Your First OB/GYN Exam

The ideal time for your first OB/GYN visit is between 13 and 15 years old. Your first visit may only include time to talk to your caregiver without being examined. This will help you get to know and develop a relationship with each other. Your caregiver can show you the exam room. They can then explain and show you the instruments that are used during a pelvic exam. It is a good idea to talk to your mother or another women in the family before going to your first visit.

Your caregiver will take a detailed history of you and your family including any medical or surgical problems, shots (*immunizations*), menstrual, personal and sexual activity. Answer all of the questions honestly. This is important so your caregiver can give you the best possible treatment. Everything you talk about with your caregiver cannot be discussed with anyone else (*confidential*). The only time your caregiver can talk to your parents about what you discussed is if it is illegal not to discuss an issue with your parents. Talk to your caregiver about these legal issues. This is a good time to write down any questions you have so you do not forget to ask them when you see your caregiver.

THE FIRST EXAMINATION

You may not need a pelvic exam on your first visit. A pelvic exam will depend on how old you are, if you have any gynecology problems and your sexual activity.

The following is what happens during a pelvic exam:

- After talking to your caregiver, you will take off all your clothes. You will then put on a gown that is open in the back but can be closed with the ties.
- Your weight, height, temperature, pulse and blood pressure will be taken.
- The upper part of your body including your breasts will be looked at (*examined*) first.
- During the pelvic exam, you will lie down on a table. You will place your feet into foot rests on each side of the table and spread your legs. The caregiver will put on latex gloves and examine the outside of your genital area for things that are not normal. The caregiver will place a plastic or metal duck bill shaped instrument (*speculum*) with lubricant on it in the vagina. This instrument spreads the walls of the vagina in order to look inside the vagina and opening to the uterus (*cervix*).
  - If necessary, a Pap test of the cervix is taken at this time. Your caregiver will use a small brush or cotton swab and fine wooden or plastic spatula to scrape cells from your cervix. The cells will be placed on a glass slide to look for abnormal cells and infection.
  - Then, the speculum is removed and the caregiver examines your internal female organs. They will do this by putting lubricant on a gloved finger and then place the finger into the vagina and their other hand on your lower belly (*abdomen*). They will then feel the position and shape of the uterus, ovaries and pelvic area. This part of the exam may be uncomfortable but does not cause pain.
- Now you have finished your first pelvic exam. You may not need a Pap test at this visit. A Pap test is recommended 3 years after you have had sexual intercourse or by the time you are 21 years old. Your caregiver will give you the results of the Pap test 7 to 14 days after the exam. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

THIS IS THE TIME IN YOUR LIFE TO BEGIN AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE BY:

- Eating a healthy and balanced diet.
- Exercising often.
- Getting enough sleep and rest.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- **Do not** smoke**,** drink alcoholic beverages in excess **or** use illegal drugs.
- Preventing unwanted pregnancy by using birth control.

- Avoiding getting sexually transmitted diseases by:
  - Using condoms during sexual intercourse.
  - Having only one sex partner (*monogamous*).
- Getting the necessary immunizations (measles, mumps, German measles, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, meningococcus, influenza, Hepatitis B and the human papilloma virus immunizations).
- Continue with yearly routine exams and Pap tests. Follow the advice of your caregiver if you should be seen more often.

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