



# **SEXUAL HEALTH AND PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE INFORMATION FOR REFUGEES**

*in Oberbayern (Upper Bavaria)*

*english*

Health is a human right. This applies to all people that live in Germany. You have the right to be treated by a doctor. Sexual health and a life without violence is important for our overall health.

This brochure is for people that live in Oberbayern as asylum seekers or refugees. It gives an overview of sexual health, contraception, pregnancy and birth. This brochure contains information about rights and possibilities for people affected by sexual violence. This brochure shows what you can do yourself for your (sexual) health and who can help you.

It is often difficult to figure out the German health care system (Gesundheitssystem), especially for people that have only just arrived in Germany. Therefore, you can find further information on the following topics in the brochure "Health - information for refugees":

**MY RIGHTS DURING THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE  
THE GERMAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM  
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH**

**YOU CAN ACCESS THIS  
BROCHURE DIGITALLY HERE:**



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AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES, WITH FEMALE INTERPRETERS)**

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# SEXUAL HEALTH

## SEXUAL HEALTH

Sexual health is inseparably connected to overall health, well-being and quality of life. For most people, sexuality is a significant part of their lives. Still, many people find it difficult to talk about their wishes, needs or problems concerning their sexual health. According to the World Health Organisation WHO, three factors are important for our sexual health:

- An environment in which we can live out and enjoy our sexuality freely and safely
- Help and treatment for sexual health problems
- Freedom from sexual coercion, abuse and sexual violence

It is very important for our sexual health that we like our bodies and feel comfortable with our sexuality.

## WOMEN'S SEXUAL HEALTH

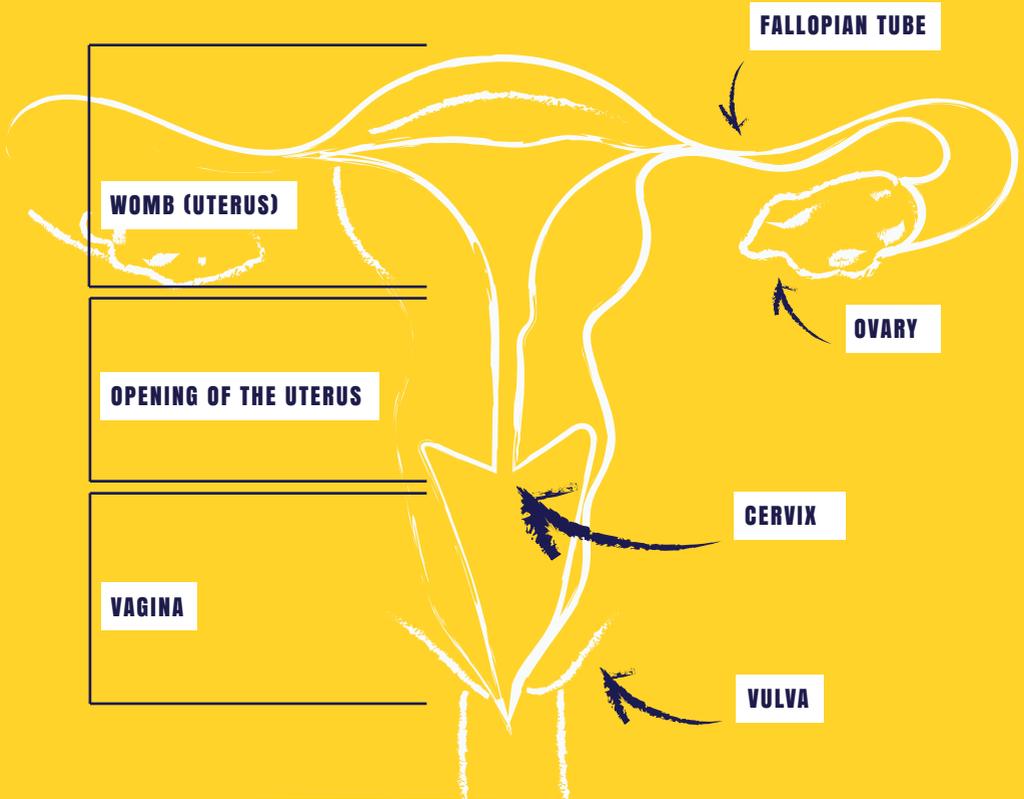
### FEMALE GENITAL ORGANS

Female genital organs are not only reproduction. Women, just like men, can enjoy their sexuality and feel pleasure from it. It is therefore very important that women can live out their sexuality freely and without constraints.

- The mons veneris is above the pubic bone and is covered with pubic hair from the beginning of puberty
- The large and small labia or vulva lips are skin flaps that cover and protect the vaginal entry.
- The clitoris is made up of a head, shaft and side with erectile tissue and is above the vaginal entry. The whole clitoris is about 9cm in size. The clitoris' purpose is solely to feel pleasure.
- About 2-3 cm behind the vaginal entry or vulva is the hymen. The shape of the hymen can vary. It is completely normal if a woman doesn't bleed during her first sexual intercourse with a man. Only about half of the women bleed during their first sex. A woman can't influence whether she even has a hymen or if it bleeds during sexual intercourse. You can therefore not tell for sure by looking at the hymen whether a woman has had sexual intercourse before or not. Tampons cannot harm the hymen.

