

Request for a Female Doctor

There are many reasons why some women feel more comfortable with a female doctor or health carer, especially when they are pregnant, when they wish to discuss sexual health matters, or when it is necessary to have an examination.

We will try to meet your request to have a female doctor and this fact sheet will explain why it may not always be possible.

Can I see the female doctor who is on duty today?

When you come for your appointment, you may notice there are female doctors on duty and may wonder if it's possible to have your visit with them.

This may not be possible because each day we organise our medical teams so that care can be given as safely and as promptly as possible to all women who are attending the clinics. All our doctors are rostered according to their skills and experience and each doctor is scheduled to see a certain number of patients.

All our doctors and midwives, male and female, and our students are trained to be respectful and to treat your personal information confidentially. Doctors are also trained to understand and respect the concerns some women may have about cultural and gender issues.

When will it be possible to see a female doctor?

We are usually able to meet a request to see a female health professional in these situations:

- Pregnant women with no health problems can usually have most of their care during pregnancy with midwives, most of whom are female. However, if complications arise, it will be necessary to see the most appropriate doctor on duty.
- Pregnant women with some health problems may be able to have an appointment to see a female doctor, but only a limited number of these appointments can be reserved. For any number of reasons the doctor may not be available on the day and may be replaced by a male doctor.
- Alternatively, you may be seen by the midwives in Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) in partnership with a team of doctors who may or may not be female. However, if complications arise, it will be necessary to see the most appropriate doctor on duty.



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We cannot always meet a request to see a female doctor in these situations:

- If you have a medical problem requiring specialist care. There may only be one doctor available with the right skills and experience to care for you.
- If you have an urgent need for an appointment or care.
- If a doctor is called away for an emergency or is on sick leave.
- If you have a complicated birth requiring a doctor to attend.

We cannot meet a request for a female doctor in these places:

- Operating theatres: this includes elective surgery.
- Emergency situation, including Women's Assessment Service.

When you are worried about having a vaginal (internal) examination.

Pregnant women do not need to have a vaginal examination at routine check-ups. Ask the midwives how likely it is that you will need a vaginal examination.

You can choose not to have a vaginal examination although sometimes it is the only way for a doctor to understand your problem. Sometimes it is important that the same person you talk to about your health concerns also does the vaginal examination. In pregnancy a midwife may be able to examine you instead of the doctor.

If you do need to have a vaginal examination, you are able to have another person with you. This may be a friend or relative, midwife or other female staff member.

Remember

- Although we can sometimes meet your request for a female doctor, it is important that you know that we cannot guarantee a female doctor.

The Consumer feedback Coordinator can be contacted by phone (08) 8161 6710 with any concerns you may have about your care while attending the hospital.

For more information

Women's Outpatients Department, 1st Floor,
Queen Victoria Building (Zone F)
Women's and Children's Hospital
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