Spanish for Nurses: 100+ Bedside Phrases

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Quick answer: Spanish for nurses is about the words and phrases you use at the bedside every shift: introducing yourself (*Soy su enfermero/a*), assessing pain (*¿Dónde le duele?*), taking vitals (*Voy a tomarle la presión*), giving medication (*Tómese esta pastilla*) and keeping patients safe (*Llame si necesita ayuda*). This guide has 100+ practical nursing phrases and medical terms in Spanish, organized by task.

More than 40 million people in the U.S. speak Spanish at home, and many of them feel more comfortable describing symptoms in Spanish. Even basic Spanish helps nurses build trust, calm anxious patients and catch problems sooner. Use these phrases for routine care, and a qualified interpreter for consent, diagnosis and complex conversations.

Introductions and building trust

- **Hola, me llamo… Soy su enfermero / enfermera.** – Hi, my name is… I'm your nurse.
- **¿Cómo se llama?** – What's your name?
- **¿Cuál es su fecha de nacimiento?** – What's your date of birth? (patient ID check)
- **¿Habla inglés? ¿Prefiere un intérprete?** – Do you speak English? Would you prefer an interpreter?
- **Voy a cuidarle hoy.** – I'll be taking care of you today.
- **No se preocupe. Estoy aquí para ayudarle.** – Don't worry. I'm here to help you.

Pain assessment

- **¿Tiene dolor?** – Are you in pain?
- **¿Dónde le duele? Muéstreme.** – Where does it hurt? Show me.
- **Del cero al diez, ¿qué tan fuerte es el dolor?** – From 0 to 10, how bad is the pain?
- **¿Cómo es el dolor? ¿Agudo, sordo, punzante, quemante?** – What is the pain like? Sharp, dull, stabbing, burning?
- **¿Desde cuándo tiene el dolor?** – Since when have you had the pain?
- **¿El dolor es constante o va y viene?** – Is the pain constant or does it come and go?
- **¿Se mejora o empeora con algo?** – Does anything make it better or worse?

The verb *doler* works like *gustar*: *Me duele la cabeza* (My head hurts), *Le duelen los pies* (His feet hurt). See doler conjugation.

Vital signs and assessment

- **Voy a tomarle los signos vitales.** – I'm going to take your vital signs.
- **Voy a tomarle la presión / la temperatura / el pulso.** – I'm going to take your blood pressure / temperature / pulse.
- **Respire profundo. Otra vez.** – Take a deep breath. Again.
- **Abra la boca. Ponga esto debajo de la lengua.** – Open your mouth. Put this under your tongue.
- **Extienda el brazo.** – Stretch out your arm.
- **Apriete mi mano.** – Squeeze my hand.
- **¿Tiene náuseas, mareo o falta de aire?** – Do you have nausea, dizziness or shortness of breath?
- **¿Cuándo fue la última vez que orinó / evacuó?** – When did you last urinate / have a bowel movement?

Medical history

- **¿Es alérgico/a a algún medicamento o alimento?** – Are you allergic to any medication or food?
- **¿Qué medicamentos toma?** – What medications do you take?
- **¿Tiene diabetes, presión alta o problemas del corazón?** – Do you have diabetes, high blood pressure or heart problems?
- **¿Ha tenido cirugías?** – Have you had any surgeries?
- **¿Está embarazada? ¿Podría estar embarazada?** – Are you pregnant? Could you be pregnant?

- **¿Fuma? ¿Toma alcohol?** – Do you smoke? Do you drink alcohol?

Medication administration

- **Le traigo su medicina.** – I'm bringing you your medicine.
- **Tómese esta pastilla con agua.** – Take this pill with water.
- **Le voy a poner una inyección.** – I'm going to give you a shot.
- **Va a sentir un piquete.** – You'll feel a little pinch/prick.
- **Le voy a poner un suero / una vía.** – I'm going to start an IV.
- **Esta medicina es para el dolor / la infección / la presión.** – This medicine is for pain / infection / blood pressure.
- **Avíseme si siente algo raro.** – Let me know if you feel anything unusual.

Mobility and fall prevention

- **No se levante solo/a. Llame si necesita ayuda.** – Don't get up alone. Call if you need help.
- **Presione este botón para llamar a la enfermera.** – Press this button to call the nurse.
- **Voy a ayudarle a sentarse / a caminar.** – I'll help you sit up / walk.
- **Voltéese hacia este lado, por favor.** – Turn toward this side, please.
- **¿Se siente mareado/a?** – Do you feel dizzy?

Comfort and daily care

- **¿Necesita algo? ¿Agua, una cobija, una almohada?** – Do you need anything? Water, a blanket, a pillow?
- **¿Necesita ir al baño?** – Do you need to use the bathroom?

- **No puede comer ni beber nada después de medianoche.** – You can't eat or drink anything after midnight.
- **Su familia puede visitarle de… a…** – Your family can visit from… to…
- **Trate de descansar.** – Try to rest.

Discharge instructions

- **Hoy le dan de alta.** – You're being discharged today.
- **Tome este medicamento cada … horas por … días.** – Take this medication every … hours for … days.
- **Haga una cita con su doctor en una semana.** – Make an appointment with your doctor in one week.
- **Regrese a emergencias si tiene fiebre, sangrado o dolor fuerte.** – Come back to the ER if you have a fever, bleeding or severe pain.
- **¿Tiene alguna pregunta?** – Do you have any questions?

Tips for nurses learning Spanish

1. **Use usted with patients.** It's respectful and expected in healthcare.
2. **Master the formal commands** (*respire, tome, llame*). See Spanish commands.
3. **Learn the body and symptoms vocabulary** in our medical Spanish glossary and 149 Spanish medical terms.
4. **Know the false friends:** *embarazada* = pregnant, *constipado* = has a cold (Spain).
5. **Practice role-plays** with a medical Spanish tutor. Listening to real accents is the hardest part.

Working in a specific unit? See Spanish for pediatrics, emergency room Spanish and mental health Spanish.

Frequently asked questions

Do nurses need to know Spanish?

It isn't required everywhere, but it's a major advantage in many U.S. regions. It improves patient trust and communication, and bilingual nurses are in high demand.

How do you say "I am your nurse" in Spanish?

Soy su enfermero (male nurse) or Soy su enfermera (female nurse).

How long does it take to learn medical Spanish for nursing?

With a focused course, many nurses can handle routine bedside phrases within 2–3 months of regular practice. Full fluency takes longer.

Can I use Spanish instead of an interpreter?

Use your Spanish for rapport and routine care. For consent, diagnosis, teaching and anything complex, follow your facility's policy and use a qualified interpreter.

PRACTICE WITH A TUTOR

Put this into practice in a real conversation

Our native Spanish tutors start at $13 an hour, and you can book your first lesson today.