



# Sexual and Reproductive Health Booklet

Health Right Association



## Sexual and Reproductive Health Booklet

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"This booklet has been prepared by the Health Right Association with the contributions of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Association in Turkey. The views contained in this booklet do not represent the views of the FES Association Turkey Representation."

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Istanbul, 2021



## Preface

As the Health Right Association, we came together to carry out rights-based activities. This project has a very special place for us as it is the first booklet we have prepared for young women. Throughout the project, we have worked hard to transform scientific information into practical information by referring to studies conducted by scientists.

We created the first version of this booklet, which we designed considering the needs of young women within the scope of sexual and reproductive health, in Turkish and Arabic in Hatay with the support of the Young Refugees Support Program. We hope to expand this updated version in Istanbul, with the support of Istanbul City Council, in Turkish, English, Arabic and Persian. We thank them for their support.

In addition, we would like to thank all of our volunteers who contributed to the preparation of this booklet, especially Cihan Alp, Elif Başak Güven, Mohammed Douba, Cansın Turbay and Ece Okur from the Health Right Association for their valuable contributions. We hope that this booklet reaches everyone and brings awareness and benefit to everyone it reaches... With love.

**“Everyone has the right to live free from violence and discrimination and to access reproductive health services.”**

Kevser, Sinem, Hatice, Eşref Bilge

October, 2021



## **Health Right Association**

The Health Right Association, which was established as a civil initiative on December 1, 2020, continues to work by becoming an association as of September 28, 2021.

The Health Right Association aims to influence the public and decision-makers, support institutions and individuals, contribute to the national literature, and minimize violations of the right to health through advocacy, awareness and capacity building on health rights and health literacy.

### **Vision**

To eliminate the violations of the right to health by maximizing the health rights awareness and health literacy level of the society and to ensure that the health rights policies and the health system comply with international standards.

### **Mission**

To create an impact on the public and decision-makers, to support institutions and individuals, to contribute to the national literature and to minimize violations of the right to health through advocacy, awareness and capacity building activities on health rights and health literacy.



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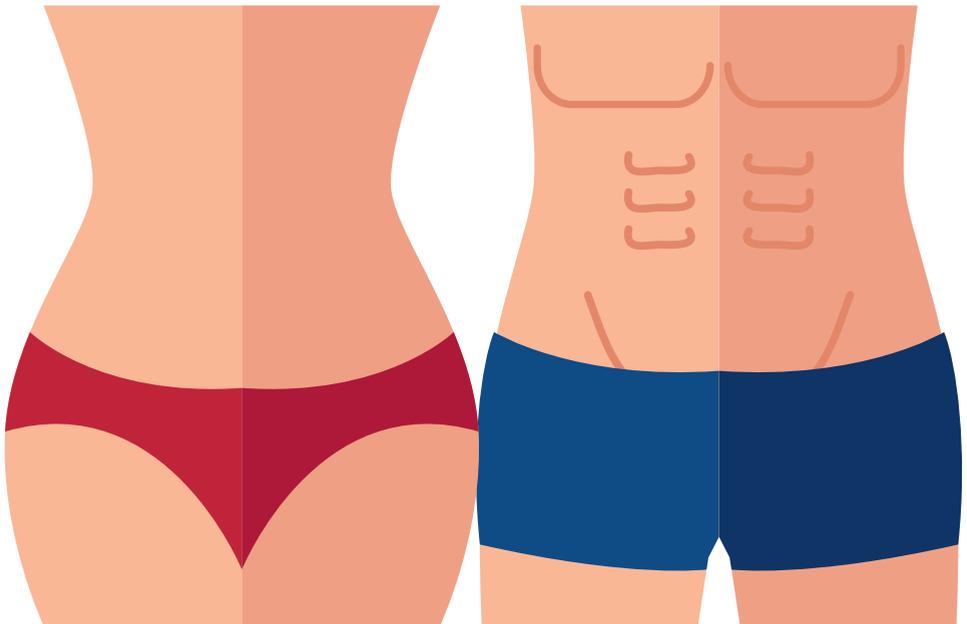


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# Sexual Health and Reproductive Health