In the time from puberty to menopause, people with female genital organs go through a cycle every month. It is controlled by hormones:

- There are egg cells in the ovaries. Every month the ovary releases an egg cell. This is called ovulation.
- The fallopian tubes are the connection between the ovaries and the womb. After ovulation, the egg cell moves through the fallopian tubes into the womb (uterus).
- When a woman has had sex with a man and a sperm cell reaches the uterus, the egg cell can be fertilised. The sperm cell hereby penetrates the egg cell.
- The fertilised egg implants itself into the womb and grows into an embryo inside the womb. During vaginal birth, the baby is pushed through the cervix, the opening of the uterus and the vagina.



## MENSTRUATION AND CYCLE

If no fertilisation has taken place, the unfertilised egg is discarded with mucous tissue and blood. This is called (menstrual) period or menstruation. Menstruation lasts about 4 to 7 days. The female cycle begins with the 1st day of menstruation and ends with the last day before the next period. The cycle takes about four weeks but a little bit shorter or longer is also completely normal.

There are many different menstrual items, like pads, tampons or menstruation cups. Menstrual items need to be changed regularly to avoid infections. Try for yourself which items are most comfortable for you.

Many women suffer from pains and don't feel good in the days before and during menstruation. Severe stomach pains can be an important sign for an illness. It is therefore very important to take the pains seriously and see a gynaecologist (women's doctor).

## MENOPAUSE

The female hormones control the cycle and make a pregnancy possible. They become less when you get older. The years before and after menstruation are called the climacteric (menopause). A pregnancy is no longer possible after this. The start and duration of menopause is different for every woman. At the age of 52 about half of all women have had

their last period.

Women who still have a cycle can sometimes become pregnant during menopause. Therefore, reliable contraception until the age of 52 is important. The rule of thumb is: if you haven't had your period for one year during menopause, it is usually not necessary to use contraception

anymore. Menopause is not an illness, it is a completely normal phase of life. It can come with symptoms such as sadness and mood swings, hot flushes, sudden sweating, night sweats or pain during sex caused by dryness in the vulva and the

vagina. It is different for every woman how strong these kinds of symptoms are or whether they occur at all. See your gynaecologist if you are having any problems.

## ILLNESSES AND DOCTOR'S VISITS

If you have any symptoms in the area of your genital organs, it is important that you see a gynaecologist (women's doctor) as soon as possible. Possible symptoms are: period pains, pain during sex, burning or itching in the genital area, (bad smelling) vaginal discharge, vaginal bleeding, incontinence (if you can't hold your urine or loose urine without noticing) or problems during menopause. It is easier to treat gynaecological illnesses if they are discovered early. Woman from the age of 20 should go for a check-up at the gynaecologist once a year. At the check-up, the gynaecologist examines your genitals and does a cancer screening. From the age of 30, the doctor also examines your breasts. This is a way to detect and treat possible cervical or breast cancer early. Even if you don't have a health card (Gesundheitskarte) yet, you are entitled to cancer screenings (see QR-Code Broschüre 1).

It is also important to regularly inspect and examine your breasts yourself. See your gynaecologist straightaway if you feel something hard in your breast, the nipples pull in or you notice any other changes!

During the examination you can also talk to your gynaecologist about issues such as menstruation and symptoms, sex, contraceptive options, pains during sex, loss of libido (meaning, when you don't feel like having sex), incontinence, vaginal bleeding, or problems connected to menopause. You can speak to your gynaecologist openly about all these issues.

Like all doctors, gynaecologists are bound by medical confidentiality.

## MEN'S SEXUAL HEALTH

### MALE GENITAL ORGANS

- A man usually has two testicles. They are shaped like eggs and are both inside the scrotum. The sperm cells are produced inside the testicles. The sperm cells are a part of the sperm. The sperm is the seminal fluid that comes out of the penis during ejaculation. A sperm cell can fertilise the egg cell of a woman and start a pregnancy.
- The male sex hormone (testosterone) is also produced in the testicles. The production becomes less with age but even older men can still make a baby.
- The prostate is a gland underneath the bladder. It is about as big as a chestnut. It also produces part of the sperm.
- The exit of the urethra is at the tip of the penis. This is where the urine comes out. When sexually aroused, the erectile tissue of the penis fills with blood which makes the penis larger and hard. The is called an erection. An erection is necessary for penetrative sex. This means sex where the penis penetrates the vagina or the anus. During an ejaculation, sperm comes out of the urethra in pulses.

## SYMPTOMS AND DOCTOR'S VISITS

Common symptoms and illnesses regarding the male sexual health are sexually transmitted infections (see below), difficulties getting an erection or prostate problems. You must go and see a urologist if you have any symptoms.

A urologist specialises in illnesses of the male genital organs and the urinary tract (also for women). Typical services are the diagnosis and treatment of urinary tract infections or preventative screening for prostate cancer. From the age of 45, you are entitled to a prostate check-up once a year even if you don't have a health insurance card yet.

