



What to Expect at Your Ob/Gyn Visit

a Guide



What you need to know to get comfortable before your visit.

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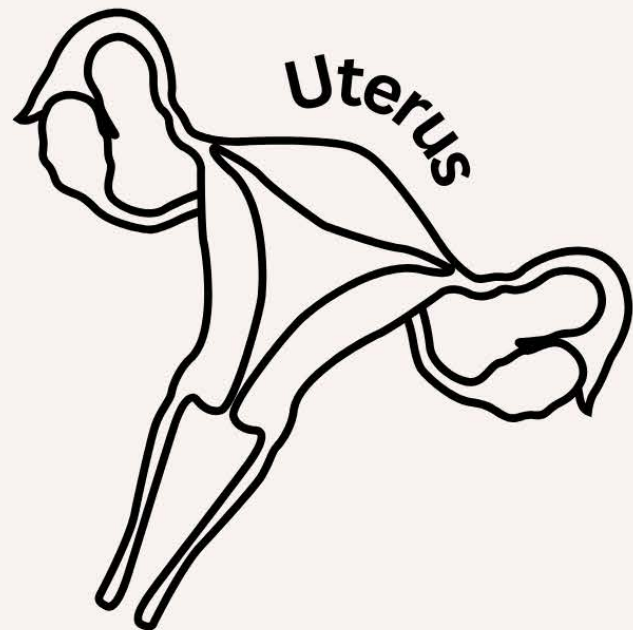
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This guide is dedicated to all the women who know they deserve to be seen and heard, and those who have forgotten.

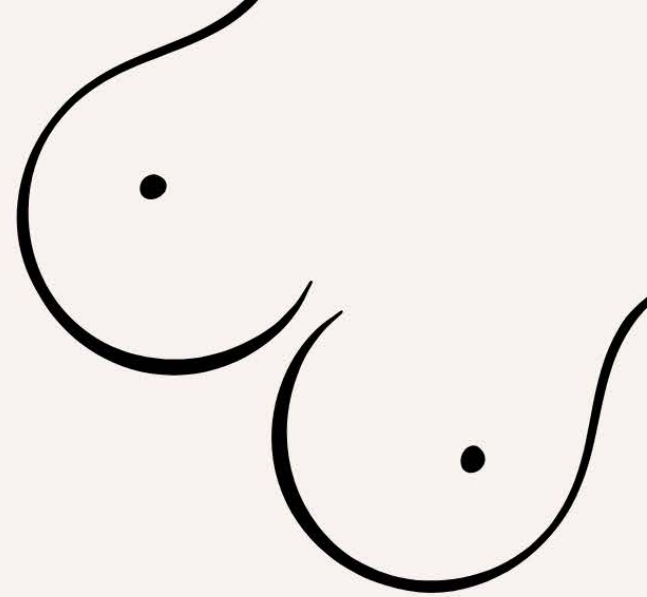
~Dr. Hack

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Intro

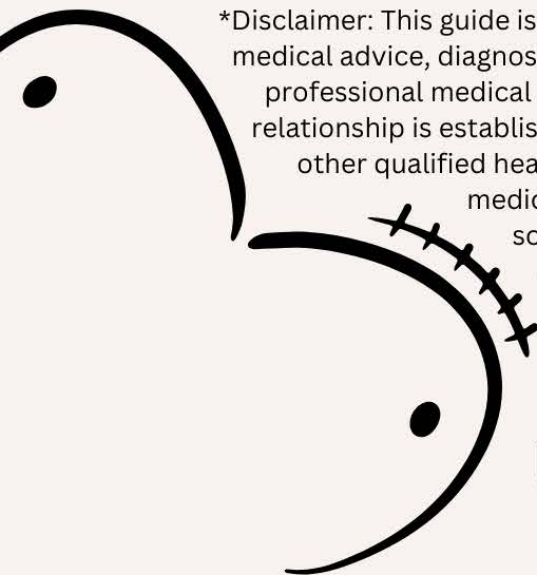


HEY THERE! I'M DR.STEPHANIE HACK, MD, MPH.