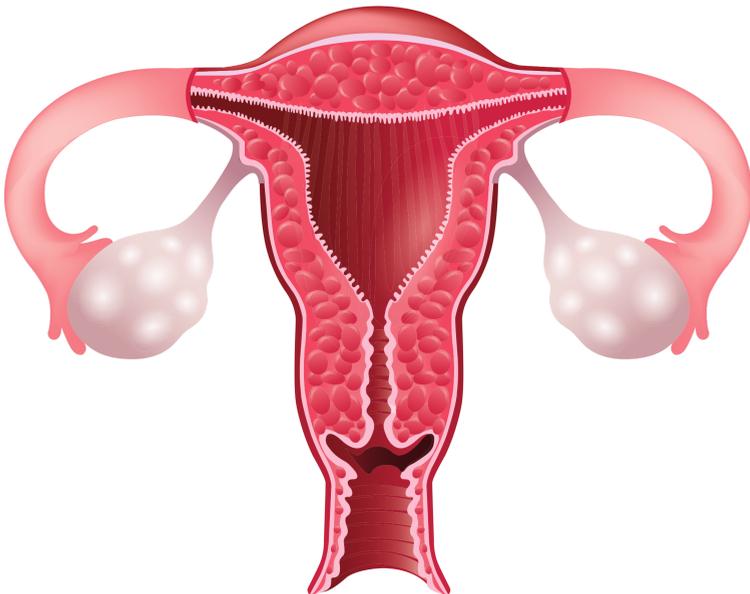




## Reproductive Health

The reproductive system, about its functions and processes, is not only the absence of illness and disability but also being in a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

Reproductive health also means that people have a satisfying and safe sex life, have the ability to reproduce, and have the freedom to make decisions about using their reproductive capabilities.

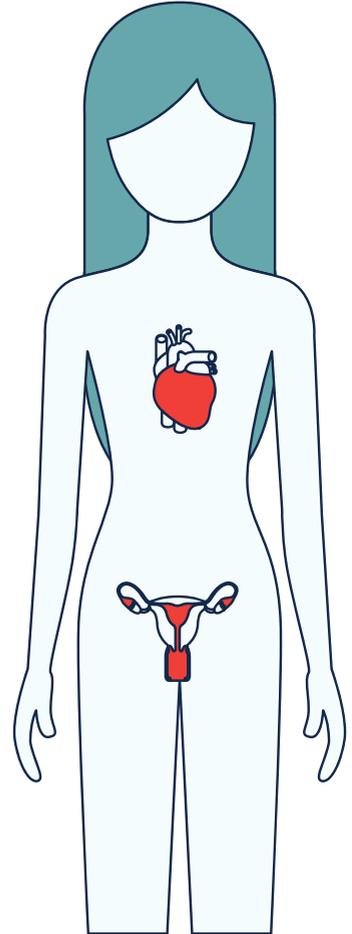




## Reproductive Health for Women

Reproductive Health is about being respectful towards individuals' healthy reproduction, having babies as much as and whenever couples want, preventing maternal deaths, experiencing safe motherhood by all women, and making relevant changes in political, legal and health systems for women to sustain a healthy and quality life.

As the population growth increases in 1960's, countries went through socioeconomic issues. This led to discussions about family planning, women and reproductive health. In 1994, the issues such as women's rights, interference with women's sexual life, increase in sexually transmitted infections including HIV, HPV and AIDS were highlighted in "International Conference on Population and Development" in Cairo.





## Main Issues in Reproductive Health

- Gender Discrimination,
- Lack of access to adequate and accurate information about sexuality,
- Inability to experience satisfying sexuality,
- Engaging in sexual activity without being sure of having responsibility,
- Ability to experience sexuality and fertility without coercion,
- Inability to benefit from postpartum health services,
- Bilinçsiz ve korunmadan yaşanan cinsel deneyimler sonucunda enfekte olma ve buna ilişkin tedavi alabilme-> **ALAMAMA mı olması gerekli?** /Being infected as a result of unconscious and unprotected sexual experiences and getting treatment related to it,
- Early parenthood.





## Rights of Reproduction

All individuals have the right to decide and act freely about their lives. While using those rights, it is important to know correct and safe information and especially to access to health services in terms of individual's private life and responsibilities toward society.