Urologists are also your contact person for problems with sex or potency as well as difficulties getting an erection. Erection problems can have psychological or physical causes. A man's fertility is also dependant on many things. Urologists can examine these.

You can speak to your urologist openly about these problems. Many symptoms and illnesses can be treated. Treatment is mostly more successful when the illness is discovered early. A urologist, like any other doctor, is bound by medical confidentiality.

## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Sexually transmitted infections (from now on referred to as STIs) are primarily transmitted during sex (vaginal, anal and oral sex). With some germs, other close physical contact, eg., kissing, petting or blood-to-blood contact, can be enough to cause an infection. A mother can give an STI to her child during pregnancy, birth or when she is breastfeeding.

In addition to that, there are yeast and bacterial infections that can be passed on between partners. These infections can be caused by exaggerated hygiene, for example, by using strong soaps or vaginal rinsing. Another cause could be an antibiotics treatment in the past that changed the natural balance in the vagina.

Anyone can get an STI in the course of their life. Some STIs, like chlamydia or herpes, are uncomfortable but can be treated. Other STIs, like syphilis, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B or C, can be very dangerous. When STIs are discovered early, they can usually be treated well. Not all STIs are completely curable.

You cannot protect yourself fully against STIs. The best protection is to always wear a condom when having sex. There are effective vaccinations against a lot of STIs. Speak to your GP about vaccination options.

The symptoms of an STI can vary. In some cases you don't even notice any symptoms at all. Possible symptoms are:

- Unusual discharge from the vagina, penis or anus, that can have an unpleasant smell
- Pain or burning while urinating
- Itchy external genital organs
- Stomach pain
- Menstrual irregularities
- General sickness symptoms, like being tired all the time, loss of appetite, fever etc.

If you suspect an STI, see your GP, gynaecologist or urologist, or the STI counselling centre in Munich (see below). Act responsibly if you think you have an STI

and protect your partner from possible infection. Don't have sex if you are unsure about being infectious.

## CONTRACEPTION: PROTECTION AGAINST PREGNANCY AND DISEASES

If you want to have sex but don't want to get pregnant or be a father, there are different options to prevent a pregnancy.

The condom, next to sterilisation, is the only contraceptive for a man so far. It not only prevents an unwanted pregnancy but also protects you against most of the sexually transmitted infections.

You can buy condoms in drugstores, supermarkets and pharmacies for a reasonable price.

The social services in some refugee centres give out condoms for free.

Most contraceptives have to be used by the woman. There are hormonal and non-hormonal contraceptives. Examples for non-hormonal contraceptives are:

- the diaphragm
- the female condom or
- the IUD (intra uterine device) coil

Examples for contraceptives with hormones are:

- The birth control pill
- Vaginal ring
- Hormone implants or IUS (intra uterine system) hormonal coil

These contraceptives can have negative side effects like bleeding in between periods, nausea, stomach pains or mood swings.

Speak to your gynaecologist or a counselling centre about which contraceptive is most suitable for you. Many of the contraceptives have to be prescribed and/or put in by your gynaecologist. You usually have to pay for contraceptives yourself. Some communities (for example Munich, Landkreis München, Ingolstadt) might pay for some or even all of the costs. Pregnancy counselling centres can give you information about whether your community pays for the costs of contraception, and help you with your application.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I DIDN'T USE CONTRACEPTION?

In the case that you didn't use contraception or used it incorrectly (e.g., forgot to take the pill, the condom broke, unprotected sex) there is the so-called "morning-after pill". It is also called emergency contraception. This medication is most effective when it is taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex. Depending on the substance, no more than 3 to max. 5 days should go by between sex and taking the "morning-after pill". It can be bought in pharmacies without prescription.

Never use the "morning-after pill" as your normal contraceptive method. It can have side effects such as nausea, headaches, dizziness and vomiting which can make the medication less effective. See your gynaecologist if you have any problems. Up until the 12th week of pregnancy, it is possible to stop (abort) the pregnancy in Germany. This is called abortion (see page 16).

## JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

Women and men are both responsible for contraception. Both can get an STI by having unprotected sex. Women and men both carry the responsibility for their children together.

Unmarried fathers and fathers that do not live with the mother of their child, still have to pay child support in Germany.

## SEXUAL SELF-DETERMINATION

Every person has the right to decide freely if they want to be sexually active and who they want to be sexually active with. You are also allowed to decide for yourself which sexual activities you want to engage in and which ones you don't. Nobody can force you to do anything you don't want to do. Including your partner. Some people feel sexually attracted to women, some to men, and some to both. Some people do not feel any sexual attraction. That is ok. You have the right to decide if you want to be with someone and who that person is. Homosexuality is not a disease. Homosexuality is normal. Homosexual partnerships and marriages are legal and accepted in Germany. Some people don't identify with the gender they were born with. They are perceived as male but feel like a female. Or a person looks like a woman on the outside but feels like a man. Every person can decide about this for themselves. If you feel forced to live contrary to your own sexual identity, it can have negative effects on your health (see page 19).