As an Ob/Gyn AND someone who also needs ob/gyn care, I know that going to the Ob/Gyn can bring up a mix of emotions. You might feel a bit anxious or exposed, and that's okay. This guide is here to help you better understand what goes on during your Ob/Gyn visits and to address any worries you may have. I want you to feel comfortable, informed, and empowered, no matter your age. My aim is to guide you through this important part of your health with sensitivity, knowledge, and compassion, so you know what to expect and feel more at ease.

You can review this guide before your visit, after your visit, and even bring it with you. Not only will you find information that explains what might happen, but there is also a list of questions that you can ask.

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Why this guide?



Understanding what happens when you visit the OB/GYN is a good thing for a few reasons:

1. **Less Anxiety:** It can make you less worried or anxious about the visit because you'll know what's going to happen.
2. **Better Questions:** You can ask more questions and make choices about your health when you know what's going on.
3. **Easier Conversations:** It helps you talk with your doctor because you'll understand what they're saying.
4. **Getting Ready:** Knowing what to expect helps you get ready for the visit, so you won't forget anything important.
5. **Early Help:** Going to the Ob/Gyn regularly helps find health problems early, which is good for staying healthy.
6. **Safety:** Knowing what to expect helps you know if something doesn't seem right.

So, knowing what to expect makes you more confident and helps you take charge of your health. It's not just about being less nervous, but also about being in control and making sure you stay healthy.

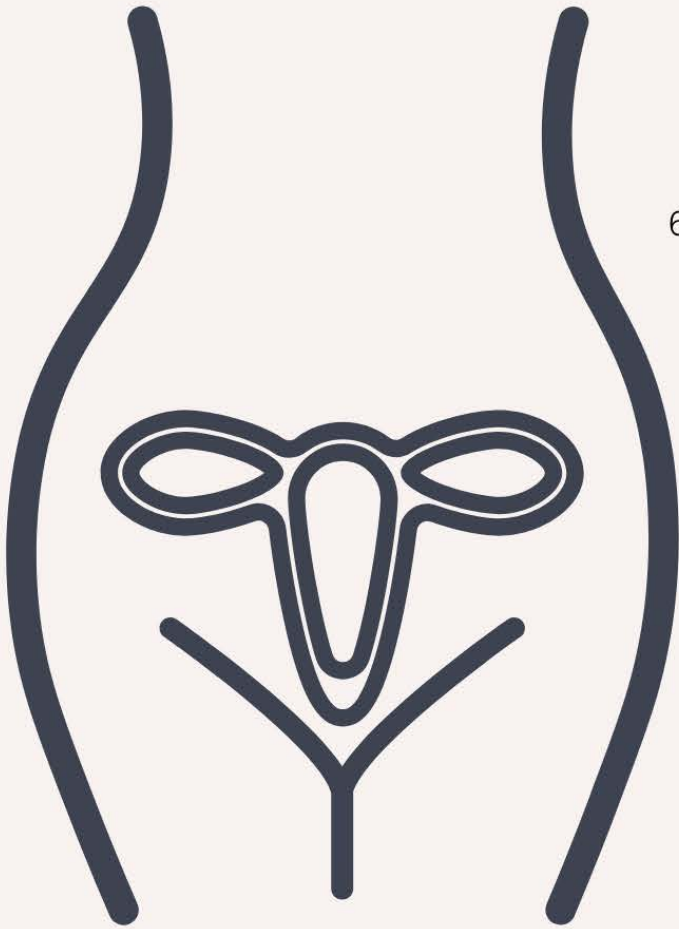
N.3 Before the visit

Preparing for your Ob/Gyn visit is important because it helps you have a good experience and get the care you need. Here's how you can get ready:

- 1. Know Your Period:** It's helpful to keep track of your period. You can mark the first day of your period on a calendar or app. This way, your Ob/Gyn can better understand your cycle.
- 2. Write Down Questions:** Before your visit, write down any questions or concerns you have. This can be about your body, your period, birth control, or anything you're curious about. Don't worry; there are no silly questions.
- 3. Bring Important Stuff:** You'll need to bring your ID and your insurance card, if you have one. This helps the office know who you are and how they can bill for the visit.
- 4. Medicines and Allergies:** Make a list of any medicines you take, even if it's not related to women's health. Also, let the doctor know if you have any allergies to medicines.



