

Preparing for Your Office Visit

While there is nothing that can be done to make OB/GYN visits seem like a vacation, they are a crucial part of women's medical care. These check-ups are the key to maintaining reproductive health, as well as ruling out serious health risks and illnesses, and should not be delayed, postponed, or skipped except in the case of a true emergency.

To help alleviate stress and guesswork surrounding these appointments, and so that you can be well prepared for your next visit to the OB/GYN, Uterus1 has developed a checklist of things to do or remember in anticipation of this important part of your medical care.

Here are a few important things to remember when preparing for your office visit:

- Schedule your routine visit about two weeks after your period. You will need to reschedule if you get your period on the day of the exam, as this may prevent your clinician from adequately visualizing your vagina and cervix.
- Print out and bring your menstrual diary or other record of your menstrual cycle. Your doctor will want to discuss your cycle with you.
- Print out and bring your personal medical records. Your doctor will need to know about hereditary or previous conditions.
- Don't have intercourse, douche, or use any other vaginal preparations for 48 hours beforehand, as this can disturb the cells of your cervix and affect your test results. Also, douching is generally considered to be unsafe and unnecessary by women's health experts: It can upset the delicate chemical balance of the vagina, and the vagina is very good at "self-cleaning," and shouldn't need help.
- Do as the organized do, and make a list of questions and concerns you want to discuss with your doctor. Especially if you get nervous when you go to the OB/GYN, having a list handy may prevent you from "blanking out" on important topics.
- If you don't have any illnesses or conditions affecting the reproductive tract, you should not feel any pain during your exam, though if you tend to feel especially tense during pelvic exams, this can lead to some mild

discomfort. If you experience any pain or discomfort while you are being examined, tell your doctor – more likely than not, there's a simple solution, and it's important information for your doctor to know.

One of the best ways to reduced stress surrounding your OB/GYN visit is to be an informed and active participant in your own health care. Know what to expect, and be prepared with any information your doctor might need. Ask questions if you do not understand something or would like to know more, and remember that while your doctor is an expert in medicine, he or she can treat you much more successfully with the help of your cooperation and participation in the health care process.

Once you are ready to plan your next visit, print out Uterus1's Office Visit Checklist and use it to help you make the process as simple and stress-free as possible.