

FACTSHEET



We help people of all ages with all sorts of problems!

Please note that we update our fact sheets as soon as new information comes to hand but due to rapidly changing regulations, they are intended as a general guide only.

HOSPITAL: Admittance & Discharge

Every country has its own culture and idiosyncrasies and Spain is no exception. One of these relates to the treatment of patients in hospital, which differs considerably from the UK and other Western European countries. Not being aware of this can cause distress and suspicion and delay the recovery of the patient. This is particularly so in the non-private hospitals.

In basic terms, the Spanish people are very much more family orientated than we have become in recent years and this is very clearly demonstrated in the way that patients are treated by the medical staff. In our culture, the patient becomes the total province of the medical and nursing staff with family visits tolerated or encouraged to raise the spirits — depending on who is visiting! In Spanish hospitals the family become part of the nursing team and are expected to carry out all the personal functions for the patient. This means feeding, washing and, where necessary, bed panning. That is why you will find a reclining chair alongside every hospital bed, which is used by the family member “on duty”, and who will stay with the patient throughout the night, if needed.

Another difference is the absence of quiet, which prevails. Families often gather en masse around the bed and either jointly watch TV (loudly) or carry out animated conversations, also at high volume. There is none of the hush on the wards that we have come to expect in the motherland. Lights are also often left switched on at night. All this makes it difficult to get good quality sleep. You will also find lots of mobile phones in constant use; by medical staff, patients and visitors. I have yet to see a “switch off” notice around the hospital.

Apart from the language barrier (and if you choose to live here, that is your fault) there is the visual difference. The Spanish tend to look serious and are suspicious of people who smile at them without cause, whereas we tend to act the other way around. Using simple Spanish words such as “Buenos dias/tardes/noches”, “Hola”, “Por favor” and “Gracias” can help to mitigate this.

So please bear these points in mind if you are unfortunate to require hospitalisation, or are related to someone who is admitted. The medical care and nursing is as good as anywhere else in the world. Indeed, if you are on a waiting list in the UK you can expect to wait much longer than in Spain. It is in the demarcation line in the general nursing that the differences occur.

Being aware of these can help to defuse potential upsets and disappointments.

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Patients are normally discharged very soon after medical care has been given (this is particularly so in the case of broken bones). Please note that patients are NOT provided with mobility equipment as in UK and family members are required to bring walking sticks, crutches, wheelchairs to the hospital on discharge. An ambulance is not normally provided to take the patient home. Often a patient or his/her representative has to return to the hospital after discharge just to make a follow up appointment. They are not provided with the appointment while they are there.

This is where we in HELP can let you plan in advance. If you know a family member or friend is going to be released and will need help, we can provide all kinds of equipment - wheelchairs, crutches, toilet aids etc. These can be booked in advance by downloading our Mobility Equipment Loan Pack, complete this and bring to the office. Or, phone to reserve, then come into the office to confirm booking.

We do ask for a deposit for our equipment to cover us for misuse, loss or damage. We also ask for a small donation to HELP for the loan of this equipment. For current members of HELP, on production of their membership card, no deposit will be charged. For further information click on this link to our Caring Services Section <http://helpmurciamarmenor.org/HowWeHelp.html#>

HELP have also produced a small booklet called 'Tell the Doctor'. This is designed to help you when you have to see the doctor or go to a hospital in Spain. It gives the Spanish equivalent of a selection of typical questions and answers, as well as many other important phrases that may be needed in a consultation. The booklet costs 6 euros and is obtainable from the HELP office.

The HELP office is always ready to provide further information and advice and regular visits are made to at the moment only to the Los Arcos Hospital, by our volunteers who call on every English speaking patient they can find. They have a good working relationship with the Director of this Hospital. We also take in reading material (or talking books) if required.

If we get a referral from the British Consul or from another HELP Office to visit someone in one of the other hospitals in Murcia, providing we have a volunteer free, we are able to do this. Similarly if the office receives a call about someone who has no family (or few friends here), we can also arrange to visit them.

If you are in the distressed state of having a death in hospital, a death certificate will be issued to go to the local judge. The deceased's passport and residencia will be required at this point and you will be asked to arrange to appoint a funeral director immediately. SIGN NOTHING without having a translator present. If you have a pre-paid funeral (which we recommend you do if you are resident) all it takes is one phone call and they will do everything for you. If you are non-resident we recommend that you obtain a yearly travel insurance policy which will cover you for repatriation in the event of death.

HELP MURCIA MAR MENOR

www.helpmarmenor.org

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