

Access to healthcare in Spain

Access to Spanish healthcare system is universal and free of charge for all citizens. Foreigners are also entitled to healthcare under the same conditions as any other citizen. All residents must be registered in the City council (municipality) irrespective of their migratory status in the country. This is a quick and easy process which can be done at no cost.

Although some Autonomous Communities of Spain do not require registration in order to access healthcare services, it is always advisable to be registered, as this is a useful document to show the length of time a person has lived in Spain, and for other bureaucratic reasons as well.

How to access public healthcare

Register in your City Council

Go to the Council register office which is closest to your place of residence and ask for a registration form ("impreso de empadronamiento"). Once completed the form, enclose your passport or resident's card and a copy of the lease of the place where you are living. If the lease is in the name of a third person who has registered already, they should complete the registration form and authorize you in writing to register in his/her address. Enclose a copy of the third person's ID document. Once completed this process, you will be issued a Register certificate. Ask for further details in your City hall.

Requesting a health card

Once you are registered you should go to the primary healthcare centre (CAP) that corresponds to your area of residence. Sign up at the information or patient desk by showing your legal ID document and your Register certificate and ask for your health card. Your health card will take some time to process, so you will receive a ticket ("resguardo") that allows you to use all healthcare services until you receive your card by mail. Once you are registered in the CAP you will be entitled to all medical services and will be assigned to a GP ("médico generalista" or "médico de familia"). The GP will give you a first appointment and he/she will treat common conditions and refer you to specialists whenever necessary.

HIV infection and care

In Spain, HIV/Aids specialists visit patients in hospitals. Your GP will refer you to an HIV/Aids specialist in a hospital through a referral order or "volante". It is advisable to bring your medical record on your first visit. You will have comprehensive HIV testing, including CD4 counts and a viral load test. Your second visit –to evaluate the results – will be two or three weeks after the tests. All tests, professional care, hospital stays whenever necessary, and any other service provided by health centres are free of charge.

HIV/Aids treatment

If you are prescribed anti-HIV treatment, this will be provided for free by the hospital pharmacy. There you will be

informed of how and when you can collect your medicines when you need to replenish them. Antiretroviral drugs prescribed in Spain are approved by European health authorities.

Other treatment

You may need to take other drugs for common conditions or side/effects. Even when they are recommended by a specialist, these drugs will be prescribed by your GP. A prescription is an official document that allows you to get your drugs from any chemist's. The cost will depend on your job or financial situation, but will be less than the retail price.

Healthcare providers

Remember that all healthcare providers are at your service and must be respectful and professional when delivering their services in their area of competence. Therefore, you should not be afraid to disclose data that can be helpful for your doctors to provide care, such as sexual behaviour, drug use, psychological state, etc. All information related to your health is confidential and is protected by Spanish legislation so that data will only be accessible to authorized personnel. HIV testing performed without informed consent is illegal and is considered a crime in Spain.

Support for application procedures and other rights

If you need information or help regarding application procedures or accessing further services such as homes, food and financial help, address your social care services, one of the immigrants' or HIV/Aids organisations, or the trade unions. They will provide help confidentially.

Peer support groups

Most HIV/Aids organisations offer information to individuals and have support groups for people living with HIV/Aids. If you need any information or are simply looking for a safe environment where you can share your experiences, these may be the places to go to. Additionally, they can advise you on treatment and all aspects related to HIV/Aids. For further information, please visit the Red2002 website (www.red2002.org.es) where you can download an on-line guide with the addresses of NGOs in Spain.

Reference: Asociación Gais Positius



grupo de trabajo
sobre tratamientos del VIH
e-mail: contact@gtt-vih.org
website: www.gtt-vih.org

POR FAVOR, FOTOCÓPIALO Y HAZLO CIRCULAR



Institut Català de la Salut
Direcció d'Atenció Primària Ciutat -Vella
Hospital de Malalties Tropicalls, Infeccioses i Vaccinació Internacional



SECRETARÍA GENERAL DEL
PLAN NACIONAL SOBRE
EL SIDA