N.3 Before the visit



5. **Know Your History:** If you've been to the OB/GYN before, try to remember the year, your test results, and what you talked about. This can help the doctor know about your health history.
6. **Freshen up:** It can be helpful to shower and wear clean underwear before your visit so you feel more comfortable. Don't worry about shaving or pedicures/manicures.
7. **Relax:** Visiting the Ob/Gyn can feel a little bit stressful, but it's okay. Just remember that this visit is about taking care of your health.
8. **Support:** If you feel scared or worried, you can bring a friend, a family member, or someone you trust to the visit. They can wait with you or be in the room if you want. This is your right.

REMEMBER, YOUR OB/GYN IS THERE TO HELP YOU AND ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS. IT'S ALL ABOUT MAKING SURE YOU'RE HEALTHY AND FEEL GOOD.

N.4 Consent

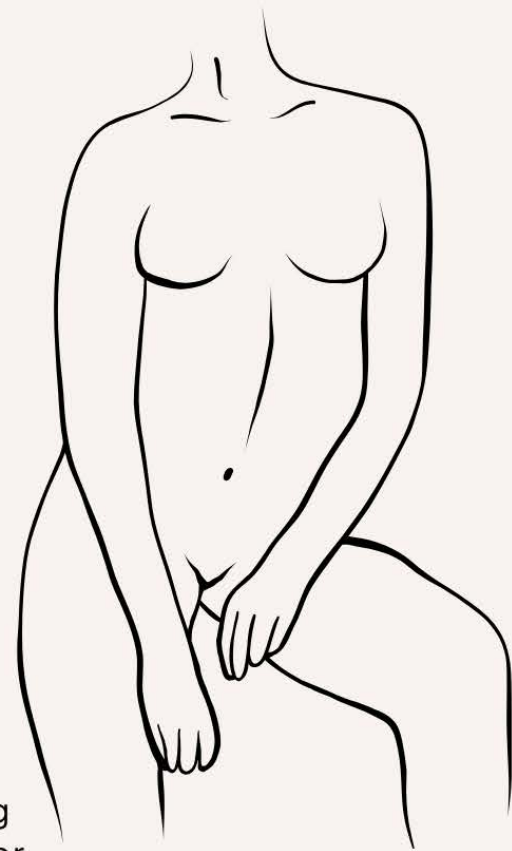
WHEN YOU'RE GETTING MEDICAL CARE, IT'S ESSENTIAL TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING AND HAVE A SAY IN YOUR TREATMENT. THIS IS CALLED "**INFORMED CONSENT**." HERE'S HOW YOU CAN ENSURE YOU'RE WELL-INFORMED:

Clear Communication: Your healthcare provider should explain things in simple terms, telling you why a procedure is needed, what to expect, and any alternative options.

Don't Hesitate to Ask: Never be afraid to ask questions or express concerns. Your healthcare team is there to provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions.

Your Choices Matter: You have the right to decline any procedure or treatment if you're not comfortable with it. Your healthcare provider should respect your choices.

Stopping Anytime: If at any point during a procedure, you feel uncomfortable or change your mind, your healthcare provider should pause and discuss the situation with you.



N.5 Questions

When you visit the Ob/Gyn, they will ask you some questions to understand your health better. Don't worry; these questions are to help you, and they are normal to ask. Here are some common questions you might hear:

1. PERIOD QUESTIONS:

They might ask when you had your first period and how often it comes. This helps them know if your periods are regular.

2. PAIN OR PROBLEMS:

Your doctor may ask if you have pain or problems during your period or at other times. It's important to tell them if something doesn't feel right.

3. BIRTH CONTROL:

If you're using any kind of birth control, they'll ask about it. This is to make sure it's working well for you.

4. SEXUAL ACTIVITY:

Your Ob/Gyn might ask if you're sexually active and if you're using protection to stay safe.

5. PREGNANCY:

If you've been pregnant before or are trying to get pregnant, they'll want to know about it.



Speculum

N.5 Questions

6. MEDICAL HISTORY:

They'll ask if you have any medical conditions, like diabetes or high blood pressure. This helps them give you the right care.

7. SURGICAL HISTORY:

Your doctor may ask if you've ever had surgery. (Wisdom teeth, D&Cs, and colposcopies count!) This helps guide your treatment.

8. MEDICINES AND ALLERGIES:

Your doctor will ask about any medicines you take and if you have any allergies. This helps them choose the right treatments.

