

Amenorrhea – This is the lack of a menstrual period

Annual Exam – A yearly visit with a physician or advanced practice clinician that includes: a clinical breast exam, a bimanual pelvic exam, and possibly a pap smear. This is also a time to speak with the provider about gynecological issues.

Dysmenorrhea – Term for pain with menstrual periods. This can be caused by hormone levels during the menstrual cycle, or can be caused by other disorders such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, or adenomyosis. Menstrual cramping typically occurs at the beginning of a period, and will last from 1-2 days. Treatment of dysmenorrhea can include pain medication, birth control pills, lifestyle changes, or surgery.

Dyspareunia – This is a term to describe pain with intercourse

Fibrocystic Breast Changes – A common problem women have when they experience swollen, tender, or lumpy breasts. This most commonly occurs during childbearing years but can also occur after menopause in women that use hormone replacement therapy.

Gardasil – Gardasil is a series of three vaccinations given to young women and/or men to prevent the transmission of Human Papillomavirus (HPV). The vaccine covers the most common types of HPV that have been linked to cervical cancer and genital warts. It is typically covered by insurance only if the woman/man is under the age of 26.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) – A common virus that is spread through sexual contact, and is detected with a pap smear test. HPV can cause an abnormal pap smear result. There are many types of HPV, and there are two common high risk types (16 and 18) that have been linked to cervical cancer.

Endometriosis – This is a condition where the lining of the uterus (endometrium) grows outside of the uterus. The tissue can be found in many places, such as in the abdomen, on the bowel or bladder, and also on the fallopian tubes or ovaries. The endometrium that is outside of the uterus responds to changes in hormones, and bleeds/sheds during the woman's menstrual cycle. The most common symptom of endometriosis is pain, and the pain occurs where the tissue has grown. Women can experience pelvic pain, pain with intercourse, pain with bowel movements, or pain with urination. Women also may have heavy menstrual periods or have issues with infertility. Treatment for endometriosis can include anti-inflammatory pain medication, birth control pills, hormone treatment, and surgery.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) – These are medications used to control the symptoms of menopause. Symptoms of menopause can include hot flashes, night sweats, decreased libido, mood changes, sleep changes, bone loss, vaginal dryness, and pain with intercourse. Hormone therapy usually includes the use of estrogen and progesterone. HRT controls the main symptoms of menopause, and can protect against bone loss. Risks associated with HRT can include an overgrowth of the uterine lining, which leads to an increased risk of endometrial cancer. Progesterone in HRT can increase a woman's risk for breast cancer.

Infertility – This is the inability to become pregnant after 1 year of unprotected sexual intercourse, or 6 months of unprotected intercourse if over the age of 35. Infertility can be caused by many factors, both female and male. There is various testing options and treatment options for fertility. A evaluation with a provider is recommended if a woman has been unable to conceive for 6 months to 1 year.

Irregular Bleeding – Irregular bleeding is any vaginal bleeding not associated with the woman's normal monthly menstrual flow.

Libido – Desire to engage in sexual activity or “sex drive.” This can change throughout a woman’s lifetime from beginning of sexual activity through menopause.

Menarche – This marks the beginning of a woman’s menstrual cycle.

Menopause – Literally means the “end of monthly cycles”. Menopause is an event that typically (but not always) occurs in women in midlife, during their late 40s or early 50s, and it signals the end of the fertile phase of a woman’s life.

Menorrhagia – This is a term for heavy periods. Heavy periods can be common when a woman first begins menstruating and towards menopause. Menorrhagia can also be caused by other conditions, such as uterine fibroids. Treatment options for menorrhagia can include birth control, hormones, or surgery. Birth control options include cyclic oral contraceptives, continuous oral contraceptives, or an intrauterine device (IUD). Surgical treatments for heavy periods include an endometrial ablation or a hysterectomy.

Menses – This is another name for the monthly menstrual period

Ovarian Cyst – A sac filled with fluid or tissue located in the ovary. These can vary in size and type, and are common during a woman’s childbearing years. They occur during ovulation. A common symptom includes pelvic pain. They can be diagnosed by a pelvic ultrasound or during a manual pelvic exam. Treatment includes observation of the cyst, pain medication, or surgery depending on the size, type, and symptoms.

Ovulation – This is a time during the menstrual cycle when an egg is released from the ovary. It is typical for this to occur during the middle of a woman’s cycle. If sperm is present, there is the possibility of fertilization of the egg by sperm.

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) – A group of symptoms that occur before a woman has her menstrual cycle. These symptoms can include mood changes, difficulty sleeping, poor concentration, abdominal bloating, cramping, headaches, breast tenderness, fatigue, skin changes, and gastrointestinal symptoms. PMS can be treated with lifestyle changes, dietary changes, or medications. When the symptoms of PMS are severe or unrelieved with conservative treatment, this could indicate a woman has Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD).

Postmenopausal Bleeding (PMB) – This is vaginal bleeding that occurs over one year after a woman’s last menstrual period.

Stress Urinary Incontinence – Leakage of urine while coughing, sneezing, or exercising is known as stress urinary incontinence. Treatments for this can include kegel (pelvic floor) exercises, a pessary, medications, or surgery.

Vaginitis – An inflammation of the vagina that can cause a yeast or bacterial infection. The common causes of vaginitis are use of antibiotics, sexual intercourse, changes in hormone levels, and the use of spermicides or a douche.