

WHAT TO EXPECT

During Your Physical Exam

Your health care provider's goal is to assess your health safely, respectfully and professionally. Your comfort, consent and understanding are of the utmost importance.

What is a sensitive examination?

A sensitive examination involves private or intimate areas of the body or situations where a patient may feel especially vulnerable, including examinations of the breast, pelvic area, genitalia, prostate, or rectum, or exams requiring undressing.

Sensitive examinations are performed only when medically appropriate and related to your care.

Common aspects of an examination include:

- Discussing your medical history, concerns, or symptoms
- Checking vital signs
- Listening to the heart, lungs, neck, or abdomen
- Examining areas related to your concern
- Touching to feel for abnormalities (such as the neck, chest, or abdomen)
- Lightly holding, turning, or adjusting a body part during examination
- Tapping areas of the body to assess organ characteristics

You have the right to:

- Understand the exam - your provider should explain what will happen and why before it begins.
- Give or refuse consent - you have the right to agree to or decline any examination or part of an examination after your provider explains it to you.
- Request an observer - you may request a trained observer during any sensitive examination.
- Decline an observer - you may choose not to have an observer present. If your healthcare provider determines that an observer should be present, or if an acceptable observer is not available, the examination may need to be postponed or rescheduled.
- Privacy and dignity - appropriate draping will be provided to minimize exposure, and privacy will be provided when dressing or undressing
- Ask questions - you may ask questions about procedures, findings, or next steps at any time.
- Stop the exam - you may ask to pause or stop the examination at any time if something feels uncomfortable or unclear.
- Receive respectful treatment - you will be treated with respect and professionalism regardless of gender, age, race, background, or identity.

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING

Any Concerns Regarding Misconduct

Recognizing Misconduct:

Hackensack Meridian *Health* is committed to providing care in a safe, respectful, and professional environment. Concerns related to misconduct during medical examinations are uncommon; however, we believe it is important that patients understand their rights and know how to raise concerns if something does not feel appropriate.

We take patient safety seriously and want you to feel informed and supported throughout your care. If you experience or observe behavior during an examination that feels inappropriate or inconsistent with professional care, you are encouraged to report your concern.

Examples of possible misconduct may include:

- Suggesting examinations not related to your medical concern
- Making sexual or inappropriate comments or jokes
- Inappropriate comments or prolonged attention to body parts
- Asking personal questions unrelated to medical care
- Offering gifts or favors
- Attempting contact outside the clinical setting for non-medical reasons
- Not allowing privacy while dressing or undressing
- Performing sensitive examinations without medical need or appropriate clinical standards
- Touching that appears sexual or inappropriate

You can report a concern through:

Hackensack Meridian *Health* (HMH)
Consumer Services: 848-888-4538 or
consumer.services@hmhn.org

New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners
<https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/sexual-misconduct-complaint>

You can access support services by contacting:

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)

RAINN.org (Spanish: RAINN.org/es) -
24/7 online chat

National Sexual Assault Hotline
800-656-HOPE (4673)