9. LIFESTYLE:

They may ask about your diet, exercise, and other things you do to stay healthy.

10. FAMILY HISTORY:

Knowing if any of your family members had health issues can be important, so they might ask about your family's health history..

Remember, your Ob/Gyn is there to help you stay healthy. They do these exams to make sure everything is okay. You have the right to ask questions, say what you're comfortable with, and be treated with respect. It's all about taking care of your health.



N.6 The Exam

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING AN OB/GYN EXAM

When you go to the Ob/Gyn, they will do an exam to check your health. It's important to know what will happen so you feel comfortable and safe. Here's what you can expect:

1. **Getting Ready:** Before the exam, you'll be in a private room. The doctor or nurse will explain everything and give you a special gown to wear, and often a sheet to put over your lap. You can put your clothes on the chair.
2. **Clean Hands:** The doctor or nurse will wash their hands. They may also wear gloves. This is to make sure everything is clean and safe.
3. **Consent:** Your doctor will ask for your permission before they start the exam. You can ask questions or say if you're not comfortable. It's all about your choices.
4. **Pelvic Exam:** You might have a pelvic exam. The doctor will gently look at your genital area to check for any issues. Then they may use a speculum to look inside your vagina. It's quick and might feel a bit uncomfortable, but it's not usually painful. Lastly, they may place a hand inside the vagina. This is done to feel your uterus and check for any abnormalities. They should **ALWAYS** wear gloves for this exam.

N.6 The Exam

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING AN OB/GYN EXAM

5. **Breast Exam:** Your doctor will check your breasts for any lumps or changes. This is important for breast health.

6. **Testing:** Sometimes, your doctor may perform tests during your exam. This could include a pap smear, wet mount, or testing for sexually transmitted infections.

7. **Talking to You:** During the exam, your doctor will talk to you. They will explain what they're doing and ask how you're feeling. You can ask questions or share any concerns.

8. **Being Respectful:** Your doctor and nurse should be respectful and kind. They understand that you might feel vulnerable, so they should make sure you feel safe.



REMEMBER, YOUR OB/GYN IS THERE TO HELP YOU STAY HEALTHY. THEY DO THESE EXAMS TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS OKAY. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK QUESTIONS, SAY WHAT YOU'RE COMFORTABLE WITH, AND BE TREATED WITH RESPECT. IT'S ALL ABOUT TAKING CARE OF YOUR HEALTH.

N.7 Questions to Ask

EVER WONDER WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK? THIS LIST HAS A FEW QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED.

1. **Birth Control Options:** What's the best birth control choice for me, thinking about my lifestyle and future family plans?
2. **Menstrual Cycle Changes:** Can you explain any unusual things happening with my monthly period, and should I be worried about them?
3. **Reproductive Health Protection:** Do I need any preventive checks or shots to keep my reproductive health safe?
4. **PMS Symptoms Management:** What can I do to handle or stop common PMS issues I face?
5. **Reproductive Health Support:** Should I consider any lifestyle changes or extra things like vitamins to help my reproductive health and ability to have children?
6. **Sexual Health Concerns:** Can we talk about worries I have regarding sexual health, like infections or ways to have safe sex?
7. **Understanding Reproductive Health:** How can I learn more about my own reproductive health, and what signs or problems should I know about?

N.7 Questions to Ask

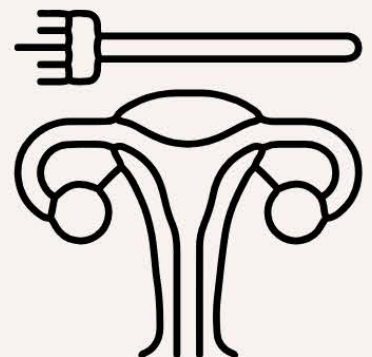
MORE QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED.

8. **Breast Health Screening:** What are the recommended checks for breast health, and how often should I do self-exams?
9. **Preparing for Pregnancy:** If I might want a baby later, what should I do now to make sure it's a healthy and successful experience?
10. **Women's Health Milestones:** What are the key things I should consider for my age group, and what can I do to stay stay healthy?
11. **Perimenopause and Menopause:** What should I know about perimenopause and menopause, and how might these stages affect my health and well-being?
12. **Pap Smears and Breast Exams:** Based on my medical history, when should I stop getting pap smears and breast exams?
13. **Hormone Replacement Therapy:** If I experience bothersome symptoms during menopause, like hot flashes or mood changes, what are the options for hormone replacement therapy? What are the risks?
14. **Bone Health:** How can I maintain strong bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis before and after menopause?

