

# DON'T PUT A PRICE TAG ON YOUR HEALTH

## PREVENTRANS PROGRAMME

Safer Sex Guide for Trans Women Sex Workers





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## Introduction

If you are both a sex worker and a trans woman, this guide is for you. We aim to provide you with information to help you feel well, take better care of yourself and be aware of your social and healthcare rights.

**Taking care of yourself is a way of taking care of your work.**

At the end of the guide there is a list of organizations that belong to the Prevetrans programme or that have specific care programmes for trans sex workers.



## Sexually Transmitted Infections

**Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)** like syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, herpes or human papillomavirus (HPV) are transmitted during sex, especially during intercourse and oral sex. Some STIs can be transmitted by coming into contact with broken skin, as are the cases of herpes or HPV. You might feel too embarrassed to go to the doctor or seek out treatment for one of these STIs. However, if you don't, you could end up infecting others and suffering health complications later on.

**If you think you might have an STI, it is best that you see a doctor, start and complete the prescribed treatment** and go back for regular ad-

vised check-ups. Some STIs cause obvious symptoms such as secretions from the urethra or the anus, stinging sensations, redness, blisters and warts. Other STIs however may be hardly noticeable at all or cause no symptoms whatsoever. Check your genitals for any signs and watch out for any unusual stains on your underwear.

Consider testing regularly for STIs. If you have HIV, ask your healthcare professionals to test you for syphilis every six months. If you have HPV as well, find out how often you should get an anal Pap smear.



## Prevention of HIV Transmission

**The HIV infection**, which causes AIDS, does not usually cause symptoms when first contracted. HIV can cause the immune system to malfunction, leading to infections, tumours and other diseases later on. This is why testing is fundamental, so the virus can be detected and fought as early as possible in order to avoid reaching advanced stages of the infection.

The bodily fluids by which HIV can be sexually transmitted are **blood, semen and vaginal and anal secretions**.

**By making sure your client uses a condom during intercourse** you can avoid having the inside of your anus or vagina, if you have had surgery, come into contact with his semen or pre-ejaculate. **Pre-ejaculate**, a lubricating and transparent fluid produced by the penis during arousal, may also carry HIV, hence the importance of using a condom from the very start.

**If you are the one penetrating him, by wearing a condom you prevent** the head of your penis from coming into contact with his anal secretions and blood, caused by anal tears during intercourse.

**If your client wears a condom while receiving oral sex**, you will be protected from HIV and other STIs. If he does not wear a condom, at least make sure he does not ejaculate in your mouth, which will prevent you from HIV transmission. There are other STIs however that can be transmitted through pre-ejaculate.

HIV is never transmitted through saliva, teardrops, urine or sweat.

The following are sexual practices by which HIV can be acquired or transmitted :

- **Being anally penetrated without a condom.**
- If you have had surgery, **being vaginally penetrated without a condom.**
- **Anally penetrating a man or a woman without a condom.**
- **Vaginally penetrating a woman.**
- **Performing oral sex (on a penis) and receiving ejaculate in your mouth.**
- **Sharing sex toys** (dildos, vibrators...) previously used by another person.

### **Remember!**

**Using a condom** during anal or vaginal sex, from the very beginning of intercourse and regardless of being top or bottom, is the best way of protecting yourself from HIV and other STIs.

Also use **lubrication** to keep the condom from breaking and ease penetration.

For **blowjobs** (even without ejaculation), a condom will protect you from other STIs.

**Wash sex toys with water** before using them.



In many FELGTB organizations there are strong condoms specifically for anal sex, condoms for vaginal intercourse and flavoured condoms for oral sex. You will also find lubricant. **Everything free of charge.** See page 18.



## Condom Use

Condoms only work if their use is constant, from start to finish during intercourse. In addition to checking their **expiration date**, remember:

- Always use a condom, both to penetrate and be penetrated.
- Place the condom on the penis when it is erect and squeeze the tip with your fingers, **making sure no air is left inside**.
- Use water-based or silicone-based lubricant. This makes it harder for the condom to break, in addition to making intercourse more pleasurable and less painful.
- Do not use oily lubricants (vaseline, oil, lotion). They can damage the condom and make it break.
- If you do not have lube, the saliva of the penetrated person is better than nothing.
- You can use extra-strong condoms.
- Do not wear two condoms at once. The friction between the two can make it easier to



break.