Find more information about sexual health in different languages under:  
[www.zanzu.de](http://www.zanzu.de)

## WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY SEXUAL HEALTH MYSELF?

- Do not be ashamed of your sexuality, your sexual wishes and needs, or possible problems regarding sexual issues. It is normal and human to have sexual needs. It is positive for your general well-being if you live out your sexuality freely and according to your own wishes.
- Say no to sexual acts that you don't want. Get help if you are forced into doing any sexual acts (see page 17).
- Also respect a No from your partner.
- Pay attention to intimate hygiene: wash your external genitals regularly with water.  
For women: wash the area between the labia with water. Do not use soap or shower gel - neither for the labia nor for the vagina. Soap and shower gel destroy the natural protective layer of the vagina and can lead to infections.  
For men: If you are not circumcised, wash the area underneath the foreskin regularly under a stream of water. Don't use shower gel or soap for this sensitive area.
- If you don't want to get pregnant or be a father, find out more about contraceptives. Use the contraceptives as discussed with your doctor or as described on the package insert.
- Protect yourself against sexually transmitted infections. Use condoms.
- Take symptoms seriously. If you have any symptoms or pain, see a gynaecologist or urologist.
- For women: see a gynaecologist once a year for a check-up.

## WHO CAN HELP ME?

The first contact person for sexual health is your gynaecologists or urologist.

## FURTHER CONTACT POINTS FOR ISSUES TO DO WITH SEXUALITY

### COUNSELLING FOR PREGNANCY, FAMILY PLANNING, CONTRACEPTION AND SEXUALITY

Pregnancy counselling centres don't only offer consultation for pregnant women but also for issues like family planning and contraception, sexuality, partnership and parenting. Some counselling centres also offer consultation in conflict situations during pregnancy for women that are unsure whether they want to keep the baby. One recommended organisation is Profamilia. Profamilia has many counselling centres all over Germany.

## Profamilia

- Confidential and free counselling for questions about family planning, contraception, pregnancy, sexuality, partnership, abortion or parenting.
- With an interpreter if necessary
- Counselling for everyone, regardless of their culture, gender, sexual orientation and identity
- It is necessary to make an appointment by phone or email
- There are a number of different counselling centres. On this website you can find the address and contact details of a counselling centre near you (enter your postal code to do this):  
[www.profamilia.de](http://www.profamilia.de)

## COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT FOR A SUSPECTED STI (SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION)

### STI-Beratungsstelle im Gesundheitsreferat der Landeshauptstadt München (STI counselling centre in the health department of the provincial capital Munich)

- Anonymous, confidential and free counselling without appointment for HIV and other STIs, risks and ways of transmission, protection and treatment options
- Testing for individual risk of HIV and syphilis, as well as hepatitis A, B and C, chlamydia, gonorrhoea
- Support and referral to specialised practices, clinics and other counselling centres
- Address: Bayerstr. 28a, 80335 Munich, Tel: 089 233 23333
- Personal consultation hours (without appointment): Mon 8am - 11am, Tue 2pm - 6pm, Thu 8am - 11am and 2pm - 3pm
- An interpretation service can be contacted if necessary (advance notification necessary for some languages)

## CONSULTATION FOR WOMEN

### FrauenGesundheitsZentrum München (Women's Health Centre Munich)

- Counselling, assistance and support for women and girls with gynaecological issues like menstruation, hormones, diseases, breast and pelvic floor, desire to have children, menopause, and also for other health issues like sleep, stress and relaxation.
- It is necessary to make an appointment by phone or email
- Address and contact: Grimmstr. 1, 1st Floor, 80336 Munich, Tel: 089-693 10 720  
Email: [fgz@fgz-muc.de](mailto:fgz@fgz-muc.de)  
[www.fgz-muc.de](http://www.fgz-muc.de)
- Counselling with an interpreter if necessary

# **PREGNANCY AND BIRTH**

If you suspect you are pregnant, you can buy a **pregnancy test** (Schwangerschaftstest) at a drugstore or pharmacy. These tests can normally give you an accurate result from the 2nd day after your period was supposed to start.

Contact your gynaecologist if your pregnancy test is positive and make an appointment for an examination. If you are pregnant, you will receive a maternity log (Mutterpass) at your first gynaecological examination. Always carry your **Mutterpass** with you during the pregnancy.

Every pregnant woman has a **legal right to sufficient medical examination and care**. Asylum seekers

are entitled to the same medical services as women with statutory health insurance. This means that you can take advantage of regular preventative check-ups by a gynaecologist and a midwife (Hebamme). Midwives are experts for the care of women during pregnancy, when giving birth, in the 6 - 8 weeks after giving birth (in German the Wochenbett) and while breastfeeding.

You can claim **additional cash and non-cash benefits during pregnancy**. Get advice from a pregnancy counselling centre (Schwangerenberatungsstelle) about this (see page 11).

Ask for a midwife early on - ideally at the beginning of your pregnancy. Pregnancy counselling centres (see below) can help you find a midwife.

The birth will normally take place in a public hospital. Make sure you already register with a hospital near you during pregnancy.

## MEDICAL CHECK-UPS

A pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks or ten lunar months, each month having 28 days. During this time, you should be examined regularly to check that everything is alright. Your gynaecologist carries out the examinations at the medical check-ups.