Everyone has the right of being free of coercion, violence and discrimination for decisions regarding reproduction. In this regard, reproductive rights are arranged by IPPF in Sexual and Reproductive Rights Declaration (2008) as follows:

- The Right to Life
- The Right to Liberty and Security of the Person
- The Right to Equality, and to be Free from all Forms of Discrimination
- The Right to Privacy
- The Right to Freedom of Thought
- The Right to Information and Education
- The Right to Choose Whether or Not to Marry and to Found and Plan a Family
- The Right to Decide Whether or When to have Children
- The Right to Health Care and Health Protection
- The Right to the Benefits of Scientific Progress
- The Right to Freedom of Assembly and Political Participation
- The Right to be Free from Torture and Ill Treatment



## Reproductive Health Issues of Immigrant Women

Reproductive health has great significance for health systems. Each year, many women and babies lose their lives and millions of women are exposed to sexual violence everyday due to preventable and curable health problems. Reproductive health cause many issues in terms of social, economic and health.

Reproductive health issues of immigrant women are:

- Pregnancy and birth related issues (Early pregnancy, unhealthy miscarriage and birth, high fertility)
- Violence/Exploitation/Human trafficking
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Sexual harrasment-rape, violence and poverty related psychological issues and their effect on reproductive health
- Insufficient Access to Reproductive Health Services





# Practical Information



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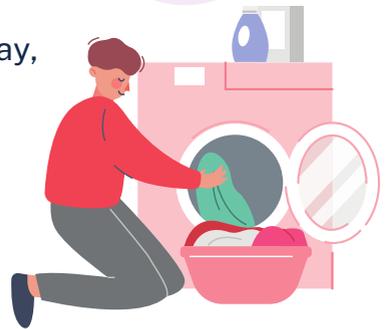
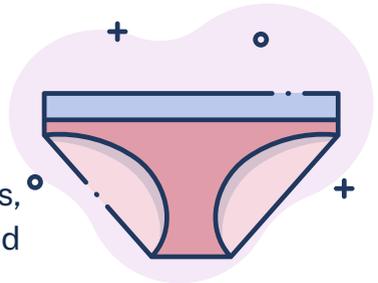
## Genital Hygiene

Women's genital area involves labia minora, clitoris, entrance to the vagina, secretory glands, urethra where urination is made, anus where defecation, and many hair follicles. Due to its complex structure, it requires attention to cleaning from different aspects.



## How to have genital hygiene?

- Avoid from genital wash,
- Choose cotton underwear,
- Prefer comfortable and loose clothes,
- Wash your underwear with unscented detergent,
- Change your underwear twice in a day,
- Be careful about overall hygiene,
- Use condoms to prevent infections,
- Don't miss regular check-ups.



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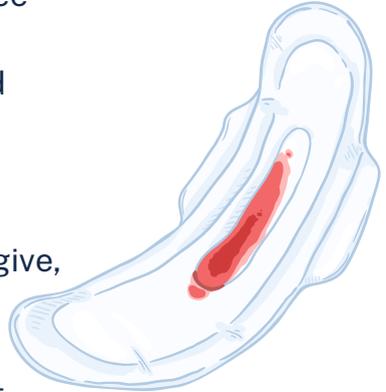
## Menstruation

Menstruation or commonly known as period, occurs once in every 28 days on average and the whole cycle is described as menstrual cycle. Period is an indicator that a women's reproductive functions healthily operates.



## What should be considered during the menstrual period?

- Be careful about genital hygiene (See p.8),
- Pad, tampon etc. should be changed often,
- Drink plenty of water,
- Be careful to eat healthily,
- Don't use drugs unless the doctors give,
- Do comforting activities,
- Have a light walk or exercise, and
- Don't expose your body extreme hot such as hot water bags.



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## Preventing Unintended Pregnancy

People have used various methods to prevent unintended pregnancy or birth for ages. Some of those methods put mother's life in danger. Today, there are **reliable and harmless** methods developed for everyone.



## When choosing the methods, they should

- It should be chosen individually, with an consultation of an expert,
- Have high effect and reliability,
- Not have a side effect,
- Be under the control of the user,
- Be enable returning fertility when wanted,
- Be effective for a long time and
- Be protective against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.



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## Methods of Preventing Unintended Pregnancy

### Natural Methods (Their reliability is low.)

- **Natural family planning (Calendar Method):** It involves calculating ovulation periods in the menstrual cycle.
- **Mucothermal Method:** The temperature and mucus structure of the uterus is monitored. Ovulation occurs in four days when the cervical mucus looks like egg white.
- **Ejaculation (Withdrawal):** It is the man's withdrawal during intercourse, at the time of ejaculation.

