

# Brazil Healthcare Quick-Start Kit

SUS, insurance, emergencies, medications and family-health navigation for expats, digital nomads and long-stay visitors.

Prepared for Baby in Brazil readers · free downloadable PDF · fact-check base: official Brazilian sources + Baby in Brazil content

[First 7 days checklist](#)

[UBS vs UPA vs hospital](#)

[CPF + Meu SUS Digital](#)

[Insurance without mistakes](#)

## What this download gives the reader

- A practical map of which door to use in Brazil: UBS, UPA 24h, hospital, private clinic or SAMU 192.
- A first-week setup checklist for people who want fewer surprises after arrival.
- A plain-English explanation of CPF, SUS access and what private-plan maternity waiting periods really mean.
- A medication, records and phrase toolkit that makes appointments easier when your Portuguese is limited.

## How to use this PDF

Use it in three passes: **skim** the quick answers, **fill** the checklists, then **save** the emergency numbers, document list and question sheets on your phone or print them for appointments.

Updated for publication support in March 2026  
Suggested SEO filename: brazil-healthcare-quick-start-kit-expats-2026.pdf

## 1) Fast orientation: how healthcare in Brazil works

Part of the system	What it does well	When readers use it most
SUS / public healthcare	Universal public backbone, emergency care, vaccination, primary care, wide safety-net access.	Emergency backup, routine vaccines, public primary care, many family-health and child-health pathways.
Private healthcare	Shorter waits, more doctor choice, stronger service consistency in many large-city facilities.	Specialist speed, private hospital choice, continuity with one doctor, predictable scheduling.
Hybrid use	Combines public safety-net access with private convenience where it matters most.	Common real-world strategy for expats and international families.

### Good mental model

Think of Brazil as a **system you must map**, not just a place where you either have insurance or do not. The safer route is to know your public options, your private options and your emergency route before you need them.

## 2) First 7 days in Brazil: do these early

- **Save 192** and identify the nearest UPA 24h and emergency-capable hospital.
- **Apply for a CPF** if you will stay, rent, sign contracts or navigate ongoing services. Receita Federal says foreigners, residents and non-residents can apply, and the service is free except at certain partner units.
- **Build one health folder** with passport, CPF, insurance card, medication list, allergies, chronic conditions, vaccinations, recent labs and emergency contacts.
- **Install Meu SUS Digital** if you will use SUS-linked digital tools or want a central place to track records over time.
- **Map your route:** routine care, urgent non-life-threatening care, and true emergency care are not the same thing.
- **Decide whether you need private insurance** based on pregnancy, children, chronic conditions, age, language comfort and the city you will live in.

## 3) Which door should you use?

Situation	Best first stop	Why
Routine check, repeat prescription, vaccine review, preventive follow-up	UBS / primary care or your planned clinic	Best fit for non-emergency care and ongoing follow-up.
Acute problem that needs same-day assessment but is not clearly life-threatening	UPA 24h or urgent-care hospital route	UPA 24h stabilizes acute cases and decides whether transfer is needed.

Situation	Best first step	Why
Severe emergency, collapse, chest pain, severe breathing problem, major trauma or obstetric emergency	Call SAMU 192 or go to the nearest emergency-ready facility	The Ministry of Health says SAMU 192 is a free 24/7 urgent and emergency service.
Planned specialist care	Private network or SUS referral, depending on your route	Use the pathway you already decided on rather than improvising late.
Child vaccines and routine child-health tracking	SUS vaccine route and child-health record, plus private pediatric follow-up if desired	This often gives families the strongest mix of cost control and continuity.

#### 4) CPF, SUS access and digital health tools

Tool	Why it matters	What the official guidance says
CPF	Useful across healthcare admin and broader life setup.	Receita Federal says foreigners can apply whether resident or non-resident; the process is free except at certain partner units.
SUS / routine access setup	Helps with planned care and organized records.	For routine care, having your personal registration ready makes life easier; urgent care should still not depend on a fully built admin setup.
Meu SUS Digital	Keeps records in one place.	The Ministry of Health says users can view clinical history, vaccination data, exam results and medications in web, iOS and Android versions.
Child digital booklet	Useful for parents who want vaccine reminders and child-health tracking.	The Ministry of Health says the digital child booklet in Meu SUS Digital shows vaccine history, next doses and reminders, and requires active Gov.br accounts for the adult and the child.