The medical check-ups take place once a month at first, and then every 14 days from the 32nd week of pregnancy. At the medical check-ups, the pregnant woman's blood pressure and weight are noted down. The urine is analysed and the status of the uterus is felt out. The child's position and heartbeat are also

checked. Additionally, the blood is analysed in regular intervals. There are normally three ultrasound scans: in the 3rd-4th, 5th-6th and 7th-8th month of pregnancy. Should there be specific risks or complications, more frequent ultrasound scans can be advisable. The costs will then be covered by the health insurance or the social welfare office.

**It is very important that you go for the medical check-ups. They are essential for your child's health and for your own health.**

## A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE IS IMPORTANT

Don't smoke, drink alcohol or take any other drugs during the whole pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This could have a major effect on the development and health of your baby. Make sure you have a

balanced and vitamin-rich diet and get enough exercise. Don't eat raw meat, raw fish, raw eggs or unpasteurised cheese during your pregnancy.

## BIRTH

A few weeks before the calculated date of birth, your body starts to get ready for giving birth. The belly sinks and the pressure on the lower belly increases. This often causes a more frequent urge to urinate or

pass stool. From the 36th week of pregnancy, you might experience preliminary contractions (false labour). These are normally short, not very strong and irregular. You can usually tell that the birth has started when

you are having regular contractions, every 7 to 10 minutes, that become heavier and heavier. This is when some women's water breaks. The water (amniotic fluid) that surrounds the baby, comes out in a flow or in drops. This is a normal process. Call an ambulance and lie down (Tel.: 112). Midwives support and assist you with giving birth. If you wish, your partner or another trusted person is also allowed to be present at the birth to support you. Giving birth is a great achievement of the female body. The cervix and other organs have to stretch many times over. Muscles have to press out the baby and the afterbirth. This happens with contractions, which means that the uterus tightens. You feel these contractions as labour pains. Make sure you breathe regularly and deeply through these labour pains. How long the birth takes and how painful it is, is very different for

every woman. For many women movement is helpful when giving birth, e.g., drawing circles with the pelvis. There are different birthing positions: some women are comfortable having the baby while lying down. Other women are comfortable having the baby in a more upright position, e.g., squatting. Try out different positions for yourself.

After the baby's birth, the so-called afterbirth begins. You will experience more labour pains here.

The placenta that supplied the baby during pregnancy detaches from the uterus and is pressed out. After giving birth you are usually moved to a maternity ward and normally stay there for a few days. Midwives look after you and your baby here.

## **AFTER THE BIRTH**

In Germany, the time after giving birth (about 6- 8 weeks) is called Wochenbett (to be in childbed). In the first weeks after giving birth, it is very important for your health to spend as much time in bed as possible. Give your body and soul time and peace to recover from the strenuous birth. In the first 1-2 weeks after giving birth, the womb that became very large reduces again in size. This can be painful. Also, mother's milk is produced. Mother's milk is very valuable for the baby. It is especially easy to digest and full of nutrients and antibodies. Children that have been breastfed are usually less prone to illnesses. Breastfeeding has a very positive effect on the relationship between a mother and child.

In the time after giving birth, just like during pregnancy, the hormones change. This can lead to strong mood swings and be very exhausting. Get support during this difficult phase. The hormones only slowly stabilise in the following weeks and the wounds heal. Blood and mucous come out of the womb that is reducing in size again. The blood is discharged from the vagina similar to menstrual bleeding.

The discharge is light red at first and yellowish-white later on. This process can last up to 6 weeks after giving birth. The discharge contains germs. Careful hygiene is therefore very important. Wash your pubic area regularly without soap. Do not use tampons. Wash your hands regularly with soap.

Midwives can come to your home in the first weeks after you gave birth. They monitor and support the development and health of the child and the mother. Midwives give you advice and show you exercises to support your postnatal recovery. This is where your body reforms after the changes that happened because of the pregnancy. There are postnatal exercise courses that you can go to from about 8 weeks after giving birth. These courses are very beneficial to the mother's health. Ask at a pregnancy counselling centre.

Women that have symptoms after giving birth, e.g., fever, headaches and stomach pains, bleeding that stops abruptly or is very heavy, must contact their gynaecologist or maternity hospital. Regular contact with your midwife can help recognise complications early.

## UNWANTED PREGNANCY

The decision whether to have a baby or not, lies solely with the pregnant person. Nobody - not your partner, nor your family, nor the state - can force you to do anything or put you under pressure. Pregnancy counselling centres can assist and advise you with your decision.

A termination of pregnancy (abortion) is possible in Germany up until the 12th week after the fertilisation of the egg took place. The condition by law for an abortion is a mandatory consultation. The termination can only be carried out at the earliest 3 days after the consultation. A gynaecologist carries out the abortion. The consultation has to take place in a state-approved pregnancy counselling centre, e.g., at the counselling centre Profamilia (see page xy). The female counsellors advise you about the risks and procedure of the abortion.

