

The right school, the right home and a trusted doctor that you can depend on – perhaps the top three concerns of parents when they relocate their family to a new country. Luckily, you needn't worry about number three: Singapore offers excellent medical care facilities with easy access to a variety of healthcare providers.

Family Health



Inara Prusakova | Dreamstime.com

Holistic Family Care

Part of the six-strong team of GPs at Complete Healthcare International (CHI), DR CHARU NARAYANAN – who has a special interest in paediatrics, answers our questions on children's health and development.

Health-wise, what are the advantages of bringing up children in Singapore?

I look back at my years in the UK and think, "Isn't it wonderful to be able to get an appointment your GP on the day you call?"

What's more, the high standards of hygiene and strict regulations in relation to food, water and pets mean that our children are protected against some serious infections such as typhoid that are still prevalent in many parts of Asia. There is high vaccine coverage, and thankfully we haven't had worrying outbreaks in children here that some countries have seen, such as measles in the UK and whooping cough in Australia.

Any special challenges?

The heat and humidity make this the perfect setting for certain other illnesses. Impetigo (school sores) and respiratory infections such as mycoplasma spread easily in day-care centres, in workplaces and in schools. And, despite our best efforts to thwart the mozzies, dengue continues to be a challenge. Dust mites, mould and the seasonal haze contribute to allergic eye, nose and throat symptoms.

Many of the children I see have faced the pressure of settling into a new culture here, changing schools and subsequently losing friends who move on to new postings or back to their native countries. Adjustment problems are common. Sadly, I also see children who have anxiety, low mood and eating disorders.

What are the most common reasons that children are brought to see you?

Babies and children are brought for developmental checks and immunisation, and there's always a rush for travel advice before families leave for exciting holiday destinations. I enjoy treating skin problems, too, and I have a special interest in dermatology.

What's it like to work as part of Dr Kim Hayes' team of GPs at CHI?

I believe we have a good team – everyone has their own area of expertise and has worked in different healthcare systems. Women's health, men's health, child health, dermatology and nutritional medicine are some of our areas of interest. What's more, the allied health professionals located at Body With Soul are highly valued members of our team. They include a physiotherapist, nutritionists, osteopaths, a psychologist and podiatrists.

How would you describe CHI's approach to child health and development?

The tranquil environment at CHI is immediately welcoming to children. Patients are at the centre of our care. Whenever possible, health advice and nutritional advice is offered at routine consultations. Knowing that it's imperative to stay up to date, I undertake my own study alongside my work. We also have specialists coming in to give us talks on disease management.

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