



How To Advocate For Yourself at Your OBGYN Appointment

Before, during & after

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How To Advocate

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If you've ever left a doctor's appointment feeling confused, dismissed, or like you forgot to say the most important thing, this is for you!

Most of us were never taught how to advocate for ourselves in medical settings. In fact, many of us were taught to do the opposite: be polite, minimize pain, don't ask too many questions, and trust that "they know best."

Here's the truth: Most doctors genuinely want to help. But the conventional **medical system has real limitations** – short appointments, high patient loads, insurance constraints, and a structure that often prioritizes symptom management over root-cause investigation.

That means if you don't come prepared, important details can get missed.

Advocating for yourself isn't about being difficult or confrontational. It's about being **prepared and clear** in your intentions for the appointment.

This guide is here to help you do exactly that.



How To Advocate

For Yourself At Your OBGYN Appointment

Before The Appointment

How to Set Yourself Up to Be Taken Seriously

1. Book Strategically

If possible, schedule earlier in the day – providers are often less rushed and more focused. When booking, briefly share what you want to discuss so it's on their radar before you walk in.

2. Prepare Your “Headline”

Before your appointment, be able to answer this in one sentence:

“What is the main thing I need help with today?”

Doctors are trained to triage. If you don't lead the conversation, it can easily drift — especially with limited time.

3. Bring Data, Not Just Feelings

Your experience is valid. And, the medical system responds best to specifics. I know, I wish it was different!

Write down (on your phone or in a notebook):

- Your top 3 symptoms, ranked by importance
- How long they've been happening
- Severity (0–10)
- Frequency and duration
- How they impact your life (work, sleep, mood, relationships, parenting, etc.)

(Cont.)



How To Advocate

For Yourself At Your OBGYN Appointment

Additional things you might want to share:

- Your research of your symptoms or condition. You don't have to share what you read on Reddit – your insights may be better received if you instead say a friend has been through a similar issue.
- Any referrals to specialists you may need for further investigation or any tests you might want to request.
- If there are any specific medications or treatment options you want to access, make note of these too. It is okay to suggest the next step based on your own research and experience.
- If additional testing, imaging, or referrals are suggested, it can be helpful to have a general sense of the potential cost ahead of time. This allows you to have an informed conversation and ask follow-up questions without being caught off guard.

4. Track Patterns (Especially With Your Cycle)

Track your symptoms alongside your cycle so you can identify potential patterns and clearly communicate them. Patterns are harder to dismiss than isolated complaints. There are many apps that make this simple and easy.

Note any triggers for the symptoms that you've noticed, the duration of your symptoms, and frequency of your symptoms. Hard data is persuasive. Be prepared to share how long you have been dealing with your health issues.



How To Advocate

For Yourself At Your OBGYN Appointment

5. Organize Your Information

Bring, email ahead of time or have easy access to:

- Recent labs and imaging
- A list (or photos) of current medications and supplements
- Prior diagnoses, procedures, or referrals

Having everything in one place helps you stay focused and ensures nothing gets overlooked.

6. Practice What You Want to Say

If you anticipate a challenging conversation, rehearse ahead of time. Helpful grounding phrases:

- I'd like to try explaining that again.
- I understand that's one approach, but I'd like to both manage my symptoms and understand the root cause.
- I don't feel comfortable moving forward without more clarity.

Remember, you are the boss of your body, which means you get to decide how this conversation goes.

7. Bring Backup (If Helpful)

Medical appointments can be overwhelming. Bringing a husband/wife/partner, family member, or trusted friend can be incredibly helpful. This person can:

- Take notes
- Catch details you may miss
- Help advocate if needed

Let them know ahead of time whether you want moral support or more active involvement.



How To Advocate

For Yourself At Your OBGYN Appointment

During The Appointment

1. Take a Breath First

Before your provider walks in, take a few slow, deep breaths or gently shake out your body to release tension.

2. Consider recording

In most states, it's perfectly legal and okay to record your doctor's appointment. If you choose to do so, let your provider know. This can be helpful if you later forget details or need to review recommendations.

3. Be Direct and Specific Early On

Clearly state your main concern and your goal for the visit right away. Try not to downplay your symptoms or their severity.

Instead of:

"My periods are so bad."

Try:

"My period pain is regularly a 9/10 and it's causing me to miss 1-2 days of work every month."

Describing impact is always persuasive: i.e. these symptoms are impacting my day-to-day life/stopping me from doing things I enjoy/impacting my partner/kids/family life.



How To Advocate

For Yourself At Your OBGYN Appointment

4. Ask Questions Without Apologizing

You came prepared. Use your list. It is okay to let them know you'd like to walk through your questions together.

If a condition is mentioned, you can ask:

- What are the steps to diagnosing this?
- How would we rule this out?
- What tests or referrals would be appropriate?

If a treatment plan is offered, ask about the risks, the benefits, and the alternatives. You are allowed to understand your care plan.

