

# Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Guide

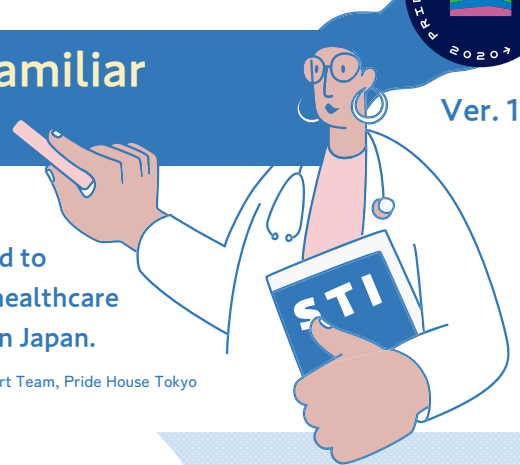


## for LGBTQ+ people who are not yet familiar with living in Japan

Ver. 1

This is a guide for LGBTQ+ people who are new to Japan. Please use this guide if and when you think you might have been exposed to STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections), when you want to know about healthcare system, where to buy materials for safer sex, or how to go see a doctor in Japan.

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## 1 : The Current Status of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Japan

In Japan, many people are hesitant to discuss their sexuality openly. This breeds a general lack of awareness about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), with some people unaware of being infected, and others engaging in sexual activities without telling their partners of their infections. Because of this, it is crucial to prioritize prevention and safeguard your well-being and that of your partners. To start, the basics of STI prevention remain the same worldwide: use condoms, practice good hand hygiene, and gargle regularly.

### ✓ Syphilis

The number of syphilis cases in Japan has been on the rise recently. However, thanks to a globally recognized standard treatment that was approved here in 2021, you are ensured world standard treatment at medical facilities in Japan if properly consulted. Nevertheless, reports indicate that reinfection is possible even after an initial successful treatment. Therefore, regular testing and vigilant prevention are vital for a healthy sex life in Japan.

### ✓ HIV/AIDS

Although the number of newly infected individuals with HIV in Japan is decreasing, cases where infection is detected after the onset of AIDS are rising. This is mostly due to a decline in testing caused by fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. While testing used to be widely available, it has become more challenging to secure appointments, with some institutions limiting the number of tests available to the general public. While mail-in testing is being developed, it has proved to be insufficient at this point. Regular testing remains crucial.

### ✓ Hepatitis B/C

Approximately 3-4 million people in Japan are infected with hepatitis B virus, with most unaware of their condition. While hepatitis B is most often transmitted sexually, hepatitis C is mostly transmitted by the sharing of syringes. Condom use remains the fundamental preventive measure against hepatitis B transmissions, and for hepatitis C avoiding the use and sharing of needles and syringes.

### ✓ Gonorrhea

Among Japanese youth in their 20s, gonorrhea cases have been increasing in recent years, often occurring alongside chlamydia. Many cases of gonorrhea are asymptomatic, and pharyngeal gonorrhea can be contracted through oral sex. Seek proper treatment and take preventive measures to protect yourself.

### ✓ Chlamydia

Chlamydia infections in Japan are on the rise, surpassing the increase in gonorrhea cases. As with gonorrhea, chlamydia can spread unknowingly due to asymptomatic cases. It can also be transmitted through the pharynx, emphasizing the need for extra caution.

If you suspect you have an STD in Japan, visit a "urologist," "gynecologist," "infectious disease specialist," or an "ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat)" doctor. Be open about your symptoms and progress to aid in accurate diagnosis. In Japan, you will receive the necessary and appropriate medical care for infectious diseases, so feel free to consult any doctor with confidence.

For foreigners | HIV Testing and Consultation Map  
[hivkensa.com](http://hivkensa.com)

HIV Testing and Consultation Map Foreign Language Page Links  
(Available in nine languages)

## Availability of PrEP in Japan

PrEP has gained recognition in Japan, but the drugs used for PrEP have not been approved for prophylactic use and are only available at one's own expense. Misuse of the drug has been reported due to a lack of information about PrEP. Those interested in PrEP should ensure proper usage. If you were using PrEP before coming to Japan and plan to continue, confirm if you can access it consistently before your trip.

### ● Continuing PrEP in Japan is not easy

There is no free distribution program in Japan, and PrEP medications are not covered by insurance, requiring out-of-pocket expenses. It is also essential that you go to specific clinics for regular testing for STDs and HIV, and a PrEP follow-up. Even if you have prior PrEP experience, your experience with PrEP in Japan may leave you nonplussed.

### ● Lack of quality clinics in regional cities

The reality is that the number of high quality medical institutions that prescribe PrEP is very small and concentrated in large cities such as Tokyo and Osaka. Online clinics and prescribing services can be effective alternatives, particularly for those in regional cities. You can find these self-prescribing clinics available in Tokyo through a quick search online.

### ● Purchasing PrEP through private importation

Importing PrEP privately will mean that you will be using PrEP without being tested for STDs or HIV. That can lead to worsening symptoms of hepatitis B or result in drug resistance if you are infected with HIV. You may also inadvertently be infected because you ran out of PrEP due to an import delay or postal issue. Moreover, private imports can be costly. Remember that continuing PrEP without knowing your HIV status limits your treatment options.

