



What women want and need from healthcare

Women have a lot on their plates. Careers and relationships fight for priority status. In most cases, they're the go-to parent, the manager of the family home and activities. And they're the first call when parents or elderly family members need help. It's a lot to juggle.

But who should take priority, especially when it comes to health needs? Themselves.

There's a dizzying array of ways women should take care of themselves, starting with prioritizing health and well-being.¹ This includes eating well, sleeping well and regular physical activity. It also means managing stress, practicing mindfulness, finding joy and more. But that's just the start.



Consider mental health

Is it any wonder women experience high rates of emotional distress, depression, anxiety, stress and burnout?² Recognizing symptoms can be hard. Actions that can help you be in touch with your feelings include:



Taking personal time
(self-care)



Sharing thoughts and feelings in
a journal or with a licensed coun-
selor



Developing a meditation or
mindfulness practice

The phases of life

Women go through distinct physical phases of life. Each requires specific preventive healthcare. Screening and counseling, including well-woman and reproductive care, are targeted depending on one's age and stage. Some broad guidelines to follow:³



Adolescence (19 & under)

A family care provider, or pediatrician, can offer support and guidance. Topics include menstruation, general well-being, age-appropriate vaccinations and sexual health.



Early adulthood (20s-30s)

A primary care provider or gynecologist can assess general health and risk factors. Focus is on sexual health, breast and cervical cancer screenings, birth control and age-appropriate vaccinations.



Perimenopause (40s)

A primary care provider or gynecologist can offer guidance on screenings and well-woman care. This includes breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings, skin checks, cholesterol and A1c tests and more.



Menopause and postmenopause (50s-plus)

A primary care provider, gynecologist or menopause specialist can address the previously mentioned screenings. Discussions may also include bone density, mobility and memory assessments, sleep disorders and age-appropriate vaccines.

Be your own best health advocate

Women's health concerns should be a priority for proper diagnosis and treatment. Sadly, gender bias exists everywhere, even in healthcare. Medical "gaslighting" is a real thing.⁴ It happens when a healthcare provider discounts a patient's complaints. They may make them feel it's all in their head. To prevent this from happening, it helps to be prepared for medical appointments.

Consider:

- Bringing a journal documenting your symptoms.
- Researching what you are experiencing. Be familiar with the terms and be able to express your concerns.
- Preparing a short list of questions for your provider.
- Asking a friend to join you for support, help take notes and observe.

Women's healthcare affects us all. Be aware and supportive.

Learn how Livongo can help support you on your wellness journey.
To sign up or learn more, go to Go.Livongo.com.

¹<https://www.harvard.edu/in-focus/healthy-living/>

²<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-aftermath-of-trauma/202503/navigating-the-mental-strain-of-gendered-caregiving>

³<https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/2021/0215/p209.html>

⁴<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/what-to-do-about-medical-gaslighting>