5. Ask for Clarification

If something doesn't make sense, don't be afraid to ask for a simpler explanation or for them to repeat what they said.

And you can always ask "why," for example:

- Why is this the best option for me based on what I've shared?
- Why would you recommend X over Y?
- What would you do if you were in my position?

Being a curious patient is not disrespectful.

6. If Something Is Refused

If a requested test, referral, or treatment is declined, calmly say:

"Can you document that refusal, my symptoms, and your reasoning in my chart?"

This isn't about being confrontational, it's about creating a paper trail. Welcome to adulthood!



How To Advocate

For Yourself At Your OBGYN Appointment

7. Pain Management Is A Right

If you're undergoing a potentially painful procedure (IUD placement, a biopsy etc), you have the right to request appropriate pain management. You are not being dramatic for asking. No one gets extra credit for tolerating pain!

This may include prescription-strength medication, local anesthetic, cervical blocks or sedation. Mention your preferences ahead of time whenever possible.

8. Clarify Next steps

Before leaving, make sure you know:

- What happens next? Concrete next steps are important.
- What do you need to follow up on to get the treatment and care you need?
- If you've been given a referral who should you expect to hear from and when?
- How long this will all take and when to follow up

Make appointments for tests, scans, or referrals immediately after the appointment if possible.

9. Request Your Records

I always tell my clients to ask for a physical or electronic copy of their medical records so they can easily refer back to them. Ask for:

- Notes from the visit
- Lab results
- Imaging reports
- The treatment plan

Having your own records really matters, especially if you change doctors, the practice you visited closes down or records get lost or accidentally destroyed.



How To Advocate

For Yourself At Your OBGYN Appointment

After The Appointment

1. Regulate Your Nervous System

Advocating for yourself can feel scary, frustrating and exhausting, especially if you are dealing with a chronic condition or illness.

Afterward:

- Shake it out
- Lie on the floor with your legs up the wall
- Drink herbal tea
- Use any other grounding tools that work for you

Your body may need time to come back to baseline.

2. Consider A Second Opinion

Your doctor's role is to offer expertise, guidance, and recommendations, not to make decisions for you. You are the ultimate decision-maker when it comes to your body and your care.

This is why it is completely appropriate to seek a second – or even third – opinion, especially if you didn't feel heard or supported.



How To Advocate

For Yourself At Your OBGYN Appointment

Know This

You Are the Client in This Relationship

You are paying for this appointment and the provider's time and expertise, whether it is directly or through your tax dollars. That means you are entitled to clear explanations, thoughtful recommendations, and a collaborative approach to your care.

If something doesn't feel right or fully explained:

- You are allowed to ask for more information or another option.
- You are allowed to ask questions.
- You are allowed to want clarity.
- You are allowed to find another provider.

Sometimes that means expanding your care team to include a different OB-GYN, a naturopathic or functional medicine doctor, or a hormone health specialist alongside conventional care.

Want More Support?

With the **Fix Your Period app**, you'll learn how to understand your cycle, interpret symptoms, and support your health at a foundational level – so you can walk into appointments informed and confident.

[Explore For Free](#)



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Nicole Jardim is a Certified Women's Health Coach and Author of [*Fix Your Period: 6 Weeks to Banish Bloating, Conquer Cramps, Manage Moodiness, and Ignite Lasting Hormone Balance*](#) a life-changing step-by-step natural protocol to ignite lasting hormone balance and improve everything from PMS, period pain, and heavy periods to irregular and missing periods. She has developed education and offerings that empower women to reclaim their hormone health using a method that combines evidence-based information with simplicity and sass.

Her work has impacted the lives of tens of thousands of people around the world by addressing the root cause of what's really going on in their bodies and minds rather than treating just their symptoms. She passionately believes that the fundamentals to healing any hormone imbalance lie in an approach that addresses the unique physiology of every woman. This is essential to reclaiming and maintaining optimal health and vitality at any age.

Nicole is the founder of the [Fix Your Period](#) app, a first-of-its-kind experience that will give you a clear roadmap to achieving better periods. Fix Your Period is an interactive and dynamic platform that starts with you taking a [Hormone Health Assessment](#). From there you'll receive an easy to implement plan to support your hormones and overhaul your menstrual cycle.

Nicole is the founder of the [Institute for Menstrual Health](#), which offers training programs, mentorship and resources for an international community of women's health practitioners and coaches. Through its signature program the [Women's Hormone Health Certification](#), Nicole teaches other health practitioners and coaches the fundamentals of hormones, menstrual cycles and fertility.

Finally, Nicole is the host of [The Period Party](#), a top-rated podcast on Apple Podcasts, the co-author of [The Happy Balance](#), a recipe book filled with over 80 hormone balancing recipes, and has been called on as a women's health expert for sites such as [The Guardian](#), [Well+Good](#), [mindbodygreen](#) and [Healthline](#).