



The 10 Principles for Women Using Male Doctors

As per the repeated request of many *nashim tzidkaniyos*, we will conclude with the key guidelines related to women seeing male doctors. The following are ten principles presented by HaRav Shmuel Vosner *zt"l*, author of *Shevet Halevi* and preeminent halachic authority who was accepted across the spectrum of

Yiddishkeit (*Shevet Halevi* 4:167).

Understandably, these principles are useful for general guidance and awareness, but one should still consult a *posek* for practical guidance on a case-by-case basis.

(The principles have been slightly tweaked in adaptation to English. It is

beneficial to see the original responsum as well.)

1. Unless it is necessary for health reasons, a woman should not regularly be seen by a male doctor, as there are many potential pitfalls related to forbidden physical contact. (See *Shevet Halevi* 3:183)
2. When it is necessary to go to a doctor, a woman should choose to see a female doctor whenever possible.
3. If it is not possible for her to see a female doctor, or the male doctor is more reputable or experienced, it is not forbidden for her to see a male doctor.
4. Under no circumstances should a woman see a doctor who is known (i.e., has a reputation) to engage in unrefined / inappropriate behavior.
5. In any case, if a woman does see a male doctor, she should go during his official office hours when there are typically many women in the office. At those times, there is less risk of inappropriate behavior. The doctor, as well, is more distracted by work when there is a constant flow of patients (and therefore has less time to focus on non-health-related matters).
6. In all of the cases mentioned above, where it is necessary for a woman to see a male doctor, it is preferable that she be accompanied by an *ehrliche* woman to the visit, who should wait for her in the waiting room.
7. In my opinion, it is not so preferable that a husband be the one who accompanies his wife and waits in the waiting room, as there are typically women there who behave and/or are dressed inappropriately. This can be detrimental rather than beneficial.

8. Although, usually, one cannot ensure that *hilchos yichud* are optimally adhered to in a doctor's office, one should at least make sure that the door to the examination room is not fully closed. If that's not possible, the door should, at the very least, remain unlocked.
 9. Aside from issues pertaining to *hilchos yichud*, doctors typically advise women in a manner that goes against the Torah, such as how long to wait between having children. Therefore, women should bear in mind not to take such advice at face value, and should consult and follow the guidance of a competent halachic authority.
 10. A woman should not engage in excessive conversation with the doctor during the visit, as well as after the visit, beyond what is necessary for her care.
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