N.8 After the Visit

AFTER YOUR OB/GYN (OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY) VISIT, THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS YOU CAN EXPECT:

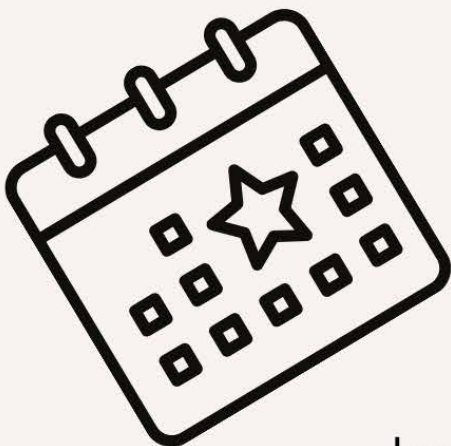
- 1. Follow-Up or Next Steps:** Your healthcare provider may recommend follow-up appointments, tests, or procedures. They'll explain what you need to do next and when to schedule these follow-ups.
- 2. Test Results:** If you had any tests or screenings during your visit, such as a Pap smear or blood work, your doctor will let you know the results. This may take some time, as some tests need to be sent to a lab for analysis.
- 3. Prescriptions:** If your doctor prescribed medication or birth control, they will explain how to take it, potential side effects, and any special instructions. Make sure you understand and ask questions if you don't.
- 4. Advice and Recommendations:** Your healthcare provider may give advice on caring for your reproductive health. This could include suggestions for a healthy diet, exercise, or any lifestyle changes if needed.
- 5. Questions and Concerns:** Don't hesitate to ask any questions or express concerns you have, even after leaving the office. You can call the doctor's office or use a patient portal if available. It's important to have a clear understanding of your health.
- 6. Follow Doctor's Orders:** If your doctor recommends specific treatments, lifestyle changes, or medications, it's important to follow their instructions. This will help you manage or improve your reproductive health.



N.8 After the Visit

AFTER YOUR OB/GYN (OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY) VISIT, THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS YOU CAN EXPECT:

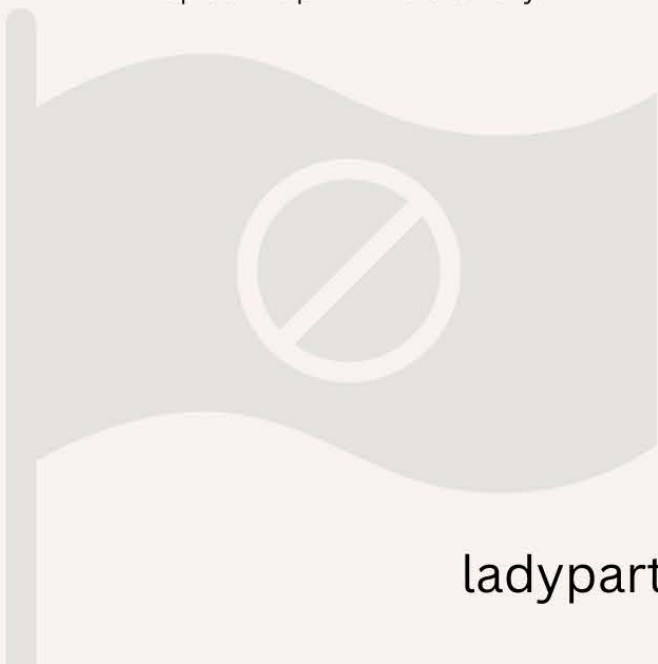
7. **Potential Side Effects:** If you had any procedures during your visit, like a pelvic exam, Pap smear, or biopsy, you might be a little uncomfortable or have spotting. This is normal and usually goes away within a day or two.
8. **Schedule Future Appointments:** Your doctor may recommend scheduling your next Ob/Gyn visit. This is important for preventive care and caring for your reproductive health. Make a note of the date and time.
9. **Review of Education Materials:** Your Ob/Gyn might give you educational materials about your health or conditions you talked about during your visit. Take some time to read and understand them.
10. **Privacy and Confidentiality:** Remember that your medical information is kept private and confidential. Your healthcare provider is bound by law to protect your personal health information.
11. **Contact Information:** Ensure you have your doctor's contact information and the contact information for their office. This will be helpful if you have questions, issues, or need to make appointments in the future.