### ● What should you do?

Connect with the few medical facilities in Japan that allow continued PrEP usage while conducting regular testing. Some clinics offer online medical services in English. If you don't have a nearby medical institution, consider private procurement of PrEP while ensuring regular checkups. If you have any doubts, consult an institution experienced with PrEP. Remember, it is crucial not to face these challenges alone. Seek assistance from those who can support your PrEP journey.

Note: The method of taking PrEP medications varies depending on individual cases, such as one's sex assigned at birth, and whether or not one is receiving hormone replacement therapy.

PrEP in JAPAN - This site provides information about PrEP and support for sexual health. ([ptokyo.org](http://ptokyo.org))

(Use your browser's translation function if you can not find English or non-Japanese references online)

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV Prevention in Japan - User's Guide  
(This is in PDF form and in Japanese only. It may be harder to translate using online resources)

Pocket-Guide [https://prep.ptokyo.org/eBook/prep\\_pocket\\_guide/](https://prep.ptokyo.org/eBook/prep_pocket_guide/)

## 2 : Medical Insurance Situation for Visitors from Outside Japan

The medical insurance situation for foreign visitors to Japan varies depending on factors such as citizenship and the length of stay. According to a survey conducted by the Japan Tourism Agency in 2019, about 30% of people who visit Japan on vacation do not have insurance. Including those who are unaware that they are automatically insured through a specific travel or financial service, half of them are not adequately prepared in advance. It is important to confirm in advance that you have "insurance to cover medical expenses" in the event of unforeseen injury or illness!



### Short-term stay, 3 months or less

(regardless of purpose or visa status)

Fundamentally you should be covered by private travel insurance

- Apply for insurance from an international insurance company before departing for Japan. Review the coverage details carefully.
- Purchasing insurance from a Japanese insurance company requires someone in Japan (a Japanese company, relative, or friend) to complete the necessary procedures. It cannot be done remotely.
- For stays less than 31 days, you can purchase travel medical insurance at the airport or through an app after entering Japan.
- Employees of companies may be eligible for public health insurance regardless of the length of stay. Check with your employer in advance.

**TRAVEL**



### Staying longer than 3 months in Japan

Fundamentally you should be covered by Japan's Public Health Insurance system, but private travel insurance is still an option.

- If you are employed, consult your employer to enroll in the public health insurance program.
- If you do not work, or if you work but are not covered by your employer, take the Residency Card issued to all long-term visa holders to the municipal office of the municipality where you are staying to register and join the National Health Insurance System (note that certain medical treatments not covered by the public health insurance system such as cosmetic surgery/check when registering).
- Besides this public health insurance, you can also purchase travel insurance to cover 30% of your medical expenses (apply through a Japanese insurance company after entering Japan).
- Private injury (accident) insurance and medical insurance may also be available options.

### About Foreigners and Health Insurance in Japan:

- Foreigners staying in Japan for more than 3 months with a residence permit are covered by the National Health Insurance under the Basic Resident Registration Act.
- Even those not covered by the Basic Resident Registration Act but staying in Japan for more than 3 months with authorized documentation are also eligible for National Health Insurance coverage.
- Employees are required to have health insurance regardless of their length of stay.

### Important Points to Consider:

- Private travel insurance may provide access to multilingual call centers and referrals to medical facilities. Some major insurance companies offer services in over 30 languages.
- Many medical facilities in Japan do not accept credit cards.
- Without Japanese health insurance or travel insurance, full payment may be required for injuries sustained at work or by third parties.

For visitors to Japan / © Tokyo Sexual Health Project. <https://www.tsh.ncgm.go.jp/en/support/japan.html>

## SAFER SEX

### 3 : Where can I buy safer sex supplies?



Japan has a well-established retail distribution network, making it convenient to purchase goods through various e-commerce websites. For items bought within Japan, delivery usually takes only a few days. If purchasing from outside Japan, personal importation may take 1-2 weeks by air or 3-4 months by sea, so it is advisable to plan ahead and stock up on supplies that you need when overseas.

Because discussions related to sexuality are not often part of normal interpersonal communication, many people in Japan feel hesitant to buy sexual health items from in-person retailers like pharmacies or variety stores\*. Therefore, e-commerce is a popular option for discreet purchasing. Note that safer sex supplies may be listed under the "adult products" category on e-commerce platforms. If you can't find the desired item immediately, try the suggestions below.

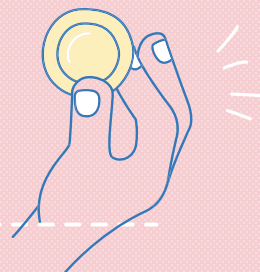
\* Note: Variety stores in Japan often refer to stores that sell sex-related goods, sometimes called sex shops or adult stores.

