

RIGHTS AND HEALTH



People with HIV need to visit a hospital to receive the best treatment and the best care possible. It is important to be assigned a primary healthcare doctor and regular visits to other specialists will also be necessary.

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Some people with HIV state that they have had problems with some healthcare professionals or workers. The National Health System in Spain nevertheless has rules and codes of conduct to ensure that the individual prejudices some healthcare professionals may have do not interfere with the type of care and treatment they give to patients.

Healthcare centres have Charters of Patients' Rights and Duties that specifically recognise the patient's right to respect for his or her person, human dignity and privacy and to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of his or her ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other personal or social circumstance.

A person with HIV may therefore not be the subject of discrimination within the health service on account of his or her illness. This means that he or she may not be refused attention, given less favourable attention or treated on an unequal basis on account of the illness.

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WHAT I SHOULD KNOW

- If you have moved to Spain from another country, you may have doubts about your right to receive free care and treatment for HIV from the National Health System. The rules are complex and may vary according to Autonomous Community and it is therefore important for you to receive specialised advice (like that provided by local organisations that support people with HIV).
- All patients have the right of access to their clinical records and to obtain a copy of the information they contain. A clinical record is a set of documents containing data, evaluations and information of any kind regarding the patient's situation and clinical evolution throughout the care process.
- Health data are very sensitive and should be given the utmost protection. Patients therefore have the right to respect for the confidential nature of the information on their health and no one may have access to them without the prior authorisation established by law.
- If you have ever received unequal and unjustified treatment in the health service, you may raise the matter with the respective health worker or with his or her supervisor. If the response is unsatisfactory, you may then deal with the matter more formally.
- Health centres, at all levels of care, have Customer Service Centres at which you may lodge a complaint or make a claim. Patients are entitled to a written response. The quality of care you receive should not be affected by the fact you have lodged a complaint.
- You may also inform an association of support for people with HIV if you have received unfair treatment or have been subject to discrimination. These organisations will help you to lodge your complaint and can offer practical or emotional support, if you require it.



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