Dr. Nathan Guerette on Why Women Shouldn't Skip Health Checkups

The Virginia urogynecologist highlights the importance of regular women's health visits, open conversations about symptoms, and recognizing changes that shouldn't be ignored.



Richmond, Virginia Nov 22, 2026 (Issuewire.com**)** - Between work, family responsibilities, and everyday demands, routine medical appointments can easily fall to the bottom of a woman's priority list. However, regular checkups provide an opportunity to discuss health concerns that might otherwise go unnoticed or unaddressed.

Dr. Nathan Guerette, a board-certified urogynecologist and founder of the Intimate Wellness Institute of Virginia, is bringing attention to the importance of making women's health a regular priority, particularly when it comes to pelvic health concerns that can be uncomfortable to discuss.

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), women should continue attending regular well-woman visits even when they don't need a Pap test or pelvic examination. These appointments allow patients and healthcare providers to review symptoms, discuss preventive care, and address concerns that may develop over time.

Why Regular Women's Health Checkups Matter

Many women associate gynecological appointments with pregnancy, reproductive health, or routine cancer screenings. However, women's healthcare extends well beyond these areas.

Changes in bladder control, pelvic discomfort, and other symptoms can affect women at different stages of life. Some develop gradually, making them easy to dismiss or accept as normal.

For example, occasional bladder leakage during exercise, coughing, or laughing may seem like a minor inconvenience. However, persistent symptoms can sometimes indicate an underlying pelvic floor condition that deserves medical attention.

ACOG notes that urinary incontinence is a common condition among women and that evaluation can help determine its cause and available treatment options.

Regular visits create opportunities to bring up these issues before they begin interfering significantly with daily activities.

"I have always been drawn to areas of medicine where you can make a very real difference in someone's day-to-day life," Guerette has said. "Pelvic health problems can affect confidence, comfort, relationships, and independence, so the impact of treatment can go far beyond one procedure."

Common Symptoms Women Shouldn't Ignore

Not every change in pelvic health indicates a serious medical condition. However, symptoms that are new, persistent, worsening, or affecting everyday activities are worth discussing with a healthcare professional.

Some concerns women may benefit from raising during an appointment include:

- Frequent or unexpected bladder leakage
- A feeling of pressure or heaviness in the pelvic area
- Difficulty emptying the bladder
- Persistent pelvic discomfort
- Changes in bowel habits or pelvic function
- Pain or discomfort during intimacy

These symptoms can have different causes, and their presence does not automatically mean surgery or another major treatment is necessary.

The purpose of seeking medical advice is to understand what may be happening and whether further evaluation is appropriate.

Making Women's Health Conversations More Comfortable

One reason pelvic health concerns may go unaddressed is that they involve topics patients find embarrassing or difficult to explain.

Unlike a visible injury or a familiar illness, symptoms involving bladder control, pelvic support, or intimate discomfort may be kept private for years.

That hesitation can make communication between patients and healthcare providers especially important.

"You can have the most advanced treatment available, but the patient still needs to feel comfortable walking through the door and talking about what she is experiencing," Guerette has explained. "These are sensitive issues. The way you listen and communicate matters."

Women can prepare for appointments by keeping track of symptoms, noting when they occur, and writing down questions beforehand. Even a brief conversation can help determine whether a concern requires additional attention.

Building Better Health Habits at Every Age

Regular women's health visits remain important through adulthood, including after menopause. The specific screenings and examinations recommended can change depending on age, personal history, symptoms, and individual risk factors.

A yearly well-woman visit does not necessarily require a pelvic examination. According to ACOG, the decision to perform one should reflect a woman's medical history, symptoms, and discussion with her healthcare provider.

For Dr. Guerette, whose work has focused on women's pelvic health since completing specialized fellowship training at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in 2005, the larger message is about recognizing the value of everyday health concerns.

Women do not need to wait until symptoms become severe before asking questions. Understanding what is normal for their bodies, noticing meaningful changes, and maintaining open communication with healthcare professionals are practical steps toward better long-term health.

As conversations about women's healthcare continue to expand, regular appointments remain an important opportunity to address concerns that might otherwise be overlooked.

About Dr. Nathan Guerette

Dr. Nathan Guerette is a board-certified urogynecologist specializing in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. He completed fellowship training at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and previously served as Director of Urogynecology at Pennsylvania Hospital. In 2009, he founded the Intimate Wellness Institute of Virginia, a specialized women's pelvic health practice serving the Richmond, Virginia, region. His career includes pelvic reconstructive surgery, clinical research, medical education, and the development of advanced treatment approaches for women's pelvic health conditions.

Media Contact

Dr. Nathan Guerette

*********@drnathanguerette.com

https://drnathanguerettemd.com/

Source : Dr. Nathan Guerette

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