

## Useful Information about Hospital Visits

If you do not have enough knowledge of Swedish, you are entitled to have an interpreter. Ask for an interpreter when you make an appointment.

In contacts with the Swedish health care system there are certain things that you should bear in mind, things that will make your visit a successful one and ensure that the care you receive is correct. As a patient and visitor, you have both obligations and rights. The Swedish health care system may be different to what you are used to in your native country.

### **An interpreter is an important part of your contact with health care services.**

- Tell the doctor or nurse who refers you to hospital if you need an interpreter. Tell them if you would specifically like a male or female interpreter, and if you would specifically like a male or female doctor.
- Do not use your children as interpreters
- During hospital visits, you should avoid bringing large numbers of friends or family members with you into the examination room. Come alone if you can, or with no more than one other person apart from the interpreter. This will enable the visit to be focused on you, the patient.

Arrange for a childminder to look after your children if possible, so that your visit can be focused on your medical care, and so that you will not be distracted. Neither the interpreter nor the hospital staff can look after your children during the examination.

### **When you visit as a patient**

Family doctors at health centres, *vårdcentralen*, issue referrals to hospitals and specialists. You will then receive an appointment time by post for your hospital visit.

Remember to write down the names of any medication that you use, or bring your medication to the hospital with you.

- When you arrive at the clinic/department, go to the reception desk and show the staff the letter with your appointment time that you received in the post. Show the staff your regular ID card, high-cost card, *högkostnadskort*, or *frikort*, the card that entitles you to free health care.

Pay using a bank card or set up payments by direct debit, so that all your healthcare charges can be debited from your account automatically. You can also pay against an invoice, which is sent to your home address. As of 1 March 2010 you can no longer pay by cash.

If you have to go to the accident and emergency department, it is a good idea to ring first.

If you are admitted to hospital and your stay in hospital creates problems for your family and financial situation, you can get help from the counsellor. Ask the staff on the ward for help in contacting the counsellor.

### **Times**

In Sweden it is important to be on time. This is useful to know to avoid misunderstandings.



- Do not forget to cancel an appointment in good time so that you avoid having to pay the patient fee, and so that others can use the appointment time.  
The interpreter's services must also be cancelled, but the hospital will take care of that.
- Explain your health problems yourself and answer the staff's questions yourself.  
Concentrate on the health problems that you made an appointment for.

**When you come as a visitor**

When visiting someone in hospital it is important that you respect other patients and visitors.

Do not visit the hospital if you have a cold. It is a good idea to ring and ask for advice.

You must not smoke in the hospital.

- When visiting the hospital you should respect the hospital's visiting hours, working procedures and the procedures at mealtimes.

Also respect other patients.

- In special circumstances, if you cannot arrange childminding in any way, please ask the person accompanying you to look after your children in the cafeteria or waiting room.
- If the weather is wet outside, when you arrive at the hospital do not forget to put on the elasticated shoe covers (available free of charge in the hospital).
- Please bring chocolate, fruit or a magazine with you rather than flowers, as asthmatics and other people may be allergic to flowers.
- Bearing asthmatics and allergic people in mind, it is a good idea to avoid using strong perfumes and perfumed products.

In Sweden patients are looked after well by the staff at the hospital. Remember that the person you visit may need your help more when he or she comes home from hospital.