



Ministero della Sanità

HEALTH CARE FOR IMMIGRANTS - TEN GOLDEN RULE

YOUR RIGHT TO YOUR HEALTH

- 1.** If you are not an Italian citizen and you have a valid *Permesso di Soggiorno* (stay permit) for one of the following reasons: employment, family, political asylum or humanitarian asylum, or you are awaiting political asylum, adoption, fostering citizenship, you must register with the *Ssn (Servizio sanitario nazionale)*, that is, with the state public health service. It is both a right and a responsibility, intended to protect your health!
- 2.** Through registration you acquire the same rights and responsibilities as Italian citizens: in other words, you may choose your own family doctor (a general practitioner you can go to for any non-serious or non-urgent health problems); you have access to all the specialist laboratory tests, hospital care and can be provided with any of the medicines that your doctor prescribes. In some cases, you will have to pay, just as Italian citizens have to, a part of the expenses (the so-called 'ticket').
- 3.** Public health assistance is also guaranteed to the members of your family who are dependent on you and are properly registered here (your wife, husband, children, brothers or sisters, parents, etc.), and if they live here in Italy with you.
- 4.** To register with the *Ssn*, you need to go to the local health office (the *ASL- Azienda Sanitaria Locale*) in your town, zone or *quartiere*, where you are officially resident or have your domicile (as indicated on your *Permesso di Soggiorno*). In order to register, all you need to take with you is your *Permesso di Soggiorno*, your *Codice Fiscale* (personal tax code), and, if you have one, a *certificato di residenza* (certificate of residence). If you do not have one, a written declaration stating your habitual domicile or address and signed by yourself is sufficient. When you go to register you will be asked to choose your family doctor from among those on the *ASL* list: please come prepared for this! If you have young children, you will also have to choose a paediatrician (doctor specialising in children's health) for them from the list. Your registration with the *ASL* will be valid for the same length of time as your *Permesso di Soggiorno*. So, when this expires and you apply for it to be renewed, remember to go to the *ASL* registration office and show them the receipt slip ('*cedolino*') from your application form, otherwise you will be removed from the *ASL* list of people who are eligible for public health assistance.
- 5.** If you are a student or working as an 'au pair' in a family, you can register with the public health assistance service, paying a yearly lump sum contribution- you can ask for information on this at the *ASL* office. With an additional contribution, your dependent children can also receive assistance from the health service.



Ministero della Sanità

- 6** If your *Permesso di Soggiorno* is for reasons different from those listed at points 1) and 5), for example, voluntary resident or for religious reasons, you have two alternatives: either you can take out a recognised private health insurance (i.e. one that is valid for/in Italy), for illness, accident and maternity, or you can register with the *Ssn*. If, on the other hand, you have a short-term visitor's stay permit, for example, for business or tourism purposes, you must have valid private insurance coverage, or you will have to pay the entire costs of any medicines, tests or health care received here.
- 7** Even if you do not have a valid stay permit (because it is out of date or you have never had one) and you have a serious health problem, the Italian *Ssn* still allows you to receive assistance, by ambulance and in hospital. This is especially the case for pregnant women and for new mothers, for children and for people with infectious diseases. It is important that you go to the state's public health system outlets (hospital, family doctor, ASL) to ask for help if you are not well. This is very important because other people's health could also be at risk if you do not ask the right people for help. Remember that many voluntary aid associations can and will also help you with your problems.
- 8** If you have limited financial means you will not have to pay for doctors or for hospital treatment or for tests, except for a very small part of the costs (the 'ticket') and, anyway, only in those cases in which other legally registered foreign guests, residents or Italian citizens are expected to pay something.
- 9** Even if you are an illegal immigrant (a *clandestino*), you must not be afraid to go to a state registered doctor or to hospital for help: under Italian Law it is illegal for anyone to report you to the authorities just because you do not have a valid stay permit. The job of doctors, nurses and of all the state health care system is, indeed, to help all those who need health care while they are here.
- 10** If you are still abroad and you wish to come to Italy for medical treatment, you must first obtain an entry visa and a *Permesso di Soggiorno 'per cure mediche'* (for medical treatment). This is not easily obtained, because in order to obtain it you must present very specific documents (you will need to get information from the Italian embassy or consulate in your country). You will also need to pay a deposit of 30% of the expected medical costs to the medical establishment that is going to provide the treatment. Furthermore, you will need to be able to show that you can pay for all the health care received here for your return journey back home, and also, that you have, for the entire length of your expected stay in Italy, enough money to pay for board and lodging for yourself and for anyone who you might wish to accompany you and assist you here.