## Hygiene Before Intercourse

For enemas or douching, **only use water**. Soap and other products should never be used inside the anus or the vagina. Make sure that water pressure is not too high as to not damage your intestine's mucosal membrane.



Douching does not prevent STIs. To the contrary, it can cause irritation, which in turn favours transmission. **Try to do it as little as possible** and make sure you only use

## If the Condom Breaks!



You **have the right to be considered** for prophylactic treatment.

If you have HIV, ask your doctor about it during your next visit. **If you have any questions** or would like to be accompanied, **contact us**.

water.

**If the condom breaks while you are being penetrated** by a person with HIV and they ejaculate inside of you; or while penetrating someone and you have HIV; it is important that you know that there is a treatment called post-exposure prophylaxis that can reduce the risk of infection.

It is an **emergency treatment** that should be started as soon as possible, ideally within the first six hours, and maximum 72 hours after the high-risk practice.

These drugs, which are dispensed by a hospital's emergency services, **should only be taken in exceptional circumstances** and prescribed by a doctor who has assessed its risks and benefits. For the treatment to be effective, it needs to be taken during 28 days.

### Clients and Partners

Some clients do not want to use a condom and will sometimes offer more money to not do so. **Do not forget that money is not everything and that your health is priceless.** When it comes to your romantic partner, it is easier to get carried away and end up not using condoms, because feelings come into play. All of us need love and affection. However, before you decide to stop using condoms with someone, it is important that first you test for HIV and other STIs. Though it may be hard to believe, a great deal of HIV infections take place within couples.

**If you have had a high-risk practice** (unprotected intercourse, ejaculation in the mouth, condom breakage...), an HIV test is the only way of knowing if you have been infected. **Do not wait:** make an appointment so your case can be assessed, you can get tested if necessary and, in the event of a negative result, see if the test needs to be repeated and when. Fasting is not necessary prior to an HIV test.

It is also advisable that you and your partner get tested if you wish to stop using condoms.

In addition to conventional HIV tests that you can get at your doctor's office and STI testing centres, rapid HIV tests are also now available, by finger-prick or saliva sampling.

The test is rapid because it can provide results within 20 minutes. A positive result must always be confirmed afterwards in a clinic. By contrast, a negative result is completely reliable. Some NGOs, pharmacies and clinics offer rapid HIV tests.

If you have an active sex life, with clients or partners, consider getting tested regularly, twice a year.



**Learn more!**

[www.felgtb.com/haztelaprueba](http://www.felgtb.com/haztelaprueba)

## Self Hormone Therapy, Silicone and Surgery Without Medical Supervision



Many of us have taken hormones to suppress our male sexual characteristics (body hair, the Adam's apple, muscle size...) and develop female ones. We do it to look more like our ideal selves.

**Changes brought on by hormones are progressive and slow** and depend on the age at which treatment is started. Keep in mind that everyone has different needs when it comes to hormones. **What works best for one woman may not work for another.**

It is best that **hormone therapy be prescribed and supervised by a doctor.** Otherwise, you could experience complications, ranging from weight gain to fluid retention or even blood circulation problems in the gallbladder or high blood pressure.

- Hormones may have side effects las hormonas pueden estar contraindicadas en algunos casos;
- In some cases, hormones are contraindicated.
- Higher doses will neither speed your process nor lead to better results.
- Inadequate doses can result in impotence. Decide if this is something important to you, in your work or for your sexuality. At the start of treatment the ability to have an erection tends to disappear and later on constant stimulation is needed. The intensity of your orgasms may also be affected.

Never inject silicone directly under the skin, neither on your face nor anywhere else on your body. Silicone is a substance foreign to the body; it causes problems and is difficult to remove. Injecting liquid silicone and other substances without medical supervision can lead to:

- Obstruction of bloodlines, veins and arteries, in some cases resulting in death.
- Displacement and clotting, generally around the ankles. It can also deform the face.
- Skin numbness, possibly leading to necrosis (tissue death).
- Cysts and ulcers.

