

Meeting with OBGYN prior to first exam empowers young women in medical settings

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A teen girl's first visit to an OBGYN often comes with a lot of anxiety, and once they are in a gown on an exam table, they may be too uncomfortable to express their concerns and ask questions. In fact, a new national survey by Orlando Health found that nearly 40% of women were at least somewhat concerned about what would happen during their first OBGYN exam. That's why experts at Orlando Health are encouraging girls and their parents to speak with their OBGYN in a non-clinical setting before their first exam. Establishing an open dialogue with their physician helps them know what to expect, what is and is not appropriate during an exam, and anything else they may be worried about.

"This is about empowering young women to take control of their health and know that they have the power in the exam room," said Christine Greves, MD, an OBGYN at Orlando Health. "Giving them a safe space to talk about any of their fears and hesitations allows them to build confidence in their ability to speak up in a medical setting."

For many women, this initial conversation is an important first step that they might not know is available. Without this option to put first-time [patients](#) at ease, they might avoid their doctor's office altogether, missing regular appointments and putting their overall health at risk.

"Helping a woman establish an ongoing relationship with her doctor could make her more likely to get the recommended annual care and to ask about anything out of the ordinary that is happening with her [health](#),"

said Greves. "These pre-exam meetings are something more young women should be asking for, and most OBGYN offices will be happy to make that appointment for them."

With recent cases in the news of young women being abused by physicians, the role of an OBGYN and proper patient education are more important than ever before. A conversation with a trusted OBGYN can provide answers to sensitive questions that patients need to know to feel comfortable and informed at any appointment.

"Many victims of sexual assault have said that they were afraid to say something during and after the abuse took place, and that needs to change," said Greves. "No woman should suffer in silence, and establishing a sense of control early on will hopefully eliminate a lot of that apprehension and help patients stay safe."

Savanna Harris remembers how nervous she was prior to her first OBGYN visit. She was 19, went to her appointment alone and didn't talk to anyone beforehand about what was involved with the exam.

"I had a lot of questions, but I guess I was too embarrassed to ask them, and by the time I was in the [exam](#) room it seemed too late for that," said Harris. "I was afraid it was going to be painful or that they were going to find something wrong with me. I also had no idea that I could have someone in the room with me, and I think having a friend or family member's support would have made me feel a lot better."

Savanna says she thinks a lot of young [women](#) would benefit from speaking to their doctor beforehand so they know what to expect. Dr. Greves says she encourages pediatricians and [primary care physicians](#) to speak with teenage patients and their parents about this option when they are preparing to make their first OBGYN appointment.

Provided by Orlando Health

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