### Barrier Methods

- **Condoms:** It is put on the penis before sexual intercourse, thus preventing the sperm from reaching the uterus.
- **Diaphragm:** It is a soft rubber threaded over a ring. It covers the cervix like a cap. It kills sperm and prevents pregnancy.
- **Chemical Method:** Spermicide chemicals are used. It is available in foam, cream, or gel form. It is placed in the vagina before sexual intercourse and the sperms are killed before they reach the uterus.



## Methods of Preventing Unintended Pregnancy

### Hormonal Contraceptives

- **Contraceptive Pills:** By taking the pill regularly every day, it prevents the release of eggs from the ovaries every month.
- **Subcutaneous implants:** It is placed under the skin of the woman's arm. It constantly releases hormones into the bloodstream. It prevents pregnancy for 5 years.
- **Injectable contraceptive:** Artificial progesterone hormone is injected. This hormone prevents the release of eggs from the ovaries for 3 months.

### Surgical Methods

- **Vasectomy:** It is the cutting the ducts that bring sperm from the male testicles to the penis. It is difficult to revert.
- **Tubal ligation:** After this surgery, the egg cannot meet the sperm and thus fertilization is prevented. It has a 50-75% chance of being reverted.
- **Intrauterine Device (IUD):** Also called spiral or ring. It is placed in the uterus. It prevents pregnancy by changing the physical environment of the reproductive organ. Provides 1 to 5 years of protection.



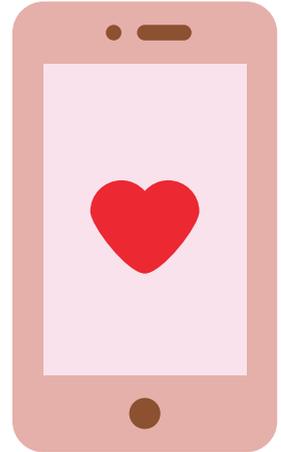
## Pregnancy Tracking and Healthy Pregnancy

Pregnancy tracking is carried out with the aim of monitoring the development of the baby and ensuring that the pregnancy process is passed in a healthy way, considering the risks that the expectant mother may encounter during and after the pregnancy period.



## Implementation of Pregnancy Tracking in Turkey

According to Article 179 of the Directive on the Execution of Health Services in Turkey, titled Women's Health Services, pregnant and postpartum women who consult to a health institution should be provided with services in accordance with the standards determined by the Ministry of Health.





## Considerations for a Healthy Pregnancy

- Healthy and nutritious products should be consumed,
- At least 2 liters of water should be drunk daily to prevent constipation, facilitate digestion and remove toxins,
- Smoking and drinking alcohol should not be allowed,
- Extreme hot environments such as steam baths, saunas, jacuzzis should not be entered into,
- Heavy lifting and strenuous movements should be avoided,
- Stress should be avoided,
- Radiation emitting imaging devices such as X-rays should be avoided,
- Close contact with sick people should be avoided,
- Only drugs and vitamins recommended by the doctor should be used,
- 7 to 9 hours of sleep a day is required,
- Car, bus and train travels should be kept less than 6 hours, and for plane travel, the journey should be taken with the permission of the doctor,
- After the 6th month, sexual intercourse should be avoided.





## Early (Adolescent) Pregnancy

In a broad sense, adolescence is the period of transition from childhood to adulthood by an individual with biological, psychological, and social changes. Adolescent pregnancy is the pregnancy of women aged between 10-19. These are pregnancies that can have short and long-term negative effects on mother's and baby's health.

### How to avoid adolescent pregnancies and their negative effects?

#### Primary protection (Avoiding unwanted sexual intercourse):

- Adolescents should be aware of the right to say **"No!"**.
- **A trusted person** (mother, father, teacher, relatives, etc.) should be notified when risky behavior is encountered,
- When exposed to an unwanted behavior, the relevant institutions should be consulted. (See p. 21-24)

#### Secondary protection (protection during sexual intercourse):

- Information on prevention of pregnancy should be obtained (See p. 10-12),
- Information should be obtained about sexually transmitted infections and safe sex (See p. 28-31)

#### Tertiary prevention (includes pregnant adolescents):

- The expectant mother should learn about pregnancy, birth and baby care (See p. 13-20)