**Do not share needles for hormone therapy or silicone with others.** Doing so entails a great risk of HIV or hepatitis C transmission.

Even though you may be undergoing self hormone therapy, it is not too late to see a **specialist**. Some hospitals have comprehensive healthcare units for transsexual people, providing services at all levels (diagnosis, hormone therapy, surgery, check-ups...).

Depending on where you live, access may vary. Generally, you must be of legal age and be in possession of a healthcare card and a referral note from your general practitioner, directing you to the right division. If you or your doctor have any questions, **seek out information at any one of the organizations** listed at the end of this guide in order to learn what steps you should take in your city



## Hormone Therapy and Reactions to Other Medications

Some HIV treatment can interfere with your hormone therapy or intensify its side effects. This is why it is important that both your endocrinologist and the medical staff supervising your HIV infection **know what medication you are taking so your dosage can be adjusted if necessary**. Your feminization need not prevent you from keeping your HIV under control. Both can perfectly be achieved at the same time.

Other drugs whose dosage may need adjustment are those used for erectile stimulation or antidepressants. Do not try adjusting it on your own; ask your doctors.

Remember that if you are under hormone therapy, **smoking is greatly discouraged**.



## How to Get Healthcare



We trans women sometimes hesitate in making use of healthcare services because we have experienced discrimination in the past or we know of friends who have, meaning we do not always go the doctor when we need to.

However, there are increasingly more professionals who are sensitive to our issues and learn **to better understand us**.

In order to access a healthcare centre, a trans medical service or an HIV Unit, **you need a healthcare card**.

**If you do not have a residence permit and you are over 18**, you only have the right to emergency care in the case of a serious illness

The law in force since 2012 restricts the right to public healthcare to those who are insured, meaning those who pay Social Security contributions, their spouses or former spouses and their descendants (sons and daughters) under the age of 26.

**If you are uninsured** but your income is under 100,000 € a year and you are a Spaniard or a foreigner **with a residence permit**, you have the right to a healthcare card.

If you do not have a residence permit but are **under 18** or a **victim of human trafficking** (having reported it and in a period of recovery and reflection), then you have the right to a **DASSE card** (a special circumstances healthcare document).



If you would like to apply for a healthcare card or have any questions in this regard, do not hesitate in reaching out to an organization or ask us to accompany you. You can also seek out information at your primary healthcare centre or by calling 012.

If due to your legal or administrative status you do not have the right to a healthcare card, remember that in many cities there are HIV and other STI testing centres that are free of charge. Learn more in an organization near you.

**You have the right to be addressed by professionals as a woman**, by your female name, regardless of whatever name appears on your documentation or healthcare card. You have the right to chose another doctor at your primary healthcare centre if you are uncomfortable with the doctor initially assigned to you.

You should report any form of abuse at the Patient Services desk. Show respect and ask to be treated with respect.

or an accident, until medical discharge. If this is your situation and you are feeling unwell, **go to your hospital or healthcare centre's emergency services** and ask to be seen by a doctor.

Regardless of your current administrative status, if you have a transmittable disease that requires long-term or chronic treatment, such as HIV, you have the right to receive medical care and treatment, as defined in the Documento de Intervención Sanitaria en Situaciones de Riesgo para la Salud Pública [Document on Healthcare Intervention in Situations of Public Health Risk].

Keep in mind that emergency care is **not billable**. Upon arrival, you have the right for a medical professional to determine whether your case is an emer-



gency. If you are given a pre-invoice, it is best not to sign it. If you do, contact the hospital's social workers as soon as you leave the emergency services so they can help you appeal the invoice. You can also contact one of the organizations listed at the end of this document so they can counsel you.

In any event, do not let it go unresolved. If you do not appeal the invoice, the debt will be registered and may prevent you from legalizing your administrative status.



