

## The Essence of Regular Gynaecologist Check ups

Regular check ups with a gynaecologist help a woman to understand her own body better and to clear up any questions she may be having. The most effective way to have the correct diagnosis and thereafter receive the right treatment in order to have a fast recovery is to be seen by a gynaecologist, specialised and trained to handle the majority of the gynaecological problems.

The following are the main reasons a woman needs to visit her gynaecologist:

### 1. Menstrual Problems

Inform a gynaecologist about any menstrual issues, like cramps, an increase or decrease of blood flow, or irregularity of the periods. There are many reasons for this occurrence, like an inflammation in the uterine wall, or vaginal infection. Bleeding between menstrual periods may be a symptom of cervical cancer.

### 2. Cervical and Uterine cancer

A pap smear test, done every three years permits the detection of abnormal cells and polyps, which can lead to cancer cells. It is a simple surgical procedure that involves the scraping off some mucus and cells from the neck of the womb, no anaesthetic is required. This test is recommended for all women from the time they start sexual relations or from the age of 35.

### 3. Breast pathologies

Women can learn to examine their own breasts, but it is important to have a gynaecologist do so too. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in India. Like all cancers the earlier the cancer is diagnosed, the earlier treatment can be given, so the greater the chances of a cure. A mammogram, (X ray of the breast), and a sonography of the breast are recommended after the age of 50 years.

### 4. Infections

Many complications can be avoided, if a person visits a gynaecologist at the slightest symptom of the infection. If one treats them as a minor problem, and ignores such signs, they could develop into serious problems at a later stage like infertility, due to a damaged fallopian tube.

### 5. Infertility

Infertility can be prevented through regular check-ups. Assisted Reproductive Techniques (ART) can reverse the infertility, through treatments like IVF (in vitro-fertilization). If the infertility is due to a serious condition, it can be detected and treated.

## **6. Menopause and HRT**

The menopause is a transitional period of life causing different problems. A decline in the hormone oestrogen is associated with the various physical and psychological disturbances, depression, and osteoporosis. In such cases Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) can help women overcome these problems.

## **7. Urinary Incontinence**

This is a condition that still is very embarrassing for many patients to bring up, but very important to do so with ones gynaecologist. There are two main different types, urgency and stress incontinence and also mixtures of the two. It is important to find the cause and to what extent it affects life. There are different treatments with drugs or surgery depending on the diagnosis.

## **8. Sexually transmitted diseases (STD)**

Unprotected sex with several partners facilitates transmission of germs that cause infections. Sometimes there are no signs indicating that a problem exists, eg. In AIDS, chlamydia and gonorrhoea. A gynaecological examination, and blood tests can reveal if the STD is present.

## **9. Methods of Contraception**

The gynaecologist is the best adviser in what contraception is suited the woman's individual needs and controlling their effects, as there are many contraceptives available in the market, and each woman is a unique individual with her own sex- life patterns, physical characteristics and preferences.

The importance of a routine consultation with a gynaecologist cannot be stressed adequately, hopefully the above listed reasons are sufficient for all the women reading this article to visit their gynaecologists soon.

***Dr. Nandita Palshetkar, Infertility Specialist, Mumbai***