

## SEXUAL HEALTH COUNSELLING BY PHYSICIANS

*This Policy Statement was reviewed by the Social and Sexual Issues Committee and approved by the Executive and Council of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) in March 2003.*

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1. Physicians should establish referral networks for specialized sexual health care when needs exceed their own competence. The referral networks may include workers skilled in:
  - contraceptive education and care
  - prevention, diagnosis, treatment, education, and follow-up of sexually transmitted diseases
  - preventive education and therapeutic intervention for victims of sexual coercion
  - assistance for patients experiencing sexual dysfunction
2. An understanding of, education in, and treatment of sexual health matters are important and necessary components of medical practice. Physicians should assess the sexual health status and sexual health needs of patients as an essential part of their care.
3. Physicians should provide patients with current information regarding sexual health.
4. Physicians should acknowledge their patients' feelings, attitudes, and norms that may be obstacles to the achievement of individual sexual health and should use this information to assist the patient to establish realistic goals.
5. Physicians should provide patients the opportunity to learn the skills needed to achieve personal goals for sexual health.
6. Physicians should participate in continuing education to maintain knowledge and practice competence with respect to sexual health.

7. Physicians should be aware and respectful of their patients' values and lifestyles with respect to sexual behaviour.
8. Physicians should be aware of how their own values may influence their practices.

*This Policy Statement replaces Policy Statement No. 50 dated October 1996.*

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