



## C-Gen 7

# Guidelines for Gynaecological Examinations and Procedures

Clinical practices in obstetrics and gynaecology will, of necessity, usually involve gynaecological examination of women. This process is formal and potentially intimidating to women, some of whom may have suffered various degrees of physical or sexual abuse during their lives.

Increasingly new areas of medical care have resulted in diagnostic processes becoming more physically invasive, including vaginal ultrasound, IVF procedures, endometrial sampling procedures and urodynamic testing.

Doctors should consider the information provided by women, and listen and respond sensitively to their questions and concerns.

Where examination is indicated, doctors should ensure that:

- an adequate explanation is provided about the nature of an examination and the information that it will provide;
- the patient has the opportunity to decline examination;
- permission is obtained, especially for breast and/or pelvic examination;
- privacy is provided for disrobing;
- suitable cover is provided during examination, for example, gown or cover sheet, and
- a chaperone is available to attend any patient undergoing physical examination when requested, irrespective of the gender of the doctor.

With respect to examination of young women and children, please see the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Policy [Genital Examinations in Girls and Young Women: A Clinical Practice Guideline](#).

## References

1. Code of Ethical Practice. *Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*, November 2006.
2. Patient Examination Guidelines, *Australian Medical Association Position Statement*, 1996.
3. Gynaecological Examinations: Guidelines for Specialist Practice. *Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*, July 2002.

4. Clinical Standards. Advice on Planning the Service in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. *Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*, July 2002.
5. Intimate examinations: use of chaperones in community based family planning clinics *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*. 2000, 107(1), 130-132.
6. [Genital Examinations in Girls and Young Women: A Clinical Practice Guideline](#). The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP). August 2009

**Disclaimer**

This College Statement is intended to provide general advice to Practitioners. The statement should never be relied on as a substitute for proper assessment with respect to the particular circumstances of each case and the needs of each patient.

The statement has been prepared having regard to general circumstances. It is the responsibility of each Practitioner to have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this statement in each case. In particular, clinical management must always be responsive to the needs of the individual patient and the particular circumstances of each case.

This College statement has been prepared having regard to the information available at the time of its preparation, and each Practitioner must have regard to relevant information, research or material which may have been published or become available subsequently.

Whilst the College endeavours to ensure that College statements are accurate and current at the time of their preparation, it takes no responsibility for matters arising from changed circumstances or information or material that may have become available after the date of the statements.