## UNFULFILLED DESIRE TO HAVE CHILDREN

It is possible that you want to have a baby, are having sex but still don't get pregnant. This can happen for many reasons. There are often possibilities for treatment. Get advice from your gynaecologist. Should your desire to have children remain

They give you the addresses of gynaecologists that carry out abortions. The consultation is confidential and free of charge. After the consultation you will receive a written confirmation that you have been advised. You will have to show this confirmation at the doctor's practice that carries out the abortion. Up until the 9th week of pregnancy, an abortion is possible without operation. You will be given medication that you can take at home. Both the termination by operation and by medication can cause pains. It is recommended that you have a support person with you. Neither of the possible types of abortion usually have an effect on a woman's fertility.

unfulfilled, there are individual ways to deal with this. Women can get advice about this at, e.g., the counselling centre FrauenGesundheitsZentrum München (see page12).

## WHO CAN HELP ME?

Pregnancy counselling centres can advise you about all issues regarding pregnancy, birth and the time with the baby. The consultation is free and confidential or anonymous on request. You have a right to counselling and support, before and after giving birth. Make use of this right. You can find the contact details for the counselling centre Profamilia on page12.

There are many other pregnancy counselling centres. Ask your social services (Sozialdienst). On the following website you can find pregnancy counselling centres near you (enter the name of your city of residence under "Schwangerenberatungsstellen" to do this): [www.hilfetelefon-schwangere.de](http://www.hilfetelefon-schwangere.de)

## CONSULTATION FOR PREGNANT PERSONS IN NEED

### Hilfetelefon - Schwangere in Not (Helpline - pregnant persons in need)

- available at all times free of charge: 0800 40 40 020
- counselling for women in conflict situations that are keeping their pregnancy a secret, as well as advice on questions about pregnancy and birth
- counselling in 19 different languages, in simple language and German sign language
- referral to counselling centres near you
- online counselling (via email and chat): [www.hilfetelefon-schwangere.de](http://www.hilfetelefon-schwangere.de)

# PROTECTION IN THE EVENT OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

## WHAT IS GENDER BASED VIOLENCE?

Gender based violence means acts of violence where gender, gender identity or sexuality of the affected person or the offender plays a part.

This includes:

- Physical violence
- Sexual violence, e.g., (attempted) rape, also in a marriage, forced oral sex, masturbation and other sexual contact
- Psychological violence, e.g., threats, blackmail, stalking (following, pestering, threatening and terrorising someone)
- Economic violence: creation of financial dependance on the offender, for example, when a person doesn't have access to their income

Gender based acts of violence usually include more than one of these types. It is normally not an isolated act but repeated acts of violence. With this system of abuse, the offenders want to demonstrate their presumed dominance and power over the affected person.

Gender based **violence is a violation of the universal human rights**. It is a criminal offence, meaning an act that is prohibited by law and the offender can be punished for committing it.

Gender based violence can happen to anyone, anywhere and at any time. **Violence can never be justified and is never the fault of the victim**. If you are or were affected by violence you have the right to help from an expert (see below).

Gender based violence happens in all countries, cultures, religions and social classes. Women, children, adolescents and LGBTQ\*-persons (see below) are especially endangered.

## TYPES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

- Partner violence or domestic abuse is the type of violence that occurs between current or former relationship partners. The violence can be physical, sexual, psychological and/or economical. In most cases, partner violence includes more than one of these types.
- Sexualised violence describes every sexual act, every attempted sexual act and every sexual remark that is not wanted or welcomed. Sexualised violence is also when you are forced to see another person naked or watch sexual acts. If you are denied the right to use contraception, it is sexualised violence. Hereby it doesn't matter who the offender is. If you are forced to sexual acts by your spouse, it is sexualised violence.
- Sexual abuse is any sexual action with or in front of a child or vulnerable person that cannot knowingly consent. A vulnerable person is e.g., a person with disabilities, a person in need of help or patients undergoing psychotherapy.  
To ensure the right of children and adolescents to

a life without violence, there is a state protection order. Governmental youth welfare offices (Jugendamt) are obliged to take action in the case of violence against children.

- The purpose of human trafficking and forced prostitution is exploitation. Persons affected are forced into (sexual) services and actions they don't want to do. They only receive part of the money that they make with this work, or none at all.
- Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting (FGM/C) has taken place when the external female sex organs have been partly or fully removed or injured without there being any medical reasons. FGM/C is a violation of the human right to physical health and has a strong impact on the health of affected women.
- Violence in the name of "honour" are criminal acts of violence. In some societies, the "honourable" behaviour of girls and women is regarded as the family honour. They are forced to act and dress a

certain way. They are supposed to be obedient to their fathers and husbands and not engage in any premarital or extramarital sexual activities. Violence in the name of “honour” can be physical, psychological, sexual and/or economical. This also includes an examination of the hymen to supposedly determine virginity (see p. xy for this). Forced marriage and forced abortion are especially

terrible criminally violent acts because they violate the human right to sexual and personal self-determination. In the worst cases, violence in the name of “honour” ends in so-called “honour killing” or “honour suicide”. Violence in the name of “honour” also includes prohibiting homosexual activities and relationships.

