

## For the Teen: What Happens At My First Gynecologic Visit

You should speak to your parents about seeing a gynecologist when you are between 13 and 15 years old. This is the age when you will likely be experiencing many changes in your body and may have questions for the doctor about what is normal and what is not.

It is a good idea to prepare for your visit by writing down the date of the first day of your last menstrual period, how often your periods are, and the age when your first period began.

Write down any questions you might have and fill out and bring it to your appointment the “Adolescent Questionnaire” found on our website [www.womancarepc.com](http://www.womancarepc.com) . This is to be kept private between you and your doctor.

When you arrive for your appointment you will meet the nurse and be brought to the exam room to talk with the doctor. You will most likely not have a pelvic or internal exam at your first visit unless there is a problem going on. With your parent present, your doctor will explain the confidentiality policy for teens. This policy is to allow you to have private time with your doctor, which you may wish to have to discuss birth control needs or STD testing.

Your doctor will direct several health questions, to you and may ask your parent for additional information about your health. Your doctor will answer questions that your parent may have, in particular often explaining the use of oral contraceptives and their safety and risks. Your parent will then be asked to return to the waiting room so that you may spend some time discussing things that are private and sometimes embarrassing to talk about in front of your parents.

We ask that you be as honest as possible with your doctor. Remember that any conversation about sex, drinking or drug use is private and that there really is no question that is too strange.

You may have a brief exam of your thyroid (front of your neck), your heart and abdomen but usually you can keep your clothes on. If you prefer you may ask for a chaperone for this part if you are more comfortable.

If you are advised to have a pelvic exam, you will be asking to undress either into a gown or to cover the lower half of your body with a sheet. While sitting at the edge of the table you will next lie down and place your heels into metal stirrups. There are two parts of the pelvic exam. The first part is with the insertion of a small speculum to look into the vagina. This is usually warmed up and about the width of a tampon. Try to relax your knees apart and keep your inner thighs muscles slack. If you are able to do this, the exam is usually only a few seconds. Next, with the speculum removed, the doctor will push one hand down on your lower abdomen with one finger inside the vagina. This will allow the uterus to be palpated and also usually lasts a few seconds. Examination jelly is usually used and may feel slightly cold.

Occasionally after the visit blood tests may be drawn for particular concerns. We encourage you to have the Gardasil Series of 3 vaccinations if you haven't had them already. This is to help reduce your risks of cervical cancer.

Test results will be made available as soon as possible and if normal / negative are entered on the patient portal. If there are abnormal test results, you will receive a phone call from your doctor or nurse with instructions.

## Preparing Your Teen For Her First Gynecologist Visit What Every Parent Should Know

At what age should my daughter visit the gynecologist for the first time, is the question I am asked most frequently. It's an important question because addressing the physiological and psychological changes that occur during this time in a young girl's life can have a great impact on the decisions she makes in the near future and the rest of her life.

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a girl's first visit to the gynecologist "for health promotion, education and prevention" should be between 13 and 15 years of age. This does not mean she will need a pelvic exam at that time.

The visit is geared toward the time of transition from childhood to adulthood and the goal is a physically and psychologically healthy young woman. Some of the milestones include positive body image, healthy sexuality, enhanced cognitive skills, and building supportive relationships.

Hormonal changes are a trigger for physical development that occurs during puberty. The first menstrual period, called menarche, is usually between ages 11-15, although this may occur as early as 10 or as late as 16. Development of secondary sexual characteristics, such as breast and pubic hair, also occurs at this time. Young girls attain adult height and stature during puberty. The growth spurt peaks at age 12 with a range of 10-14.

Relieve first visit anxiety –

The first visit to the gynecologist can be a great source of anxiety for the teen and her parent. Knowing what to expect can help alleviate some of this stress.

The teen may wish to prepare for her visit by writing down when her last menstrual period started, how often her periods are and at what age the periods started.

We recommend your teen fills out a short questionnaire found on our website, [www.womancarepc.com](http://www.womancarepc.com) about her health and behaviors. This should be brought in to the appointment but is kept PRIVATE between the teen and her doctor.

We need a parent to be with your teen at the first appointment to meet the doctor and be informed about our confidentiality policy with teens. This means that you will be asked to allow your teen to talk with her doctor alone and to keep that conversation private unless a serious concern such as life/death risk is present.

A pelvic or internal exam is not usually part of the first visit, unless there is a special concern or complaint going on. The first pap smear for cervical cancer screening is done at age 21, however STD screening is often done earlier and may be done earlier and may be done by a urine sample.

If tests are performed, we prefer to send them directly to your teen by email or phone. If your daughter gives her permission (for a particular set of tests) we may contact you to discuss the test results or you may schedule an appointment with your daughter to talk with the doctor about these results.

We encourage your daughter to talk with you about her visit, what she learned and what she was advised. It is up to her discretion as to how much she chooses to tell you.

Once your daughter has been seen at our office, it is between you and your daughter as to whether you come in with your daughter for future visits.