

## **GOING INTO HOSPITAL - Information**

### **EMERGENCY DEPT** (*Urgencias*)

You should only use the emergency department for a very serious accident or illness that really cannot be dealt with by your Medical Centre or by your local doctor.

Also, as said before, try to have someone with you who speaks Spanish. There are some hospital staff who speak English, but you may not be lucky enough to find one on duty.

On arrival at Emergency, the patient will be taken to be seen by a doctor immediately - or may have to wait a while, if not too urgent. Normally the person accompanying him will stay in the waiting room. Give details of the patient - name, address, age, NHS card or EHIC, present medication, etc. - at the reception desk. It is a great help if you have this information with you - fill in the **Information Pages** [pages 94–95] in this book **NOW!** And keep copies in your bag or wallet and in the car.

The time taken to deal with the patient may stretch to hours as the doctors wait for results of X-rays and tests, so be patient. Eventually, when it is clear what the problem is and what treatment is necessary, you will be informed and usually allowed to see the patient.

If he may go home, the doctor will write out a report on what he has found and done. This should be taken to your local doctor if you need to see him for drugs to be prescribed or for follow-up treatment.

Some patients may be held for observation for up to 48 hours in Emergency. One person may visit the patient at given times, to help with personal care.

If he is to be admitted, you will be told which ward he will be on, though it may be some time before he is actually moved there.

### **INTENSIVE CARE UNIT** (*U.C.I. = Unidad de Cuidados Intensivos*)

Very seriously ill people will be admitted to the Intensive Care Unit, where they can be attended by highly specialized staff and monitored by sophisticated machines at all times.

Visitors are only allowed for a short time each day. The doctor in charge of the case will usually be available to discuss the patient's progress at about this time.

It is important that a relative is always reachable should the patient's condition deteriorate or surgery be required, to give their permission for the necessary treatment.

This means that a spouse or parent, on holiday with the patient at the time of his admission, will have to stay in Spain when the holiday ends.

The patient will be moved to a normal ward once his condition is stable, although of course he may still be very ill.

### **WARDS** (*Planta de ...*)

Most hospitals will only have wards for acute cases and they will not normally keep a chronically or terminally ill patient indefinitely. Once there is nothing further to be gained from hospital care, the patient will usually be sent home, or to a suitable nursing or residential home when a place is available and payment has been arranged.

### **ADMISSION** (*Ingreso en el Hospital*)

If you are on the list for a planned admission following the recommendation of a specialist, you will be informed by letter or phone to let you know the date and time you should arrive. You should go to the Admission Office (*Admisión*) to be registered, with your NHS (SIP) card, or EHIC and passport.

**Surgical admissions:** Up to a month before admission, you will be given an appointment to see an anaesthetist to undergo a basic examination to make sure you are fit for surgery.

### **You need to bring with you:**

- Washing / shaving tackle
- Slippers
- Dressing gown (if up and about)
- Glasses, false teeth, hearing aid, etc., with suitable receptacles (they may have to be removed for certain tests or surgery)
- A small amount of cash for phone / TV cards
- Phone numbers of friends and family
- Books, magazines, cards, writing tackle, etc.

### **Do NOT bring:**

- Jewellery, credit cards or other valuables (if admitted in an emergency, these may be deposited in Admission or Emergency)
- Pyjamas / Nightdress - hospital gowns will be provided
- Food or drink of any sort
- Clothes other than what you are wearing