

Medical Card or GP Visit Card?



One application can assess a person for both. The main difference is the range of services covered.

Republic of Ireland only | Last reviewed: 18 July 2026

Quick comparison

Label	Medical card	Gp visit card
GP visits	Covered	Covered
Most prescribed medicines	Covered; prescription charges may apply	Not covered
Public inpatient and outpatient services	Covered	Not covered by the card
Certain dental, eye and hearing services	Covered	Not covered
Assessment	Financial, automatic category or discretionary assessment	Age, category or financial assessment

Applying

- ☐ Apply for the Medical Card if eligible. If the person does not qualify, the HSE automatically assesses the same application for a GP Visit Card.
- ☐ Include household income, expenses, marital status and dependant details.
- ☐ Include evidence of allowable expenses. The assessment uses more than one headline income figure.
- ☐ If healthcare costs cause financial hardship, include the costs and a medical report for discretionary assessment.
- ☐ Apply online where possible, or use the current MC1 form. Keep the reference and copies of supporting documents.

2026 basic weekly rates for applicants under 70

These are starting rates before relevant allowances and expenses are added.

Household	Medical card	Gp visit card
Single, living alone, under 66	EUR 184	EUR 418
Single, living alone, age 66 to 69	EUR 201.50	EUR 418
Single, living with family, under 66	EUR 164	EUR 373
Single, living with family, age 66 to 69	EUR 173.50	EUR 373
Couple or single-parent family with dependent children, under 66	EUR 266.50	EUR 607
Same household, age 66 to 69	EUR 298	EUR 607

Age 70 and over

- ☐ Current gross weekly Medical Card income limit: EUR 550 for a single person.
- ☐ Current gross weekly Medical Card income limit: EUR 1,050 for a couple.
- ☐ People aged 70 and over can receive a universal GP Visit Card above these limits, but must register.

Other direct routes

- ☐ Children under 8 can register for an Under 8s GP Visit Card.
- ☐ People receiving full-rate or half-rate Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit can register for a Carers GP Visit Card.
- ☐ Some groups qualify for a Medical Card without a financial assessment, but still need to apply.

Your next step

If the figures feel complicated, submit clear evidence of income and expenses and let the HSE assess both cards.

Sources checked 18 July 2026: [HSE - National Assessment Guidelines for Medical Card and GP Visit Card](#) | [HSE - What a Medical Card covers](#) | [HSE - GP Visit Cards](#) | [HSE - Assessment for a Medical Card](#)

Republic of Ireland guidance only. This is general information, not medical, legal or financial advice. Schemes, rates and eligibility rules can change. Check the linked official source before applying or changing an existing arrangement.