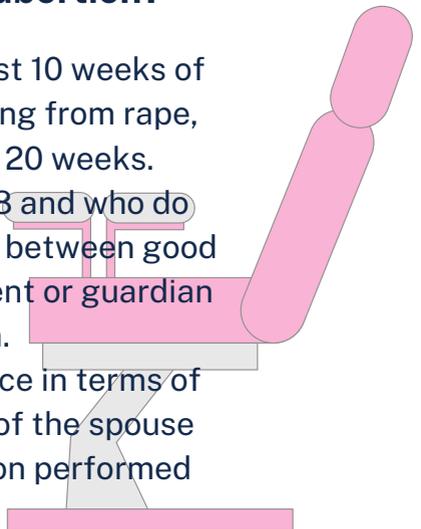
## Medical Termination of Pregnancy/Abortion

Abortion means the medical termination of an unwanted pregnancy. Abortion is both a right to health care and a legal right for women, girls and anyone who can become pregnant who want to terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

Abortion cannot be done off the record and cannot be performed in a place other than a hospital/private clinic. Only doctors are authorized to perform abortions.

### What are the requirements for abortion?

- Abortion is required within the first 10 weeks of pregnancy. In pregnancies resulting from rape, abortion can be performed within 20 weeks.
- For individuals under the age of 18 and who do not have the ability to distinguish between good and bad, the consent of their parent or guardian is required to perform an abortion.
- If there is no medical inconvenience in terms of the mother's health, the consent of the spouse should be obtained for the abortion performed upon request.





## Miscarriage

Miscarriage (abortion) is defined as termination of pregnancy due to various reasons before the twentieth week, according to the last menstrual period. During this period, the fetus is less than 500 grams. Miscarriages up to the 12th week of pregnancy are early miscarriages. Miscarriages between 13 and 20 weeks are late miscarriages.



## Possible Causes of Miscarriage

There is not always a specific reason for having a miscarriage, but it can occur for some reason.

These are:

- Fetal genetic causes
- Genetic causes present in parents
- Infections during pregnancy
- Some diseases of the mother

## What should be done?

- Certain points should be considered to ensure a healthy pregnancy (See p. 13-14).



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## Birth

The moment of birth is the last moment of approximately 6-9 months of pregnancy. During birth, focusing only on birth and not getting into negative thoughts helps the mother to carry out more comfortable birth. It is important for mothers to do what the doctor recommends.



## Types of Births

- **Normal Birth:** It is also called natural birth. It is carried out without medication, painkillers and no medical intervention.
- **Cesarean section:** It is one of the birth methods used in cases where normal birth is risky. This method is considered as surgical intervention.
- **Birth in Water:** Birth is carried out in a warm water of 35-37 degrees.



## Considerations After Birth

- It is necessary to stay under medical supervision for the first 24 to 48 hours after birth (consult your doctor about that),
- Simple exercise can be started 1 week after normal delivery and 6 months after cesarean section, with the permission of the doctor,
- Healthy food should be eaten and plenty of water should be drunk.
- Smoking and drinking alcohol should not be allowed,
- To take a bath, the day recommended by the doctor should be waited and take a standing shower,
- Genital hygiene should be paid attention (See p. 8),
- Support should be received from close ones,
- In order to prevent infection in the breast, the mother should breastfeed her baby frequently,
- **General checks and vaccinations** of the baby should be done on time,
- Especially breastfeeding mothers should not use any medication other than the medication and vitamins prescribed by the doctor,
- Spicy and fatty foods should not be consumed,
- Sexual intercourse should be avoided until the end of puerperium.



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## Birth Complications

Complications associated with birth can occur during or after birth. Complications can put the health of mother and baby at risk.



## What can I do?

- If possible, birth should be carried out by a gynecological and obstetrician doctor,
- Regular follow-up of the mother and fetus should be carried out by a specialist doctor during the period of birth,
- 24 to 48 hours after birth (according to the doctor's recommendation) should be spent under medical supervision,
- When an unexpected situation is encountered after leaving the hospital, it is vital to consult to the nearest health institution.





## Sexual Violence

Violent acts mainly occur in the form of physical, psychological, sexual violence, or neglect. Sexual violence can be experienced regardless of gender and sexual orientation, and it can also be practiced by friends, spouses, and family, apart from attacks by a stranger. Physical abuse, touching, forcing to watch movies with sexual content, sexual verbal assault, and forced intercourse are sexual violence.

