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GYN Clinical FAQs:

Q- At what age do you recommend coming in for first pelvic exam?

A- As girls grow into teens, it's important that they receive appropriate medical care. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) recommends that young women have their first visit with an OB/GYN between the ages of 13 and 15.

For most teens, the first visit will include an external examination of the genitals but not an internal examination of the reproductive organs, which is recommended beginning at age 21 for healthy women. However, if a patient has abnormal vaginal bleeding, painful periods, unusual vaginal secretions, or other problems that may be associated with her reproductive health, she may need a pelvic exam sooner.

Q- At what age do you recommend having your first mammogram?

A- The American Cancer Society and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend annual mammograms starting at age 40. The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends biennial screening mammography starting age 50. If you are at high risk of developing breast cancer due to personal or family history, mammograms before age 40 may be indicated, as well as other enhanced screening such as breast MRIs. Mammogram screening ends at age 75. Please discuss with your RGOA provider when you should have a mammogram.

Q- Do you recommend the HPV vaccine?

A- The HPV vaccine (Gardasil) is administered to females and males age 9-26 in three doses over a six month period. The Centers for Disease Control and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend routine HPV vaccination to girls at age 11 or 12. The vaccine is most effective when given before any exposure to HPV (i.e. before sexual activity) and produces higher antibody when given at this age compared to older ages. Girls and women age 13-26 can still receive the vaccine if they have not previously. The HPV vaccine is not recommended for pregnant women.

HPV can cause genital warts, precancerous lesions of the cervix & vagina, and cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine helps protect against diseases caused by HPV Types 6, 11, 16, and 18. These four types of HPV cause approximately 70% of cervical cancers and 90% of genital warts. However, because there are more than 100 types of HPV, the vaccine will not protect against all HPV types. The vaccine will also not protect against HPV types to which you have already been exposed. However, since exposure to all four HPV types prevented by the vaccine is unlikely, vaccination may still provide some benefit. Vaccination does not eliminate completely the chance of developing precancerous or cancerous lesions of the cervix, so it is still imperative that routine Pap testing continues.

The HPV vaccine is administered in three doses. The second dose is given two months after the first dose and the third dose is given six months after the first one. If the second or third doses are not given at those exact intervals, they can be given at any time and the earlier doses do not need to be repeated. Insurance companies will only pay for doses completed by the 27th birthday.

Q- Why do I need to come to an annual gyn exam if I'm not getting a pap smear this year?

A- From a medical perspective the annual well woman exam provides an excellent opportunity to not just monitor for certain health conditions but also to promote good health maintenance and allow an opportunity to learn more

about health related topics. The annual exam therefore is the foundation for wellness promotion, a time for assessments of need for screenings, immunizations and other health related treatments. Preventing disease and injury is the most cost-effective, common-sense way to improve and maintain your health.

Q - Do you have experience with advanced laparoscopic techniques? How do you determine the type of surgery to be performed?

A- RGOA physicians have expertise in both minimally invasive surgical techniques as well as robotic assisted surgeries. These types of approach avoid the large abdominal incisions, extended hospital stays and longer recovery times of the traditional open surgeries. Not all surgeries can be performed using a minimally invasive approach. Your RGOA gynecologic surgeon will work with you to determine the best approach for your age, overall health and specific condition.

Q- Do you offer contraceptive implants and Inter-uterine Devices (IUDs)?

A- RGOA providers are trained and certified to provide thorough contraceptive care including a variety of IUDs (Mirena, Skyla, Paragard) and the Nexplanon contraceptive implant.

Q -How can I communicate with the office regarding routine (non-urgent) questions or medication refill requests?

A- Multiple options exist for communicating with the RGOA offices. You may either call your specific office with issues or you can use our convenient patient portal system to assist you. The portal system even has a free app available for your smart phone. (link to app stores.)