Keeping You Comfortable During Gynecology Tests and Treatments

For Outpatient Procedures

This handout explains the ways that we can help you be comfortable during same-day procedures for your reproductive health.

People feel pain differently. Our clinics offer a few different ways to support comfort and reduce pain before, during, and after gynecology procedures.

- Some options are standard. They are there for you whenever possible.
- You can ask for some other options during your procedure.
- A few other options may need to be planned with your care team ahead of time.

Note: This sheet is for procedures done when you are awake, like having a Pap smear or an IUD inserted. It is **not** for procedures done when you are asleep.

Words to know

Gynecology—medical care having to do with the female sex and reproductive organs

Oral medicine—medicine you take by mouth

Procedure— a test, treatment, or surgery done by a doctor, nurse, or other member of your care team

Reproductive—related to having babies

Topical medicine—medicine that is put directly on the part that hurts, like creams or ointments

Every patient deserves respectful, compassionate, and thoughtful care. Gynecology visits can be hard for many different reasons. Planning ahead with your care team can make it a little easier.

Please tell your care team **before** the procedure if you:

- Have had a bad experience with this kind of treatment in the past
- Can feel overwhelmed or disturbed by certain feelings or sensations
- Have had trauma in the past that makes things harder for you
- Want to talk about getting a prescription for pain or anxiety medicine.

Please let us know **during** the procedure if you:

- Feel pain or discomfort
- Feel anxious or overwhelmed

You are always in control, and you can ask to stop at any time.

Standard comfort methods

We offer these options to all patients, except when the care team says they would be unsafe. During your procedure...

- We explain what we are doing, step-by-step.
- We give you words of support and encouragement.
- We can adjust how you are sitting or lying down so that you are comfortable.
- We can pause or stop the procedure at any time.

For informational purposes only. Not to replace the advice of your health care provider. Copyright © 2026 Fairview Health Services. All rights reserved. Clinically reviewed by Fairview Women's Services. SMARTworks 526367 – REV 04/26.

Oral pain medicine (Over-the-Counter)

Try to take over-the-counter pain medicine about an hour before your visit. If you're not sure what to take, ask a nurse before the day of your procedure. Your health and other medicines you take can affect which pain medicine is best for you. Do **not** take aspirin. Choose from these pain medicines unless your care team tells you to take something different:

- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, or generic) or Naproxen (Aleve or generic)
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol or generic)

Breathing and relaxation

Relaxation methods can help with pain. Here are some you can use during your procedure. Ask your care team if you would like to learn more about any of them.

- Slow, deep breathing
- Saying what you are feeling out loud when something bothers you
- Reminding yourself to relax when things feels intense. You could choose a word, action, or object that reminds you to relax. For example, if you feel your hands curling into fists or your toes curling, it could be a sign that your stress level is rising. This could remind you to loosen up your muscles or do some deep breathing.

Symptom care

Your care team can offer these options to reduce discomfort during your visit:

- Warm or cool packs for comfort or cramp relief
- Water, juice, or light snacks if you feel:
  - Lightheaded
  - Shaky
  - Sick to your stomach (nauseated)

  Note: Try to eat a light meal before your visit, unless your care team tells you not to.

Options you can ask for

Many people find these options helpful, but we may not offer them unless you ask. So, please ask if you would like them.

Sensory options

- Adjusted or dimmed lighting, when available
- Playing music in the room
- Using your own headphones or earbuds
- Less talk during the procedure, or ongoing description of what we're doing—your choice

Topical numbing medicine

You can ask us to put pain relieving medicine (lidocaine) on your cervix or vaginal area before we start. This can help with pain, but you may still feel some pressure or cramping.

Pain medicine shot

At some clinics: You can ask for a lidocaine shot to numb the area. This can be used for inserting birth control, biopsies, or procedures on your cervix. The shot may sting for a while before the area goes numb.

Options to plan ahead of time

Here are some reasons to talk to your care team early:

- To get all your questions answered
- To learn what to do and what to expect on the day of the procedure
- To have time to fill any prescriptions you need
- To have time to sign any consent forms needed
- To learn how to take your pain medicine safely