N.9 Red Flags

NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT AT YOUR VISIT, HERE'S A LIST OF THINGS THAT SHOULD NOT HAPPEN

1. **Undesired Exams:** Your healthcare provider should always ask for your permission before conducting any exams. If you're uncomfortable or don't want a particular exam, you have the right to say no.
2. **Unexplained Photos:** Your healthcare provider should never take photos of you without explaining why and getting your clear consent. Your privacy is important.
3. **Pelvic Exams Without Gloves:** During pelvic exams, your healthcare provider should always wear gloves. This is for your safety and hygiene, and you should expect nothing less.
4. **Lack of Respect:** You deserve to be treated with respect and dignity during your visit. Your concerns and questions should be taken seriously.
5. **Unwanted Touching:** No one should touch you without your permission. If you ever feel uncomfortable with any physical contact, speak up immediately.

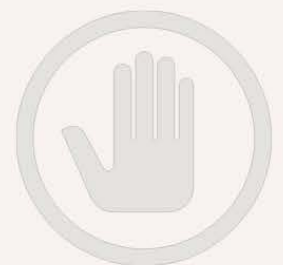
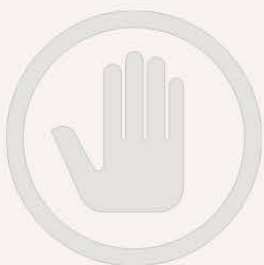


N.9 Red Flags

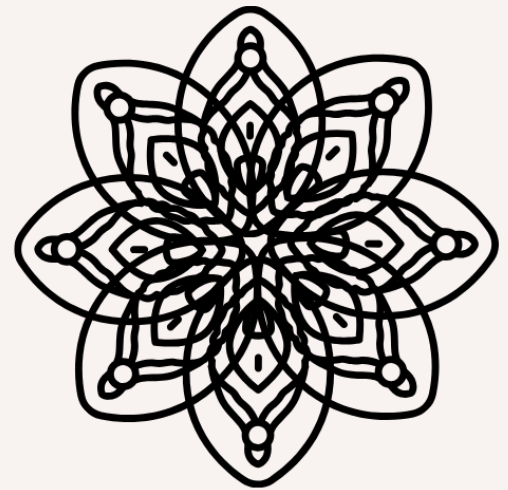
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6. **Lack of Explanation:** Your healthcare provider should explain all procedures and results in terms you can understand. Don't hesitate to ask questions if something is unclear.
7. **No Consent:** Nothing should happen during your visit without your informed consent. You have the right to make choices about your own body and healthcare.
8. **Disregard for Pain:** If you're in pain during an exam or procedure, your healthcare provider should address it promptly and adjust their approach if necessary.
9. **Judgment or Shaming:** Your healthcare provider should never judge or shame you based on your lifestyle, choices, or medical history. Their role is to provide care and support.
10. **Lack of Privacy:** Your privacy should always be protected. You should have a private space to undress, and conversations about your health should be kept confidential.

IF YOU FEEL YOUR RIGHTS OR PRIVACY HAVE BEEN VIOLATED DURING YOUR OB/GYN VISIT, CONSIDER REPORTING THE INCIDENT TO THE HEALTHCARE FACILITY, CLINIC MANAGEMENT, OR LOCAL AUTHORITIES. YOU CAN CONFIDE IN SOMEONE YOU TRUST ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE. FINALLY, CONSIDER SEEKING CARE FROM A DIFFERENT HEALTHCARE PROVIDER WHO PRIORITIZES YOUR WELL-BEING AND COMFORT