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTIQ\* PERSONS**

LGBTIQ\* Persons don't fit in with the traditional gender roles and ideas of many societies. They are therefore particularly often affected by Gender based violence. It is every human 's right to live free from discrimination, regardless of whom they love or which gender they identify with. The term LGBTIQ\* means the following people:

- Women that love and/or desire women\* (lesbian)
- Men that love and/or desire men\* (gay)
- People that are attracted to people of both or more genders (bisexual)
- People that don't identify with the gender they were appointed at birth (transgender)
- People that were born with characteristics of both genders (intersex)
- People that place their sexual identity beyond the two-gender system and/or heterosexuality (queer)

You have the right to decide,

- if and who you want to marry
- if you want to be intimate and who you want to be
- which sexual acts you want to engage in
- if and when you want to have children and who you want to have them with.

## EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE: AN IMPORTANT INFORMATION IN THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE

Experiences regarding Gender based violence can affect the asylum procedure. If you are or were affected by violence, it is very important that you inform the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) of this at your interview. Gender based prosecution in your home country can be a reason for asylum. Gender based prosecution means fleeing from, or because of, Gender based violence like forced marriage, forced abortion, FGM/C, human trafficking, violence and discrimination because of sexual orientation or identity, sexual or domestic violence. If you have proof of Gender based prosecution, present this at your hearing.

You can decide whether your hearing will be conducted by a male or a female decision-maker and interpreter. Inform the BAMF as soon as possible by letter or email for this ([service@bamf.bund.de](mailto:service@bamf.bund.de)). State your full name, your date of birth and your file number (Geschäftszeichen). You can find your Geschäftszeichen on letters from the BAMF. Also inform the BAMF if you want to be accompanied by a person

of trust. The accompanying person cannot be an asylum-seeker himself or herself.

There are decision-makers at the BAMF that have been trained specifically for the needs of the following persons: victims of torture, victims of trauma, people affected by Gender based prosecution and human trafficking, unaccompanied minors.

These decision-makers are called specially-commissioned-case-officers (Sonderbeauftragte). If you would like a Sonderbeauftragte to conduct your hearing, please inform the BAMF as soon as possible.

If you are or were affected by physical, psychological and/or sexual violence or human trafficking, you are a so-called particularly vulnerable person. You have the right to special (psychological) support. Please inform the BAMF, the management of your refugee center and your Sozialdienst about your special need of protection.

## MEDICAL SUPPORT AND DOCUMENTATION

Following Gender based violence you have the right to medical and psychological support. See a doctor as soon as possible after a sexual assault, violence or rape. You can go to the emergency room of any hospital at any time to do this. The doctors can find and treat wounds, injuries and (possible) sexually transmitted infections early on. If requested, there is the possibility to abort a (possible) pregnancy or get the morning-after pill.

Doctors can secure and document evidence and traces of the violence. Then you can prove that you have experienced violence. Medical documentation can be decisive for a possible court case. It is hereby very important that injuries and traces are documented immediately after the offence as this is when they are most visible. There are medical examination centres that specialise in the documentation of domestic violence (see page 23). Emergency rooms of hospitals and many

gynaecologists can also conduct a documentation and securing of evidence.

Just like our body has wounds after an injury, our soul can be wounded by bad experiences.

These injuries can cause several different symptoms, such as sleeping problems, nightmares, constant sadness, anxiety, irritability and concentration problems. These symptoms are a normal and human reaction to experiences of violence. You have the right to psychological support, for example by a psychiatrist (see QR-Code Broschüre 1).

## WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM AFFECTED BY GENDER BASED VIOLENCE?

Remind yourself that the violence is not your fault. Don't be ashamed of the crime that has been committed against you. Don't believe the apologies, justifications and promises of the offender. What you are experiencing is an injustice. You can defend yourself against violence. You don't have to go through it alone and have the right to support. Get support! Call or write to a counselling center (Beratungsstelle).

Women and adolescents in imminent danger can find refuge in a protected space or a women's shelter. Contact a counselling center for this.

There are counselling centers where you can get free and confidential help. This means that they are not allowed to pass on any information about you. In many counselling centres you can also get anonymous counselling. This means you don't have to give the counsellor your name or any personal information. You don't have to tell the counsellors anything you don't want to. You will get informed about possible actions and your rights. You decide the next steps. You also decide whether you want to press charges with the police.

## SUPPORT FOR WOMEN

### Hilfetelefon - Gewalt gegen Frauen (The violence against women support helpline)

- Available at all times free of charge: 08000 116 016
- Anonymous counselling and support by phone
- Interpreters can be added at any time
- Referral to counselling centres in your area
- Online-counselling: [www.hilfetelefon.de](http://www.hilfetelefon.de)

Counselling for women affected by violence

In many cities or communities there are counselling centres for women that are or were affected by violence. The staff members at these centres will listen to you and believe you. In the event of imminent danger there is the possibility to find refuge at a women's shelter or protected space. The (all female) counsellors can support you with this.

