

## **Your first Gynaecological visit: What to expect?**

A gynaecologist is a medical doctor that has specifically specialized to understand the science of the female reproductive system and general female health. Therefore, your first gynaecological examination is a great start to understanding your female body . Many women are anxious about this particular visit, but knowing what to expect can help relax you prior to the visit.

### **When should you start visiting a gynaecologist?**

You should see a gynaecologist once you begin to be sexually active, or even before you plan to have intercourse. If you have not experienced any pubertal changes by age 14, or not started menstruating by age 16, or experiencing any problem such as heavy bleeding on the period, severe lower abdominal pain related / unrelated to periods, frequent urinary tract infection etc.

### **Before the visit:**

If you are nervous, plan to take a friend, or your mom. You may even enquire whether your gynaecologist is male or female prior to the appointment if this is a concern. It is useful to note all your complaints and remember the date of your last period. If you have decided not to have an internal examination, remember to state this to the gynaecologist.

### **What happens at the consultation:**

1. You will need to complete a registration form
2. Then a detailed history will be taken, and your complaints are noted
3. The examination will be in a private area, and an assistant might be present
4. After a general examination (which might include a breast examination), a pelvic ultrasound will be done with a small probe that is inserted into the vagina (vaginal ultrasound). The ultrasound will be done abdominally if you are a virgin. You will need to have a full bladder then.
5. Then finally an internal examination followed by a papsmear might be done.

**What does an ultrasound show?**

The gynaecologist will be able to visualize the uterine shape, size and note any abnormalities in the lining or the muscle layer of the uterus. The cervix, ovaries and fallopian tubes can also be seen.

**Can you have a gynaecology visit while you're on your period?**

Yes, you may. But if are bleeding heavy then a pap test might not be done as the blood interferes with the results of the test.