### I have been abused, what can I do?

#### Institutions and organizations that can be consulted when exposed to violence or at risk:

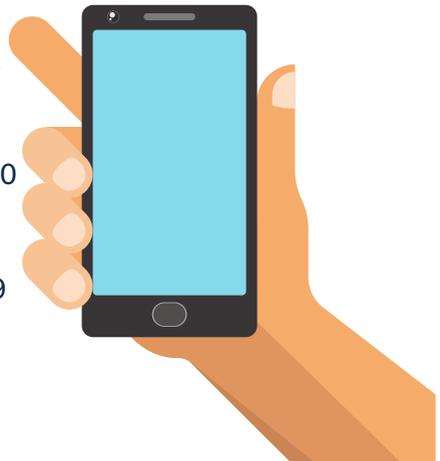
- Governorship - District Governorship
- Police station
- Gendarmerie Station
- Judicial Authorities (Office of Chief Public Prosecutor and Family Courts)
- Provincial Directorates of Family, Labor and Social Services
- Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (SONIM)
- Health Institutions

**Istanbul SONIM:** Phone: (0212) 465 21 96 - 465 21 97 - (0549) 806 79 48 Address: Yeşilköy Mah. Halkalı Cad. No: 30 Bakirkoy



## Emergency Hotlines and Mobile Applications

- **ALO 155** Police Help
- **ALO 156** Gendarmerie Help
- **ALO 183** Social Support Hotline  
(provides free service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- **112 EMERGENCY** Call Center
- **Gelincik Line:** 444 43 06
- Violence Reporting Mobile Application
- Women's Support System (KADES)
- **ALO 157** Victims of Human Trafficking Emergency Aid and Report Hotline
- **Domestic Violence Hotline:** (0212) 656 96 96 ve (0549) 656 96 96
- **Women's Councils Hotline:** (0505) 004 11 98
- **Nirengi Association Support Against Abuse Hotline:** 0850 216 53 67
- **Right to Life Hotline:** 444 82 85
- **İBB Women's Support Hotline:** 444 80 86
- **Kadıköy Municipality Hello Violence Against Women Hotline:** (0216) 349 9 349





## Institutions to Apply Against Violence

- **Women and Family Counseling Centers of Municipalities:** You can get detailed information by applying to IBB or your district municipality.
- **Association for Combating Sexual Violence:** (0542) 5853990 [www.cinselsiddetlemucadele.org](http://www.cinselsiddetlemucadele.org) E-mail: [info@cinselsiddetlemucadele.org](mailto:info@cinselsiddetlemucadele.org)
- **Association of Legal Support Center for Women (KAHDEM):** [www.kahdem.org.tr](http://www.kahdem.org.tr), E-mail: [kahdem@gmail.com](mailto:kahdem@gmail.com)
- **Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV):** (0212) 251 58 50, [www.kadav-ist.org](http://www.kadav-ist.org), E-mail: [info@kadavist.org](mailto:info@kadavist.org)
- **Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation:** (0212) 292 52 31 ve 32, [www.morcati.org.tr](http://www.morcati.org.tr), E-mail: [morcati@morcati.org.tr](mailto:morcati@morcati.org.tr)
- **Bakırköy Municipality Özgecan Women's Counseling House:** (0212) 466 39 39
- **Küçükçekmece Municipality Women's Counseling and Shelter:** (0212) 411 08 35, E-mail: [sosyalyardim@kucukcekmece.bel.tr](mailto:sosyalyardim@kucukcekmece.bel.tr)