#### Smart family move

Even if you plan to rely mainly on private care, a simple public-system setup and a saved emergency route can prevent stressful, expensive improvisation.

#### 5) Private insurance without expensive misunderstandings

Check this point	Why it matters
Waiting periods (carência)	ANS says plans may require up to 24 hours for emergencies, 180 days for general situations and 300 days for full-term childbirth.
Hospital coverage with obstetrics	This is the segment that includes childbirth and guarantees care for the newborn during the first 30 days after birth.

Check this point	Why it matters
Hospital network	A plan is only as useful as the hospitals, maternity units and specialists it truly gives you access to.
Copay / reimbursement model	A cheap monthly premium can still become expensive if your real route depends on out-of-network reimbursements or repeated copays.
Language support	If your Portuguese is limited, service quality is not just about medicine; it is also about clear instructions, discharge guidance and emergency communication.

## 6) Medication and records strategy

- Carry a written list of **generic medicine names**, dosages, allergies, chronic conditions and previous reactions. Brand names alone are often not enough.
- Keep prescriptions, recent lab results and diagnosis summaries in a single phone folder and one paper set for emergencies.
- If you use long-term medication, do not assume the same brand or exact packaging will be easy to find after arrival. Build a refill plan early.
- For children, keep vaccine records, weight notes, past admissions, fever history and medication instructions easy to show during appointments.

## 7) Pregnancy, children and vaccines

Topic	Reader-friendly takeaway
Pregnancy vaccine planning	The national schedule says the first prenatal visit is the right time to review and update indicated vaccines.
Pregnancy schedule highlights	The official schedule includes influenza each season and one COVID-19 dose in each pregnancy; yellow-fever vaccination in pregnancy is handled only in exceptional risk scenarios after risk-benefit review.
Child schedule starts early	The child schedule includes BCG and hepatitis B at birth, with more routine doses beginning at 2 months.
Digital child tracking	The child digital booklet in Meu SUS Digital can help families follow vaccines, development and reminders.

## 8) Portuguese phrase card for healthcare situations

English	Portuguese
I need urgent medical help.	Preciso de ajuda médica urgente.
I am pregnant.	Estou grávida.
My child has a fever.	Meu filho / Minha filha está com febre.
I am allergic to...	Tenho alergia a...
I take this medication every day.	Tomo este medicamento todos os dias.
Where is the nearest UPA 24h?	Onde fica a UPA 24h mais próxima?

English	Portuguese
Please speak slowly. I do not speak Portuguese well.	Por favor, fale devagar. Eu não falo português muito bem.
I need an English-speaking doctor, if possible.	Preciso de um médico que fale inglês, se possível.

## 9) Fill-this-in emergency card

Field	Your information
Nearest UPA 24h	_____
Nearest emergency-capable hospital	_____
Primary clinic / doctor	_____
Insurance company and hotline	_____
Important medications	_____
Allergies	_____
Chronic conditions	_____
Emergency contacts	_____
Child pediatrician / maternity contact	_____

### Print tip

Keep one copy in your home, one inside your passport or family document folder, and one photo on your phone. In real emergencies, simple information wins.

## 10) Official source shortlist

Official source	Use it for
Ministério da Saúde / Saúde do Viajante	Foreign-traveler urgent-care guidance, SAMU 192 and UPA 24h basics.
SAMU 192 campaign page	National emergency-service overview and current coverage context.
Receita Federal CPF service	How foreigners can apply for CPF.
Meu SUS Digital	Health records, vaccination data, exam results and medication history.
Child Digital Booklet news and instructions	How the child booklet works in Meu SUS Digital.
National Vaccination Calendar	Pregnancy, child and adult vaccine planning.
ANS consumer guidance	Waiting periods and private-plan coverage logic.

Suggested landing-page CTA: **Download the Healthcare Quick-Start Kit** · first-week checklist, emergency route map, CPF/SUS setup and insurance notes for expats in Brazil.