**Talking with Your Gynecologist**

Visiting the gynecologist (also called the OBGYN) is necessary for females to maintain good health. As a woman, your body will go through many changess and stages throughout your lifetime and having a disability can sometimes make these stages harder. There are many difficult questions, concerns, and issues that a woman may want to discuss with her gynecologist about her health, such as, questions about having children, menopause and aging.

Tell your gynecologist about any medications you are taking and your medical history, including any female relative’s history of breast or cervical cancer. The following checklist will assist you in working with your gynecologist. There are blank spaces available for you to write in your own personal questions too.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Date: Doctor’s Name: | | |
| Doctor’s Address: | | |
|  | | |
| Doctor’s Telephone No: Email Address: | | |
|  | | |
| **Questions for your gynecologist:** | | |
| **No.** | **Question:** | **Answer:** |
| 1. | Am I at a healthy weight for my height? |  |
| 2. | How often do I need to get a pap smear test? |  |
| 3. | If I choose to use birth control, what types of options do I have? |  |
| 4. | If I use birth control, will it affect my other medications? |  |
| 5. | As a woman with a disability, should I be taking any special vitamins? |  |
| 6. | Can you show me how to do a breast self-exam? |  |
| 7. | When should I start getting regular mammograms? |  |
| 8. |  |  |
| **Women’s Health Resources:** | | |
| * CDC Women with Disabilities: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/women.html> * Center for Research on Women with Disabilities: <http://www.bcm.edu/crowd/> | | |

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| **Questions about having children:** | | |
| **No.** | **Question:** | **Answer:** |
| 1. | What are the chances that my child will be born with a disability? |  |
| 2. | Will my medications affect my ability to become pregnant or my baby’s development? |  |
| 3. | Can I continue taking my medicine while I am pregnant or does it need to be changed? |  |
| 4. | Is there anything I can do before I become pregnant to increase my chances of having a healthy pregnancy? |  |
| 5. | Will my disability affect my own health while I am pregnant? |  |
| 6. | Am I at risk of having complications during delivery because of my disability? |  |
| 7. | I’ve heard conflicting information about drinking alcohol while trying to get pregnant or during pregnancy. I want to confirm that I should not drink alcohol. |  |
| 8. | I’ve heard smoking while pregnant is unhealthy for me and my baby. I want to confirm that I should not smoke while pregnant. |  |
| 9. |  |  |
| 10. |  |  |
| **Pregnancy Resources:** | | |
| * **Women’s Health: Disability and Reproductive Health:** <http://www.womenshealth.gov/illnesses-disabilities/your-health/sexuality-reproductive-health.html> * **Parenting with a Disability:** <http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/parenting_with_an_intellectual_disability.html> | | |

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| **Questions about menopause and aging:** | | |
| **No.** | **Question:** | **Answer:** |
| 1. | Considering my disability(s), what do I need to know about menopause? |  |
| 2. | How will menopause affect me and my body? |  |
| 3. | Is there anything I can do during menopause that will make it more comfortable for me? |  |
| 4. | Will I need hormone therapy (HT) before, during or after menopause? |  |
| 5. | Are there any precautions or vitamins that I should be taking to prevent me from getting Osteoporosis? |  |
| 6. |  |  |
| 7. |  |  |
| 8. |  |  |
| **Aging and Menopause Resources:** | | |
| * CDC Breast Cancer Screening – The Right to Know: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/righttoknow/index.html> * **Villanova’s Health Promotion for Women with Disabilities: Menopause** <http://nurseweb.villanova.edu/womenwithdisabilities//Menopause/MenoMain.htm> * American Association on Health & Disability – Mammogram Tips   <http://www.aahd.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/MammoTipsWomen20091.pdf> | | |