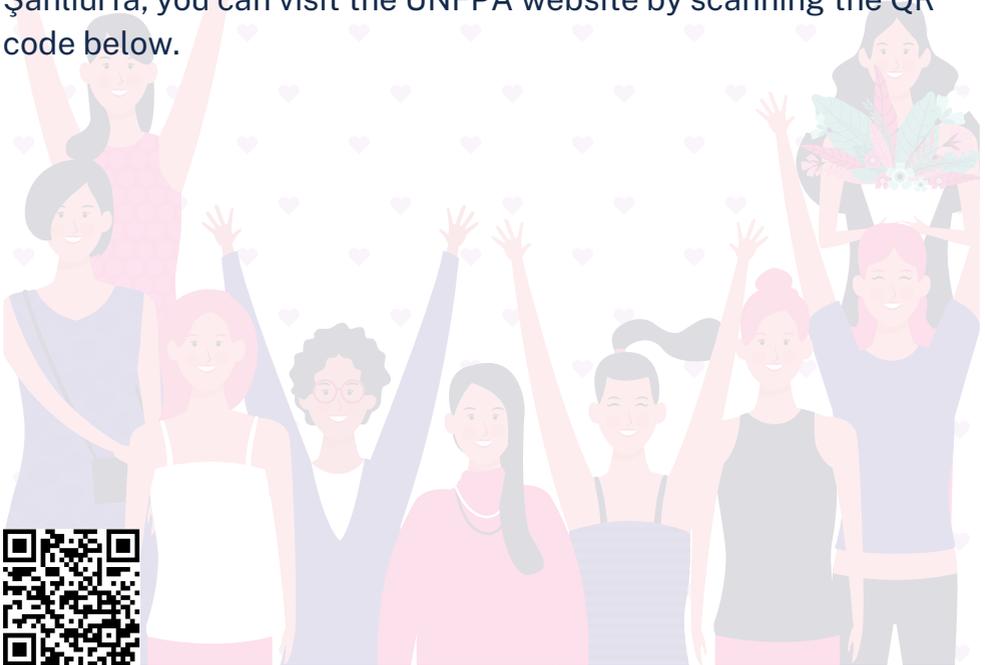




## Women's Health Counseling Centers

Safe spaces are created for women and girls in Women's Health Counseling Centers.

For detailed information about women's health counseling centers in Adana, Adiyaman, Ankara, Batman, Bursa, Diyarbakir, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Kocaeli, Konya, Malatya, Mardin, Mersin, Osmaniye and Şanlıurfa, you can visit the UNFPA website by scanning the QR code below.





## Access of Young Women to Reproductive Health Services

Institutions that young women in Turkey can benefit from regarding women's and reproductive health:

- Family Health Centers
  - Family doctor
- State Hospitals
  - Gynecology and Obstetrics Polyclinic
- Training and Research Hospitals
  - Gynecology and Obstetrics Polyclinic
- Women's Health Counseling Centers





## Access of Young Women to Reproductive Health Services

Institutions where young women can benefit from women's and reproductive health in Istanbul:

- **İBB Şehzadebaşı Medical Center:** (0212) 455 15 50
- **Ataşehir Municipality Women's Health and Mammography Center:** (0216) 570 50 00 (1943- 1991)
- **Beşiktaş Municipality Voluntary Testing and Counseling Center & 24/7 Online Medical Consultation Service:** (0212) 444 44 55
- **Beylikdüzü Municipality Pregnant School:** (0212) 444 09 39
- **Kadıköy Municipality Zehra - Mustafa Yüksel Mammography and Women's Health Center:** (0216) 565 66 16
- **Kadıköy Municipality Dr. Rana Beşe Health Clinic:** (0216) 418 88 30 - 348 40 27
- **Kadıköy Municipality Prof. Dr. Korkmaz Altug Health Polyclinic:** (0216) 565 13 44 - (0216) 565 25 94
- **Şişli Municipality Polyclinic & Laboratory Services:** (0212) 708 88 88
- **Tuzla Municipality Women's Coordination Center:** (0212) 444 0 906
- **Sarıyer Municipality Polyclinic Services & Psychosocial Services:** (0212) 444 1 722
- **Women's and Family Health Association:** 0312 219 8064
- **Istanbul Positive Living Association HIV Test:** +90 216 418 10 61



## Access of Refugee Women to Reproductive Health Services

Laws regarding the access of refugees in Turkey to health services have been regulated. Accordingly:

- No contribution fee is charged for basic and emergency health services, as well as for treatments and medicines within this scope,
- Necessary studies are carried out and measures are taken regarding communicable diseases, child vaccination and reproductive health,
- Refugees can benefit from health centers established in temporary accommodation centers, health service providers belonging to the ministry and its affiliates, university health practice and research centers, private hospitals, and health services provided voluntarily by foundations or associations.





## Immigrant Health Center

Immigrant Health Centers affiliated to Public Health Directorates have been established in every province in Turkey. Health services provided in Immigrant Health Centers:

- First level diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation services,
- Vaccination and other preventive health services and reproductive health services,
- Monitoring and scans for different age and gender groups (pregnant, puerperal, newborn, infant, child, etc.),
- Health education (hygiene, breast milk, healthy nutrition, etc.).