## Tips for Workplace Safety and Hygiene

Below are some tips and ideas for improving the quality of your working conditions, making them safer and less conflictive.

If you work the streets and get in a client's car, send an SMS or WhatsApp to a friend with the client's licence plate number and, if necessary, tell the client that your friend knows you are with him and is able to call. You and your friend can also agree to call each other after a reasonable amount of time, enough to have completed the service.

Keep in mind that **drugs and alcohol do not mix well with sex**. They can make you lose control. Avoid mixing work with drugs and leisure.

The streets belongs to all of us. You are in no way obligated to pay others (mafias or other workers) to occupy a part of a street. If this happens, try to report it. Remember that sex work is not a crime.

Respect your colleagues' work space and **cooperate together** to improve the workplace (safety, cleanliness and companionship).

**Avoid** providing services in **residential area**. Try to minimize all types of unnecessary exhibitionism in residential or

shopping areas.

Keep your workplace clean; do not throw condoms or tissues on the ground. If no bins are available nearby, keep used condoms in a bag and throw them away later.

If you are ever physically or sexually assaulted by a client, partner or anybody else, report it to the police. If you are unsure how to or are worried about the consequences of reporting, ask one of the organizations listed in the guide. We all have the right to be protected and treated equally by the police force.



## Organizations with Programs for You:

In many FELGTB organizations there are condoms for anal, vaginal and oral sex (flavoured), and lubricant. These are all free of charge.

Below you will find a list of organizations belonging to the Preventrans program or that have specific programs for trans sex workers.

## Participating Organizations of the Preventrans Program:

### GAMÁ Colectivo LGTB de Canarias

Pº Tomás Morales, 8, bajo. 35003 Las Palmas de GC  
Contacto: 928 433 427 / [gama@felgtb.org](mailto:gama@felgtb.org) – [gama@colectivogama.com](mailto:gama@colectivogama.com)  
Web: [www.colectivogama.com](http://www.colectivogama.com)

### COGAM

Puebla, 9, 28004  
Contacto 91 522 45 17 / [mario.blazquez@cogam.es](mailto:mario.blazquez@cogam.es)  
Web: [www.cogam.es](http://www.cogam.es)

### LAMBDA. Col.lectiu de lesbianes, gais, transsexuals i bisexuals.

Albacete, 52, bajo. 46007 Valencia.  
Contacto: 963 342 191 / [info@lambdavalencia.org](mailto:info@lambdavalencia.org)  
Web: [www.lambdavalencia.org](http://www.lambdavalencia.org)

### DIVERSITAT

Labradores, 14, 3ª. 03002 Alicante  
Contacto: 657 35 32 38 / 630 003 219 [trans@somdiversitat.com](mailto:trans@somdiversitat.com) - [diversitat@felgtb.org](mailto:diversitat@felgtb.org)



Web: [www.somdiversitat.com](http://www.somdiversitat.com)

### ALGARABÍA

Heliodoro Rodrigo Glez. 10, local izq. 38005 Santa Cruz de Tenerife

Contacto: 638 790 420 / [algarabia@felgtb.org](mailto:algarabia@felgtb.org) - [algarabia@algarabiatfe.org](mailto:algarabia@algarabiatfe.org)

Web: [www.algarabiatfe.org](http://www.algarabiatfe.org)

### ERRESPETUZ

Asociación Vasca para la defensa y la integración de las personas transexuales.

Bilbao

Contacto: 675 459 317 / [errespetz@felgtb.org](mailto:errespetz@felgtb.org)

### OJALÁ

Cruz Verde, 16, bajo. 29013 Málaga

Contacto: 952 652 547 / [ojala@felgtb.org](mailto:ojala@felgtb.org)

Web: [www.ojalamalaga.es](http://www.ojalamalaga.es)

### AET-TRANSEXUALIA

Asociación Española de Personas Transexuales e Intersexuales

Barquillo, 44, 2º-Izq. 28004 Madrid

Contacto: 915 425 930 / 616601510 [transexualia@felgtb.org](mailto:transexualia@felgtb.org)

Web: [www.transexualia.org](http://www.transexualia.org)

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