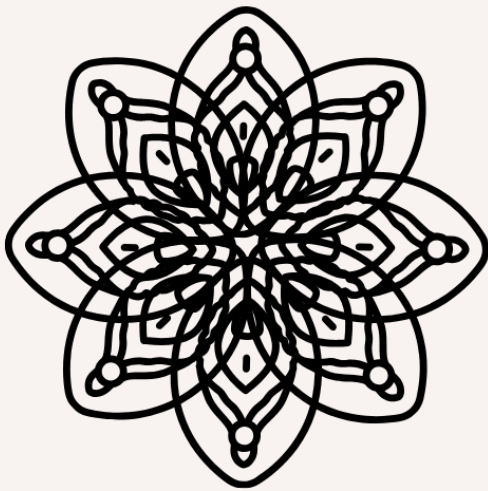


N.10 Conclusion



WE HOPE THIS GUIDE WAS HELPFUL

Visiting your OB/GYN is an important part of taking care of your reproductive health. During your exam, you can expect a thorough and gentle evaluation of your well-being. It's a time to ask questions, share any concerns, and get expert guidance on how to maintain your health. Remember, your OB/GYN is there to help and support you throughout your life's different stages. So, feel comfortable and empowered during your visit, knowing that you're on a journey towards a healthier and happier you.



N.11 Glossary

HELPFUL WORDS TO KNOW

Amniocentesis: A procedure during pregnancy where a small sample of amniotic fluid is taken to check for genetic conditions or other issues.

Cervix: The narrow lower part of the uterus connecting to the vagina, which widens during labor to let the baby pass through.

Cesarean Section (C-Section): A surgical procedure to deliver a baby through a cut in the mother's abdomen and uterus, often used when a regular vaginal birth isn't safe.

Contractions: The tightening and relaxing of the uterine muscles during labor, helping push the baby through the birth canal.

Clitoris: A female erogenous organ consisting of a complex network of erectile tissue and nerves, with parts located inside and outside your body

Fertilization: The process where an egg and sperm join to create a fertilized embryo, which can grow into a baby.

Gynecology: A branch of medicine focused on the female reproductive system, which includes the uterus, ovaries, and breasts.

IUD (Intrauterine Device): A small, T-shaped device placed inside the uterus to prevent pregnancy.

Mammogram: An X-ray of the breast used to detect and diagnose breast cancer.

Menopause: A stage in a woman's life when her monthly periods stop completely, typically happening in the late 40s or early 50s.

N.11 Glossary

HELPFUL WORDS TO KNOW

Menstrual Cycle: The regular monthly changes in a woman's body, including menstruation, that prepare the body for pregnancy.

Menstruation: The monthly process where the lining of the uterus is shed, commonly known as a period.

Obstetrics: A branch of medicine that deals with pregnancy, childbirth, and the health of the mother and baby during this time.

Ovaries: Female reproductive organs that make eggs and hormones like estrogen and progesterone.

Pap Smear: A test that checks for cervical cancer by collecting a small sample of cells from the cervix and examining them under a microscope.

Pelvic Exam: A physical check-up of the female pelvis, including the vagina, cervix, and ovaries, to find any health issues or abnormalities.

Postpartum: The time after childbirth when a mother recovers and takes care of her newborn.

STI (Sexually Transmitted Infection): Infections that spread through sexual contact. Some common STIs include chlamydia, gonorrhea, and herpes.

Speculum: A medical tool used during a pelvic exam to gently separate the walls of the vagina, allowing the healthcare provider to see the cervix and perform tests or procedures. It comes in various shapes and sizes to make sure you're comfortable.

Ultrasound: A test that uses sound waves to make images of the uterus, fetus, or other reproductive organs during pregnancy.

N.11 Glossary

HELPFUL WORDS TO KNOW

Uterus: Also called the womb, it's a muscular organ where a fertilized egg attaches and a baby develops during pregnancy.

Vagina: A muscular tube connecting the uterus to the outside of the body, where the baby comes out during childbirth.

Vaginal Flora: The environment of different types of bacteria that live in the vagina.

Vaginal pH: A measure of how acidic/basic vaginal fluid is. The normal vaginal pH is acidic and ranges between 3.8 and 5.0.

Vulva: The outer part of the female genitalia that surrounds the vagina, including the labia majora, labia minora and clitoris.

Wet Mount: A laboratory test where a sample of vaginal discharge is mixed with a liquid on a slide. It helps healthcare providers examine the sample under a microscope to identify infections or irregularities in the reproductive system. This test is often used to diagnose conditions like yeast infections or bacterial vaginosis.