## Istanbul Immigrant Health Center

For detailed information about the Immigrant Health Centers in Arnavutköy, Avcılar, Bağcılar, Bahçelievler, Başakşehir, Beyoğlu, Büyükçekmece, Esenler, Esenyurt, Fatih, Güngören, Kağıthane, Küçükçekmece, Maltepe, Pendik, Sancaktepe, Sultanbeyli, Sultangazi, Ümraniye, Üsküdar and Zeytinburnu districts, you can visit <https://istanbulism.saglik.gov.tr/>.



## Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):

Sexually transmitted infections are infections that are passed from one person to another through sexual contact (intercourse).

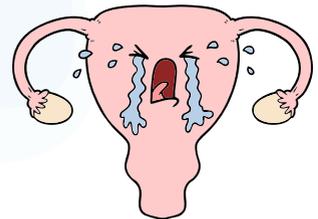
**The main way of transmission** is to have sexual intercourse with someone who has an infectious agent without taking protective measures.

**Left untreated**, sexually transmitted infections can lead to infertility and cervical cancer.

These types of risks make the issue of **safe sex** more important.

Such infections can be transmitted during sexual intercourse, as well as from mother to infant before, during, or immediately after birth, through transfusions of defective blood or the use of unsterilized syringes.

**Various treatments** includes vaccines, antibiotics or effective creams. Some infections do not have a definitive treatment.





## Most Common Sexually Transmitted Infections:

- **HPV (human papillomavirus):** It is transmitted through skin contact during sexual intercourse. It can manifest itself through warts in the genital area or throat. HPV is the most important cause of cervical cancer. That's why getting the **HPV vaccine** is so important. HPV vaccine protects against risk to a great extent.
- **Gonorrhea:** It tends to infect warm, moist areas of the body. The infection can progress without any symptoms. Gonorrhea can cause infertility.
- **Chlamydia:** It is a common sexual infection. Newborn babies can also get chlamydia infection from their mothers during birth.
- **Genital herpes:** Symptom of infection can include water-filled red blisters in the vagina, anus, and buttocks, herpes around the mouth, pain when urinating, fever, and vaginal discharge. It can be infect the baby during normal birth.



## Most Common Sexually Transmitted Infections:

- **Scabies:** It is an itchy and contagious skin infection caused by the scabies penetrating under the epidermis, which is so small that it can hardly be seen with the naked eye.
- **Syphilis:** It is a potentially serious infection, early treatment is necessary to prevent permanent damage and long-term complications. In the first stage, a round, hard wound can usually be felt on or around the genitals. Syphilis can transmit from an infected mother to her unborn baby.
- **HIV:** It is a contagious infection that collapses the immune system. HIV can cause AIDS and there is no definitive treatment to completely remove the virus from the body. Thanks to early diagnosis, the virus can be suppressed with protective and preventive treatments and it can be prevented from collapsing the immune system.
- **Hepatitis B:** Hepatitis B, a serious contagious infection, remains in the body for years. It can become chronic and cause permanent damage to the liver through cirrhosis or cancer. Hepatitis B can transmit from mother to baby. There is no definitive treatment.



## Ways to Avoid Sexually Transmitted Infections:

- **Condom should be used:** While condom protects from most sexually transmitted infections, it does not protect from some. For example HPV infection! It is not necessary to have full sexual intercourse for HPV to be transmitted, because HPV can also be transmitted by friction, and cause genital warts. But still, a condom must be used, because it will protect from 90% of sexually transmitted infections.
- Having sex with more than one person can increase the risk of encountering infection. Having sex with someone who has sex with more than one person can likewise increase the risk.
- It should be ensured that **all precautions are taken** while having sexual intercourse with people who you are sure they **do not have infections**,
- **A screening test should be performed once a year for sexually transmitted infections** (such as Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea). If the partner is changed, the tests should be repeated.
- **The immune system should be kept strong:** Immune system should be strengthened with balanced nutrition, regular sleep and stress-free emphasis.



## Sources:

You can read the QR code below to access the resources used in the preparation of this booklet and for further reading.



You can reach [bilgi@saglikhakki.net](mailto:bilgi@saglikhakki.net) for any feedback.

*"This booklet has been prepared by the Health Right Association with the contributions of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Association in Turkey. The views contained in this booklet do not represent the views of the FES Association Turkey Representation."*

# S Sağlık Hakkı



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