approximately 450 million urban residents — replacing respiratory system diseases, infectious diseases and tuberculosis that were prevalent in the 1950s.

People are living longer: The average life expectancy of the Chinese people reached 71.8 years old, five years more than the international level.

"Prevention first" is an important principle in all of China's health care work, and the National Physical Fitness Program, for instance, also provides guidance to help citizens tackle new health problems.

In recent years, community health service networks have expanded to include most large and medium-sized cities, and are popular among citizens. These services are geared to accommodate at the grass-roots level problems involved with increased urbanization and contemporary social problems such as an aging population, and changes in disease patterns and social position.

Concentrating mostly on anti-epidemic work while providing services of medical treatment and health care, the community health service networks are becoming more and more popular among citizens.

Government health departments also have worked hard to prevent and control all infectious, endemic

and parasitic diseases. The Ministry of Health's assessment report on AIDS prevention and control indicates that HIV affects all the mainland's 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. Vice-premier Wu Yi, head of a national committee for AIDS prevention, emphasized the extreme importance of prevention and control of AIDS at a national work conference on AIDS prevention in Beijing in April 2004.

China gained valuable experience in coping with the outbreak of SARS in the first half of 2003. In May 2003 the State Council issued Regulations on Public Health Emergencies, establishing a legal framework for tackling public health crises.

Furthering its cooperation with World Health Organization, the state is planning for significant investment in a system to handle all public health crises.

In 2003, China started to carry out a new-type of rural cooperative medical care system. Based on major illness health insurance coverage, this cooperative medical care system follows a payment plan by the individual, financial support from the collective, and subsidies from the government.

Once a farmer who has joined the cooperative medical care system is hospitalized, the cost incurred can be reimbursed according on a sliding scale. This medical care system is expected to cover the whole country in 2010.

Meanwhile, China will establish and practice a medical-aid system in rural areas that offer medical aid to poor farmers who are seriously ill. Plans are set for a standardized rural medical-aid system throughout the country in 2005.

The medical-aid fund, specially allocated by various levels of government with donations from people from all walks of life, will be used exclusively for medical aid.

With thanks to China.org.cn