

Preparing for your visit with your Healthcare provider

It can be anxiety provoking and awkward to discuss your most intimate body parts with your healthcare provider and undergo a pelvic exam when your pelvis hurts. Let's talk about how to get the most out of your appointment to truly get to the bottom of what is causing your pelvic pain symptoms and create an appropriate treatment plan for you.

1. Typical Topics at an appointment with a pelvic pain specialist are intercourse, bowels, bladder and pelvic discomfort or pain. Pelvic Pain specialists hear about these things all day every day so please do not hold back in discussing even the littlest details about your sexual life and toileting habits. It's super important to be open and honest because every detail matters in understanding what is going on with you.
2. Jotting down bullet points about your symptoms and prior treatments before you go into the appointment is super helpful for everyone!
3. Pelvic pain specialists really like to hear about specific chief complaints and when each complaint started. Try and remember the timing of what is going on as best as you can.
4. Bring Support! Feel free to bring your spouse, partner, friend, or family member for support.
5. Be sure to communicate to your pelvic pain specialist if something hurts during the exam, the more communication the better.
6. Be sure to bring records of imaging studies that have been done in the past, as well as medications and/or doses that have been tried. That helps us to come to a diagnosis and plan easier and helps us in understanding what medications may or may not work for you going forward.
7. Please do not suffer in silence if you believe you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, or any other mental health conditions. There are mental health professionals with specific training in pelvic pain who are skilled in helping you navigate this, and we have found that this can positively affect outcomes. Trauma and history of trauma, whether physical or emotional also has a significant impact on pain and healing, you don't have to talk about it on your first visit, but we are here to support you on your journey, and this is a safe space for you to share.
8. It may be helpful for some individuals to know that most evaluations with a pelvic pain specialist will involve an internal rectal and/or vaginal exam in order to assess the muscles and nerves of your pelvic floor. If this something that makes you uncomfortable, please let your practitioner know, and they will work around this.
9. If you have had any tests done, bloodwork, imaging, hormone panel, Gi/stool testing, please bring that with you. This all contributes to our understanding of what may be contributing to your pain.
10. Please let us know if there is or has been any other injuries in your past, surgeries, any nagging pains that seemed to be separate from your pelvic pain. We want to get the whole picture and frequently something going on in another part of the body can have a role in driving the pelvic pain.
11. Also please come with questions. What do you want to get out of this appointment, what are your goals? Where have you been left confused by other practitioners? We are also here to educate, to help you understand the process and all the factors that affect pelvic pain. We will do our best to try to help answer, and if not, we will do our best to help you find the answers you are seeking.