

10 things doctors want women to know to manage their health

MAR 28, 2025



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Women's health concerns are too often overlooked or dismissed, perpetuating a cycle of inequitable access to quality health care. As the nation's health care system strives to create a more inclusive and equitable future, it is imperative to delve into the different medical needs that should be prioritized to improve women's health.

The AMA's What Doctors Want Patients to Know™ series provides physicians with a platform to share what they want patients to understand about today's health care headlines.

Here is a list from this series on what doctors want women to know to enhance their health. The list features advice from physicians at organizations that are members of the [AMA Health System Program](#), which provides enterprise solutions to equip leadership, physicians and care teams with resources to help drive the future of medicine.

1

Keep an eye out for symptoms of dyspareunia

Experiencing pain during or immediately after sexual activity—known as dyspareunia—is a condition affecting many women, yet it remains a topic often shrouded in silence. This medical issue, which can affect both physical and emotional well-being, is more common than many may realize. Understanding and addressing this condition is crucial for promoting overall sexual health and quality of life.

[Amber Savells, MD](#), an ob-gyn at [Baptist Health Medical Group](#) in Paducah, Kentucky, took time to share what patients need to know about pain during or after sex.

2 Endometriosis is under-recognized

Endometriosis, a chronic and often painful condition affecting millions of women worldwide, continues to be a significant yet under-recognized health issue. Characterized by the growth of tissue similar to the uterine lining outside the uterus, endometriosis can cause severe menstrual pain, fatigue, and even infertility. Despite affecting about one in 10 women of reproductive age, many still struggle to receive a timely diagnosis, often enduring years of symptoms before finding relief.

[Katie Peterson, MD](#), an ob-gyn at [Confluence Health](#) in Wenatchee, Washington, discusses what patients should know about endometriosis.

3 Birth control is safe and effective

Social media platforms—particularly TikTok—have become hotbeds of misinformation about birth control, with highly persuasive videos vilifying hormonal contraception. Myths and misinformation in circulation have caused significant concern among physicians as they see an increasing number of women discontinuing their contraceptives.

[Kimberly Dawn Warner, MD](#), an ob-gyn at [Colorado Permanente Medical Group](#), debunks many of the birth-control myths that have been circulating on social media.

4 Get screened for osteoporosis

Bone health is a critical aspect of overall well-being, yet millions worldwide grapple with a silent threat that weakens bones: osteoporosis. This condition, often undetected until a fracture occurs, poses a significant risk, particularly among older patients. Being aware of the condition and knowing what preventive measures to take are key.

[Nancy Salloum Harrison, MD](#), a rheumatologist at [Hattiesburg Clinic](#)'s The Arthritis Center–West, highlights what patients need to know about osteoporosis.

5 Talk with your doctor about uterine fibroids

Uterine fibroids cast a long shadow over the lives of countless women, emerging as a common yet overlooked gynecological health issue today with more than 200,000 cases per year in the U.S. These benign tumors in the uterus are not usually cancerous, but very little is known about how and why uterine fibroids develop and grow. This can be frustrating because there is no way to prevent uterine fibroids. But knowing what symptoms to watch out for and when to visit your physician can make a difference.

[Veronica Gillispie-Bell, MD, MAS](#), an ob-gyn and system medical director of health outcomes for [Ochsner Health](#), discusses what patients need to know about uterine fibroids.

6 Depression is not your fault

It creeps in quietly, often unnoticed, until the weight becomes unbearable. Depression, often a master of disguise, hides behind smiles and routine, casting its shadow on countless lives. Despite its prevalence, stigma and misunderstanding frequently overshadow discussions about depression's reality, leaving many to struggle in isolation. But as the conversation about mental health grows louder, the veil is lifting.

[Andrea DeSimone, DO](#), a psychiatrist at [Bayhealth](#) Medical Center in Dover, Delaware, took time to discuss what patients need to know about depression.

7 **Take steps to manage anxiety disorders**

Anxiety is a shared human experience. For instance, the prospect of speaking in front of a large group of people or taking a test can trigger anxiety. Yet this unease can also serve as a catalyst for diligent preparation and rehearsal. But if feelings of extreme fear and turmoil become overpowering and hinder routine activities, this may indicate an underlying anxiety disorder.

Two psychiatrists share more about recognizing and managing anxiety disorders, including [Sandra Swantek, MD](#), a geriatric psychiatrist in Chicago at [Rush University System for Health](#).

8 **Early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is vital**

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive neurological disorder that affects millions worldwide, robbing individuals of their memories, independence and ultimately, their lives. In the U.S., because of the increasing number of people 65 or older—particularly older adults who are 85 or older—new cases of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are projected to double by 2050, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

Anjali N. Patel, DO—a cognitive neurologist at the Atlantic Neuroscience Institute at Overlook Medical Center, which is part of [Atlantic Health System](#)—discusses what to know about Alzheimer's disease.

9 **Know your risk for complications postpartum**

Navigating the delicate phase following pregnancy can be challenging. From physical recovery to emotional well-being, the postpartum period—which

begins after delivery demands careful attention and support. Despite advances in medical understanding and increased awareness, gaps in postpartum care persist, putting many women at higher risk of worse outcomes. Knowing what to expect and when to seek care is key to improving health outcomes and experiences postpartum.

[Jennifer Heer Ford, MD](#), an ob-gyn with [Baptist Health Medical Group](#) in Louisville, Kentucky, shares what doctors want patients to know about postpartum care.

10 Recognize the symptoms of preeclampsia

Preeclampsia happens in 5% to 8% of all U.S. births. The potentially dangerous disorder can lead to serious and even fatal complications for mother and baby if left untreated. That is why early detection and intervention are key to turning the tide on maternal health and well-being.

Two physicians discuss what patients need to know about preeclampsia, including Dr. Peterson from Confluence Health.

When it comes to effective patient-physician communication, it's important that both parties speak from a base of shared knowledge. The AMA's What Doctors Want Patients to Know series explores dozens of health topics, including [high cholesterol](#), [depression](#), [inflammatory bowel disease](#) and [vertigo](#).