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1. CARE ABOUT YOUR SEXUALITY. IT IS IMPORTANT TOO

Arriving in a new country means many changes and often many difficulties to overcome, such as adapting to new customs, learning the language, finding a job and somewhere to live, sorting out papers and permits, and also navigating the health system.

Throughout this process, doubts and queries may arise, along with various difficulties, however, in turn, numerous new possibilities may open up for every individual.

Taking care of your health is essential in helping you to face all these challenges, make the most of opportunities, and to feel good about yourself.

We need to take care of our health and that of course includes our sexuality. This means taking time to think a little about our habits and behaviour, and introducing small changes which can help us to avoid some problems, and obviously this can also affect our quality of life in terms of our sexual health.

Good health is important for everyone and good health includes sexual health, which, as we shall see, covers contraception, and prevention of STIs (sexually transmitted infections) but there is much more to it than that...



This guide provides some suggestions for caring for your sexuality and how to make the best use of the resources available to you.



2. THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

2.1. To take care of your health in Spain you need to know that....

- All foreigners (with or without "papers") residing in Spain and who are registered as residents with the local authority known as the **padrón municipal** are entitled to health care in the same conditions as Spanish nationals.
- In Spain, foreigners are entitled to **emergency** public health care in the event of accident or serious illness.
- Foreigners under the age of eighteen are entitled to health care in the same conditions as Spaniards.

- Foreign women who are pregnant in Spain are entitled to health care during pregnancy, birth and antenatal care.

DUTIES: All citizens using the Spanish health system, in addition to the rights to which they are entitled, are also required to comply with a number of duties. Some examples of these are: using the installations in a correct manner, respecting the regulations of each health centre and its staff, and making appropriate use of the resources available, to name just a few.

2.2. What is the Padrón Municipal?

The Padrón Municipal is a register which records all the residents living a particular municipal district.

Registration in the Padrón Municipal is a right and also a duty of all foreigners living in Spain. Once you are registered you become a regular resident with all the civic rights and duties that this entails.

Everyone, whether they have papers or not, is entitled to be registered in the Padrón Municipal.

It is free to register and has several **advantages** such as:

- You will be able to obtain a health card or Tarjeta Sanitaria which entitles you to medical attention and if you need to buy any medicine, this will entitle you to a reduction in price.
- Registration will also allow you to send your children to Public Primary Schools as well as subsidised private schools and to apply for grants and aid.
- You will gain access to numerous programmes run by the local authority, providing information, guidance and support.

The Town Hall or the Council offices of the place where you live will inform you on how to register on the Padrón Municipal.

2.3. The Tarjeta Sanitaria and health centres

The **Tarjeta Sanitaria** entitles you to use the public health system. Once you have obtained the health card or Tarjeta Sanitaria you will be assigned a medical doctor at your local health centre, and a professional nurse who will normally attend you.

Everyone whether they have "papers" or not, is entitled to a Tarjeta Sanitaria or health card.

You can consult your general practitioner or First Aid Doctor on issues concerning **sexual health**, for example, advice and guidance if you have had unprotected sex, what to do if you suspect that you have caught a sexually transmitted infection, information on family planning and contraception, advice in any situation of mistreatment, free HIV testing (AIDS virus) etc.

If you need it, your general practitioner may refer you to a specialist, for example, a gynaecologist or urologist.