Practical Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology
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Edited by

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Preface

I’m assuming that you’re a “clinician” – a term that I use to mean someone who provides clinical care for individuals – and in the case that you’re reading this book, for young girls and adolescent young women. You may be a family physician, a family nurse practitioner, a general gynecologist, a pediatrician, an obstetrician-gynecologist, an internist, a specialist in adolescent medicine, a physician’s assistant, a registered nurse, a certified nurse midwife, or a clinician of another stripe/persuasion/training. I specifically don’t intend for the audience to be physicians only, as I know that many other varieties of clinicians provide care for girls and teens. I welcome your interest in caring for young girls and adolescents. You may regularly provide care for teens, but want to know more about their gynecologic care, as do many of my colleagues in adolescent medicine. You may provide gynecologic care for adults, but want to learn more about the gynecologic conditions that affect young girls that you see much less frequently, as is the case with my colleagues who are general obstetrician-gynecologists.

I want to remind those who do not regularly provide pediatric care for teens that there are really two parties to keep in mind with the pediatric age group: the designated patient and her parent (usually her mother or other female adult guardian). The challenges of providing the necessary confidential care to our adolescent patients, who live within the context of their family, are many. It’s not an easy line for a clinician to walk, and thus several chapters in this text address issues such as the initial consultation visit with an adolescent, confidentiality, and even legal issues for the care of adolescents.

I would strongly encourage you to review those chapters in the section on Adolescent Health as a place to start reading, if you intend to provide gynecologic care for adolescents. This section addresses common issues for all adolescents, even those who don’t present with a specific gynecologic problem. For example, Chapter 20 on Adolescent sexuality provides important background on adolescent development. Chapter 19 provides essential legal information on the provision of adolescent healthcare. Another section that will be helpful is Appendix 1, Essential Information, which includes a number of tables that will be relevant to an understanding of adolescent health. Tables on adolescent development, normal menstrual parameters, sexual history taking, psychosocial assessment using the HEEADSSS tool, and indications for a pelvic examination provide a wealth of information summarized in easy to reference tables.

Similarly, providing care for a young girl, particularly one with vulvovaginal symptoms, will be facilitated by pre-reading this Essential Information prior to going to the chapter on a specific symptom or condition.

But after you’ve read these initial chapters and reviewed the Essential Information, then in all likelihood, you will be reviewing the book with concerns about a specific patient with a specific gynecologic problem. I would first direct you to the appropriate section of the book by age – prepubertal or adolescent. Within the age groupings, each section is further organized by either the presenting sign or symptom or by the specific gynecologic condition that occurs in that group. For example, if you are looking for what conditions may cause vaginal discharge in a prepubertal girl, you would look in Section 1 for prepubertal conditions, and then in Part 2 under symptoms and signs. You will then find information about the various conditions that can cause discharge. Alternatively, if you have an adolescent patient whom you have diagnosed as having a specific condition, such as a vulvovaginal yeast infection, and you want to read further about the management of this particular condition, you would look in Section 3 for adolescents, and then under Part 4, gynecologic conditions in adolescent girls.

Finally Appendix 2 includes useful web resources for adolescents, for parents, and for clinicians.

Overall, I hope that the organization of the book will make it both a useful text that will provide background information to allow you to better provide care to teens and young girls, as well as a handy reference that will answer specific questions about girls
with specific gynecologic symptoms, signs, or conditions.

The preparation of this book has been quite a project, involving the hard work and dedication of many medical colleagues. My friends and colleagues who have so generously contributed their knowledge to the content of this book have, collectively, many, many years of clinical experience. They are the true experts on each topic, and they have taught me a great deal. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of them. In addition, the many individuals at Wiley-Blackwell have contributed their professionalism, feedback, guidance, skills, and expert management from the very beginning of the project with the conception of an idea for a book, through the long gestation period of communications with contributors, editing, and finally the birth of the book through the work of the production staff. They have my gratitude and thanks. Of course I also thank my husband who has seen my free time consumed by this project, yet who has supported me faithfully and lovingly in so many ways. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, I thank my patients and their parents. They continue to teach me daily.

I welcome any thoughts, suggestions, and feedback on this book. We share the goals of providing excellent, knowledgeable medical care that the young girls and developing young women whom we see in our clinical practices deserve. As clinicians, we are privileged to help guide them toward a healthier future.

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