



healing the world one book at a time

Village of Care Press

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It's Not in Your Head

- 80% of women agree their doctors don't listen to them (NIHR, 2023)
- 45% of women are uncomfortable talking to their doctor about their health (PatientPoint, 2022)
- 29% of women say doctors ignore or dismiss their symptoms (KFF, 2023)

Knowledge Is Power

After reading this book, you will be a Fearless Informed Female!

- ✓ I know the medical terms for my parts "down there"
- ✓ I can understand my doctor and they can understand me
- ✓ I know what to expect in medical exams for female health
- ✓ I don't need to be afraid
- ✓ I know how my body works, and what isn't normal
- ✓ I won't let my doctor dismiss my symptoms as imaginary

Dr. Robert Pushkin and Dr. Sharon Pushkin, a father-daughter team, are Board certified OBGYNs. They shared a private practice for more than 21 years; together have more than 50 years of experience working in women's health and delivered more than 8000 babies. They have written this book with their patients in mind. Using simple and medically accurate terms, they give you the knowledge you need to advocate for yourself with your doctor. This empowers you with medical knowledge, so you can live your healthiest life with your doctor as your ally!

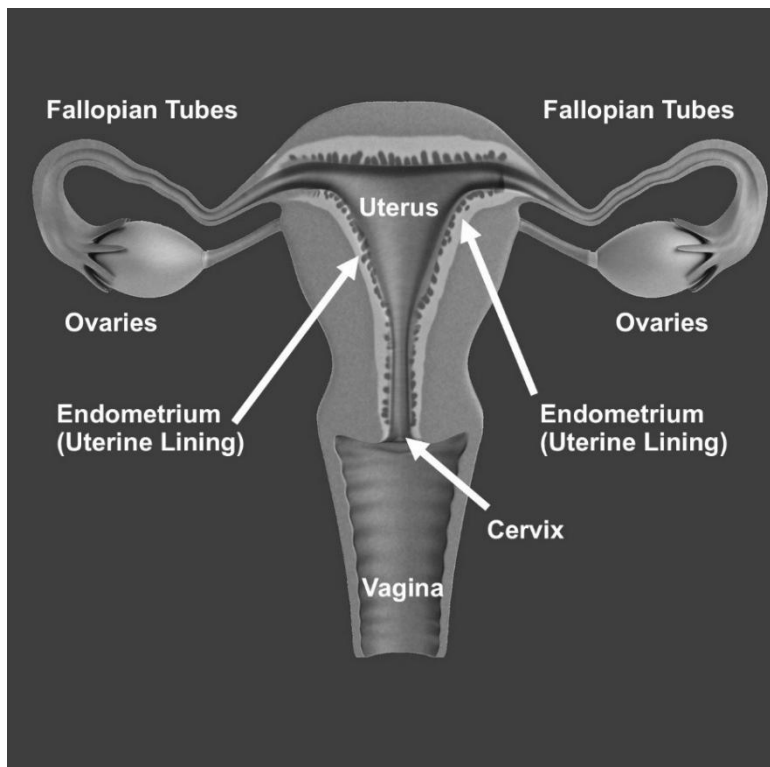
Chapter 1

Your Reproductive System

We promise that we will not use a lot of technical jargon in this book and we wrote it as though we were talking to you. However, you must know a few technical terms to understand your reproductive system and your menstrual cycle. First you need to know the proper medical terms for your reproductive system (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Your Reproductive System



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Vagina

Your vagina is the canal that connects the outside of your body to your uterus. When you have sexual intercourse, this is where a man puts his penis. This is how sperm gets to your uterus when you get pregnant. When you are pregnant, this is where

the baby comes out if you have a vaginal birth; for pregnant women, this is often called the birth canal.

Cervix

You can think of your cervix as the doorway between your vagina and your uterus. It is normally tightly closed and protected by a thick mucus to keep your reproductive tract sterile. However, the cervix does allow menstrual blood out during your period, which we talk about later. You have two fallopian tubes and they let sperm in if you have intercourse without using a condom.

Uterus

The uterus, or womb, is where a fetus grows if you are pregnant. The uterus is an extraordinarily strong muscle; during childbirth, the uterus contracts and pushes the baby out the birth canal.

Endometrium

The endometrium, or uterine lining, is the mucus membrane inside the uterus. It thickens with blood every month preparing for a fertilized egg to implant itself. You ovulate every month and if the egg is not fertilized by a sperm, the endometrium sheds the lining and starts again. This is what we call “getting your period.”

Ovaries

You have two ovaries that produce eggs on alternating months. Your ovaries also produce female sex hormones (estrogen and progesterone) that your body needs for sexual development (puberty), menstruation (your period) and reproduction (pregnancy).

Fallopian Tubes

You have two fallopian tubes; each one helps connect an ovary to your uterus. When an ovary produces an egg, it travels through the fallopian tube to the uterus where it can be fertilized by a man’s sperm if you have sexual intercourse.

Related to your reproductive system are two nearby systems. Your bladder stores urine, which is carried outside the body by the urethra when you urinate; because the bladder does not have a cervix, it is easy to get a bladder infection and many women will see their gynecologist for treatment. But the bladder and urethra are not part of your reproductive system.

Similarly, your rectum stores feces, which are pushed outside the body through your anus. But the rectum and anus are not part of your reproductive system.

