

Specialist examinations, laboratory and instrumental tests

In order to book specialist services, you need to show the prescription prepared by your general practitioner or pediatrician (or the doctor at the STP clinic), and the health card or STP at the counters of the outpatient department or the hospital where the visit will be performed. If you do not have any exemption, for each specialist examination you have to pay the ticket.

Hospitalisation

Your general practitioner or paediatrician, the specialist doctor, the STP clinic physician or, in emergency health situations, the emergency physician, may require hospitalisation. Admission is free, so you will not have to pay anything to the hospital staff.

What to do in medical emergency?

The telephone number 112 is a free public service of first intervention, active 24/7 throughout Italy. Call the telephone number 112 only in case of emergency requiring immediate medical aid. Depending on the severity, it will be sent an ambulance to transport the patient to the most appropriate health facility. When you call the number 112 remember that you:

- respond calmly, in Italian, to the questions of the operator and stay on line until requested
- provide your phone number
- explain what happened and specify the address where to send relief

Emergency room

In case of accident, injury or danger to life, you can also go directly to the emergency room of the nearest hospital. Emergency room examinations are not carried out in the order of arrival, but depending on the severity of symptoms. The staff, in fact, assigns a color code (white, green, yellow or red) to ensure immediate assistance to persons in danger of death.

Contact your local emergency room only for emergency situations that cannot be differently treated. For all other needs, important but not urgent, you should contact your general practitioner or a STP clinic and access to specialist examinations required by prescription. If you go to the emergency room for non-emergency reasons, you will be assigned a white code. This means that you will be visited after patients in more serious conditions and you will have to pay the ticket.

Where can I get medicines if I need them?

Medicines are prescribed by a doctor and provided by pharmacies. In pharmacies you will find the so-called "over-the-counter medicines". These are drugs that you can buy without a prescription but paying the full price. In each neighbour there is always a pharmacy open even at night and on public holidays: every pharmacy externally displays an indication with the pharmacies' shift in the neighbour. Some drugs are free, for others you have to pay a ticket and some others have to be paid entirely.

Where can I find more information?

ASL: for further information, please ask about the local health service (ASL) of your area; this is the main referral service to access public health services and are present everywhere.

112: the number to call in case of emergency is 112: you will be redirected to a specialist based on the type of emergency (medical, security, etc.)

1522: the phone number 1522 is a national multilanguage 24/7 service for women who are victims of all forms of violence.

Italy's health service navigation guide

for migrants



What are my health care rights in Italy?

In Italy, health is considered a fundamental right accessible by everyone. If you have a residence permit, you are entitled to the same rights as Italian citizens.

Also if you are irregularly staying in Italy, you can access medical services and health care staff cannot report you to the police.

How can I access Italy's health care services?

If you have a residence permit (for asylum seeker, refugee, subsidiary or humanitarian protection, work or family reasons) – or if you just asked for it and you have a receipt - you must refer to the local health service (ASL) of the area you live in to get freely registered with the public National Health Service (SSN). If you are a minor or if you have minor children, ask to the local health service (ASL) also if you don't have a residence permit.

- go to the local health service (ASL) of the area you live in and bring with you your residence permit (or receipt of request) and your fiscal code
- choose your general practitioner and/or paediatrician for your children from the list available in the ASL; you can change the doctor whenever you want
- after registration, you will receive an important paper with the name of the general practitioner or paediatrician and the validity period of your registration: always bring this paper with you when you need medical services
- after some time, a plastic health card will be sent to your address: this is an important document you must always have with you

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Registration with the public National Health Service (SSN) means that you can access health services by paying a small part of the overall costs (the so-called "ticket"). In some cases, you have the right to freely access health services: if you are affected by a disease or if you have low income, ask to the local health service (ASL) or to your general practitioner to get more information about ticket [exemptions](#).

If you do not have a residence permit or economic resources, you are entitled to access health services through a code called STP (temporary staying foreigner) issued by local health services (ASL) and hospitals.

Nobody can report you to the police if you ask for medical assistance.

What health care services are available in Italy?

First-level medical care

When you register with the public National Health Service (SSN) you will choose your general practitioner and/or paediatrician for your children. They represent a gateway to health services and offer for free:

- medical examinations
- prescription of medicines, specialist examinations and tests
- requests of hospitalisation
- certificates for the school and job

You can change your general practitioner and/or paediatrician whenever you want by referring to the local health service (ASL).

When the general practitioner is not available (at night time or on holidays), a substitutive telephone service is available (servizio di continuità assistenziale): ask the ASL or your doctor for the telephone number of your area.

If you don't have a residence permit, there are specific outpatient departments offering first-level medical care and prescriptions for undocumented people. Feel free to ask for information in the ASL of your area.

Women's and children's health

The family counselling service (consultorio familiare) offers medical, psychological and social services for women, children, adolescents, couples and families. In particular, it provides gynaecological examinations, cancer prevention, reproductive and sexual health services, medical care during pregnancy, after childbirth and during breastfeeding, information and assistance for voluntary interruption of pregnancy, counselling on the possibility to give birth without providing your personal data (if you do not want to keep the baby), vaccinations and psychological services.

No medical prescription is needed. Services are provided for free, except for some specialist examinations for which ticket payment is provided.

Vaccinations

Your child's health is important and vaccinations are the most effective means to prevent infectious diseases and relevant complications. In Italy, some vaccinations are mandatory (diphtheria, tetanus, polio, hepatitis B), other just recommended. Talk with a pediatrician to receive information and directions. Vaccinations can be made at the family counselling or at local health services (ASL) and your children have right to receive vaccinations even if you have not been granted with a residence permit.

If your child has already commenced a cycle of vaccinations in your country of origin, he/she can continue the vaccination schedule in Italy if you have the relevant certificate of vaccination. Otherwise, talk with a doctor.