Follow this link to find a counselling centre for women in your area

(enter your post code or place of residence for this):

[www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/de/hilfe-vor-ort.html](http://www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/de/hilfe-vor-ort.html)

## **COUNSELLING CENTERS FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND FORCED PROSTITUTION**

(anonymous counselling; also possible for people that don't live in Munich)

### ○ **JADWIGA**

Schwanthalerstraße 79 (back building),  
80336 Munich  
Tel: 089 38 53 44 55  
Email: muenchen@jadwiga-online.de  
[www.jadwiga-online.de/hilfe-fuer-betroffene](http://www.jadwiga-online.de/hilfe-fuer-betroffene)

### ○ **SOLWODI e.V.**

Dachauer Str. 50, 80335 Munich  
Tel: 089 27 27 58 59  
Email: muenchen@solwodi.de  
[www.solwodi.de](http://www.solwodi.de)

## **COUNSELLING CENTER FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE IN THE NAME OF "HONOUR" AND FGM/C**

(anonymous counselling possible; also possible for people that don't live in Munich, counselling also for affected boys and men)

### ○ **Wüstenrose (IMMA e.V.)**

Goethestr. 47, 80336 Munich  
Tel: 089 45 21 63 50  
Email: wuestenrose@imma.de  
[www.imma.de/einrichtungen/w%C3%BCstenrose/](http://www.imma.de/einrichtungen/w%C3%BCstenrose/)

## **SUPPORT FOR LGBTIQ\* PERSONS**

There are organisations in Munich that support LGBTQ\* Persons, anonymously if requested. There is also the possibility there to meet and interact with other LGBTQ\* Persons. Even if you don't live in Munich, you can contact the organisation by phone or email.

### ○ **LeTRa e.V.**

Counselling centre for lesbian women\* and centre for mutual sharing.  
Blumenstr. 29 (Counselling), Angertorstr. 3,  
80469 Munich  
Tel: 089 72 54 272  
Email: info@letra.de  
[www.letra.de](http://www.letra.de)

### ○ **Sub e.V.**

Counselling, information and support for gay, bisexual men\* and trans\*men  
Müllerstr. 14, 80469 Munich  
Tel: 089 85 63 26 417  
[refugees@subonline.org](mailto:refugees@subonline.org)

### ○ **Trans\*Inter\*Beratungsstelle**

(ein Projekt der Münchner Aids-Hilfe e.V.)  
(Trans\*Inter\* Counselling Centre – a project of Munich Aids-Hilfe)  
Counselling and support for trans\* and inter\* persons and their relatives and friends  
Lindwurmstr. 71, 80337 Munich  
Tel: 089 54 333 130  
[info@trans-inter-beratungsstelle.de](mailto:info@trans-inter-beratungsstelle.de)  
[www.trans-inter-beratungsstelle.de](http://www.trans-inter-beratungsstelle.de)

## SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

In many cities or communities there are counselling centres for children and adolescents that are affected by violence. Relatives and friends can also get counselling here if they suspect a child is experiencing violence. The Hilfe-Telefon Sexueller Missbrauch (Help-telephone sexual abuse) can help you find a counselling centre in your area.

### Hilfe-Telefon Sexueller Missbrauch (Helpline sexual abuse)

- Confidential and anonymous (if requested) counselling for children and adolescents that are affected by violence. Counselling also for people close to the person affected.
- Available for free: 08000 22 55 530
- Telephone hours: Mon, Wed, Fri: 9am - 2pm; Tue and Thu: 3pm - 8pm
- Telephone counselling generally only in English and German. Online-counselling in German, French, English and Turkish
- Referral to counselling centres in your area
- Online-counselling: [www.hilfe-telefon-missbrauch.online](http://www.hilfe-telefon-missbrauch.online)

## SUPPORT FOR MEN

Men are also affected by Gender based violence. Especially on the dangerous flight routes to Europe, many (young) men experience Gender based violence.

### Hilfetelefon Gewalt an Männern (The violence against men support helpline)

- Confidential and anonymous (if requested) counselling for men that are or were affected by violence. Counselling also for people close to the affected person.
- Referral to counselling centers in your area
- Telephone counselling generally only possible in German. Counselling on Monday (6pm – 8pm) also possible in Turkish.
- Available for free: 0800 123 9900
- Telephone hours: Mon - Thu: 8am - 8pm; Fri: 8am - 3pm
- Chat-counselling: <https://onlineberatung.maennerhilfetelefon.de/>
- Chat-counselling hours: Mon - Thu: 12pm – 3pm and 5pm – 7pm
- [www.maennerhilfetelefon.de](http://www.maennerhilfetelefon.de)

## MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION

### Untersuchungsstelle für Opfer häuslicher Gewalt der Universität München (Investigative body for victims of domestic violence of the University of Munich)

- Confidential counselling by phone, free examination, (photographic) documentation of injuries, securing and storing of evidence and traces (also if it hasn't been decided whether charges are going to be made)
- For adults, regardless of origin, residence status or health insurance
- If possible, bring your own interpreter (friend, acquaintance)
- It is necessary to make an appointment by phone: 089 2180 73011
- Address: Institut für Rechtsmedizin der Universität München (Institute for Forensic Medicine of the University of Munich), Nußbaumstr. 26, 80336 Munich

**WHAT WE STAND FOR:  
HEALTH IS A HUMAN RIGHT**

Countless people all over the world do not have access to healthy living conditions and proper health care. Even in Germany, some parts of the population are excluded from the regular health system. Ärzte der Welt (Doctors of the World) are committed to helping people assert their right to health – through political and medical aid.



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