#### ✓ Condoms

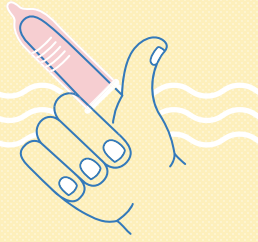
- Condoms can be purchased at convenience stores, supermarkets, drugstores, and e-commerce.
- Convenience stores and supermarkets offer a basic selection.
- Drugstores and e-commerce sell a wider variety.
- Some sex establishments, such as love hotels, may provide condoms in each room, but it is advisable to prepare your own condoms in advance if you are concerned about the quality and expiration date, as it is difficult to check in advance.

#### ✓ Femidoms or internal condoms for people with vaginas

Currently, internal condoms may not be readily available in Japan. Those interested in using internal condoms may need to rely on international mail order options.



Continue to next page



### ✓ Lubricants/Lotions

Lubricants and lotions can be found at drugstores, variety stores, and on e-commerce platforms. A wide range of options is available, but be cautious when using them with condoms, as some water-based and oil-based products may not be compatible. In pharmacies, lubricants are often found in the same section as condoms, while e-commerce platforms may list them under the adult products category.

### ✓ Finger Condoms

Primarily available through e-commerce, finger condoms may be harder to find in physical stores. They may be listed under the adult products category.

### ✓ Dental Dams

Dental dams are primarily available through e-commerce, with limited availability in physical stores. They may also be labeled as dental hygiene products, requiring extra effort to find them in the adult category.

### ✓ Tongue condoms

Primarily available through e-commerce, tongue condoms may be harder to find in physical stores.

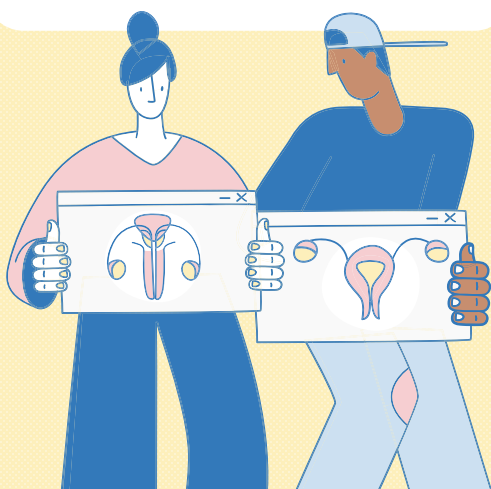
### ✓ Latex Gloves

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, latex gloves are relatively easy to obtain as a hygiene product. They can be found in pharmacies and well-stocked supermarkets, as well as through e-commerce platforms.

## Where to Buy Sex Toys

Sex toys can be purchased at variety stores and through e-commerce. However, most variety stores cater to heterosexual cisgender men, so if you cannot find what you're looking for in a physical store, exploring e-commerce platforms may offer a wider selection.

\* Note: Variety stores in Japan often refer to stores that sell sex-related goods, sometimes called sex shops or adult stores.



## 4 : Hospital Visits in Japan: Your Guide to Healthcare

If you stay in Japan for more than 90 days, you are eligible for national health insurance coverage. Under this coverage, you are responsible for 30% of hospital treatment and other expenses, while the remaining 70% is covered by public health insurance. It is important to note that any treatment not covered by health insurance will be your full responsibility.

- For general illnesses, injuries, or concerns about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), you can visit hospitals or clinics without an appointment in most cases
- In general, it is up to you to decide which department/specialty care you need to visit and proceed accordingly
- Large general hospitals may require appointments, so it is advisable to check their websites or call ahead. Some facilities offer services in languages other than Japanese
- Online medical services may also be available, providing convenient healthcare options

### Getting Tested for STIs:

If you suspect or want to confirm an STI or HIV status, you can visit the following places:

- Public Health Centers
- Sexually Transmitted Infections Medicine/STIs clinics
- Obstetrics and gynecology clinics
- Urology clinics
- Dermatology clinics
- Otolaryngology (ENT) clinics



### Continuing HIV Treatment:

Note that HIV treatment in Japan can be costly, and it is often more affordable to bring a prescription from your home country before arriving. While limited hospitals and clinics provide HIV treatment, the following options are available:

- Hospitals and clinics specializing in STIs  
You might find this map helpful: <https://www.hivkensa.com/language>
- Core HIV/AIDS treatment hospitals or core HIV/AIDS treatment centers  
You can find them on the website: <https://hiv-hospital.jp/> (Please use a translation function on your browser as needed)
- For long-term stays in Japan, visit: <https://ptokyo.org/en/faq>

### Birth Control and Pregnancy:

For birth control or pregnancy-related inquiries, consider the following options:

- Obstetrics and gynecology clinics (for matters related to ovaries and uterus)
- Urology clinics (for matters related to testicles)
- Pregnancy tests are available at pharmacies
- The morning-after pill (known and pronounced as the "afutah piru" in Japan) is usually prescribed by obstetricians/gynecologists
- Online medical services can provide prescriptions as well.

### Using PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis):

Please note that health insurance in Japan does not cover PrEP, making it a self-pay medical treatment. If you plan to use PrEP, it is often more cost-effective to obtain a prescription from your home country before coming to Japan.

- In Japan, general practitioners, family doctors, or physicians can assist you
- For a list of clinics offering PrEP consultations, visit the website <https://prep.ptokyo.org/facilities> (Please use a translation function on your browser as needed)