

## When Should A Girl First See A Gynaecologist?

Dr Duru Shah



**T**he exact time to see a gynaecologist for the first time is when you have blossomed from a little girl to a young girl, as you need to know everything about your reproductive system, why you get periods, what is normal and what is abnormal, when should you get alarmed and what are the myths related to periods.

If your periods are regular, it is enough proof that all is well with your reproductive system. But unless you

understand what is normal, you will never know if there is any problem, disease or dysfunction of the system and you would never realize what are heavy or scanty periods, early or late periods, or even painful periods - which ones are normal and which are pathological.

Your hormones are swinging and you have grown from being a little girl to a young girl - about to be married. It is important for you to understand how pregnancy occurs, how to prevent it, how to avoid unsafe sex and unwanted

pregnancies. You may also need to know how to stay healthy and prevent long-term complications of any of these problems, if they occur. This is when you need to see your gynecologist once again!

Your gynaecologist is your friend. She will guide you, offer you all the help you need and will advise you about whatever you need to know but is shy to ask. This is the age when a lot can go wrong and it can be prevented by some simple and useful tips, vaccinations and loads of correct information and advice.

### S O C I E T Y S A Y S S O

Current treatment options range from pelvic muscle exercises, behavioural modifications, treatment of urinary infection, local hormone therapy, neo-control therapy and surgery. Surgery offers the best cure rates for stress urinary incontinence even in elderly women. Surgical treatment involves the use of TVT (Tension free Vaginal Tape) which is an innovative, effective and simple solution for stress incontinence. It entails a day care surgery which is minimally-invasive. It is a simple surgical option to treat incontinence which is completed in 30 minutes and can be done under local anaesthesia. The patient returns home the same day, and has minimal post-operative pain. It has a 96 per cent success rate, with 85 per cent patients completely cured and about 11 per cent patients experiencing significant improvement.

Newer medical therapies are also available for urge incontinence and make the woman's life more manageable.

**Self management includes:**

- Use of adult diapers/pads to prevent a leak
- Avoiding exercise/physical activity
- Reducing tea/coffee intake
- Losing weight
- Changing lifestyle as needed

Every affected woman wants the freedom from sudden urine loss, a normal, active social lifestyle, freedom from shame, embarrassment of a sudden leak, a safe and simple treatment, no scar, short hospital stay, no complications and above all a better quality of life. Though incontinence is a common problem in women, it has a big impact on women's lives. Most women suffer in silence due to a lack of awareness on available treatment options.

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