

Reproductive Health Care for Women with Developmental Disabilities

MAP to Access

Developmental disabilities include developmental delay, intellectual and learning impairments, autism spectrum disorders, Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, and communication impairments. Women with developmental disabilities need the same basic and reproductive health care as women without disabilities.

- Most women with developmental disabilities live independently and direct their own lives. They are often experts on their bodies. Respect and use this input.
- Basic health care must include pap smears, mammograms, and all other regular exams.
- Accessible medical equipment, such as adjustable exam tables, enable quality health care.
- Reproductive health care for developmentally disabled women must address sex, birth control choices, AIDS and other STDs, pregnancy, motherhood, and menopause.
- Sexual problems or concerns may or may not be related to disability. Think flexibly and together with your patient.
- Watch out for and report signs of abuse. Women and teens with developmental disabilities experience a higher rate of sexual abuse and sexual assault.
- We need you to be trained in the social and personal issues of disability.
- We need providers and facilities to accept Medicaid.



Adjustable Exam Table

Learn more:

- **Center for Research on Women with Disabilities**
www.bcm.edu/crowd
- **The Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions**
www.cdihp.org
- **Importance of Accessible Examination Tables, Chairs and Weight Scales**
www.cdihp.org/products.html
- **Encyclopedia of Nursing and Allied Health.**
www.enotes.com/nursing-encyclopedia/sexuality-disability
- **Sexuality and Disability**
www.springer.com/psychology/community+psychology/journal/11195
- **Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health for Persons with Disabilities**
www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/general/9789241598682/en/
- **Women with Disabilities Center, Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago**
www.ric.org/conditions/community/women-disabilities-center/index.aspx



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