



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

In affiliation with
NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital

Welcome to **Gynecologic Oncology at Columbia University Medical Center!** We hope that this informational letter is helpful to you. We strive to take excellent care of you.

Our phone number is **212-305-3410**. Our fax number is **212-305-3412**. Our office is open Monday through Friday 9:00 am – 4:30 pm. Our answering service is available 24 hours/7 days per week by calling our main phone number. Our website is **www.columbiaobgyn.org**.

Along with your physician, the following is a list of the staff members with whom you may interact:

Katie Elliott, NP	Nurse Practitioner
Cirah Mira-Falkenstern, RN	Registered Nurse
Yarenys Collado	Front Desk/Surgical Coordinator
Katia Collado	Front Desk/Radiology Scheduling
Michelle Guzman	Medical Assistant
Jessica Torres	Medical Assistant
Liat Kabel	Practice Manager
Reena Vattakalam	Clinical Research Coordinator

We also have a dedicated team of fellows, residents, and medical students that may be involved in your care either as an inpatient or in the office.

The following are some of the most frequently asked questions about our practice:

Where to park:

There is a parking lot on the corner of 165th Street and Fort Washington Avenue (southwest corner) directly across the street from the Herbert Irving Pavilion where our office is located. You may also valet your car with the main hospital's parking located at 177 Fort Washington Avenue that is located just north of the Herbert Irving Pavilion. There is some free street parking available depending on the day and time of your appointment.

Where do I go?

You should enter the Herbert Irving Pavilion and inform the welcome/security desk of your appointment. You will then take the elevators to the 8th floor where our suite is located and follow signs to Room 837.

What to expect during your appointment:

After checking in for your appointment and possibly completing any required forms, you will take a seat back in the main waiting area by the main elevators. A medical assistant will then call you into the room when the doctor is ready to see you. One of our nurses will come in to get your history and update any medical information you may have for the physician. The physician will come in, review your records, and perform a physical exam. You will then have a discussion about your diagnosis, proposed plan and any questions you have will be answered.

Why a physical exam is pertinent at the time of your office visit/consultation:

It is extremely important to perform a physical exam during your visit. The physician will review your medical records and your personal and family history as well as any relevant imaging studies. A physical exam is a necessary and vital component in determining the best course of treatment.

What to expect if surgery is needed:

After you have spoken with the physician and agreed upon the type of surgery you require you will then meet with a surgical coordinator. Most often, you can obtain all of the required preoperative testing that same day. You will fill out the necessary paperwork and a date for surgery will be discussed and scheduled. If it is not convenient for you to get your preoperative testing the same day as your appointment, an appointment will be scheduled for you in the near future. You will also be given a surgery packet with more detailed information.

What if pathology or cytology slides need to be read at Columbia University?

If you plan on obtaining treatment here at Columbia University and have pathology or cytology from an outside laboratory, the slides from that procedure usually require review at Columbia to confirm the diagnosis prior to receiving surgical or chemotherapy treatment. These slides will be obtained directly from the outside laboratory and sent directly to Columbia University. You will need to sign a medical release form granting permission to the outside laboratory to send the slides to us. You may also get the slides directly from the outside laboratory and bring them to our office. We will then send the slides to the pathology/cytology department at Columbia University.

What if radiology studies are needed?

After you have spoken with the physician and agree upon the type of studies you require, you will then meet with our staff, who will coordinate the necessary radiology appointment and preauthorization if needed. We have several locations you can choose from depending on the study you require.

What if chemotherapy is needed?

After you have spoken with your doctor and agree upon the type of treatment you require, you will meet with one of our nursing personnel who will discuss your chemotherapy schedule in detail. You will usually see your physician in our office before each chemotherapy treatment that will be administered in the infusion center upstairs on the 14th Floor in the Herbert Irving Pavilion.

If you require copies of your medical records:

You will need to fill out an authorization to release medical information. This can be obtained on our website or by calling our main phone number. The release form can be sent back to us via fax or mail. Medical records will not be released without a signed authorization form under any circumstances. These records will be sent to you within 7 business days from the day the form was received in our office.

Who do I contact regarding billing or insurance coverage?

Our staff is always available to assist you with any questions pertaining to your insurance coverage. If you have specific questions about your bills, please contact our billing department at **212-305-2399**. Please note that if you have any copayment or deductible that is due, it is expected at the time of your visit.

What if I need an interpreter?

To promote clarity and consistency in communication, translation services are available for all patients and families. Please inform us of your need. This pertains to those who speak a foreign language, have limited English language skills, or use sign language or assistive listening devices. We strongly recommend bringing a family member or friend with you to your appointment that speaks English or can help you communicate with your physician.

Should I have an advance health care directive?

To best help us serve you, it is recommended that you complete an advance health care directive, also known as a living will, personal directive, or advance directive. This is a set of written instructions that a person gives that specify what actions should be taken for their health if they are no longer able to make decisions due to illness or incapacity. The Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA) was passed in 1990 and is used to inform patients of their rights regarding decisions toward their own medical care, and ensure that these rights are communicated by the health care provider. Specifically, the rights ensured are those of the patient to dictate their future care (by means such as living will or power of attorney) should they become incapacitated. We encourage all patients to consider these issues and keep a current directive as applicable.

Coverage before and after office hours and on weekends:

If you need to reach your physician before or after office hours or on the weekends, please call our main office phone number **212-305-3410**. The answering service will take a detailed message and deliver it to a physician right away. You should expect a phone call back shortly thereafter. Please be considerate as these calls should be emergencies or urgent care issues and not routine questions or medication refills. All non-essential calls should be addressed only during office hours.

How do I obtain test results?

Please call the office 1-2 weeks following your appointment, procedure, or test for those results. You will be transferred to one of the nurses who will be able to help you and answer any questions that you may have.

Resources are available to assist you at all times:

We have patient navigators and support services available to you and your family. Please inquire as to what resources may be available to you. Geri Lipschitz is our Social Worker who is readily available to assist you with a variety of issues including home health care and a myriad of other services. We also have many research protocols which are currently available to you. Our Research Nurse Coordinator, Crystal Miller and our Clinical Research Coordinator, Reena Vattakalam will assist and guide you with the specific studies available for you. Your physician and our research team will discuss relevant studies with you in detail.

What if you cannot make a scheduled appointment?

We ask that you cancel any appointments that you are unable to make as soon as possible. In certain cases, charges could be applied if you do not call to cancel in a timely manner.

What if there is inclement weather? How do I know if you will be open?

Please call our office at 212-305-3410 or check our web site for any weather related closures at www.columbiaobgyn.org.

What if you have questions, compliments, or concerns about our practice?

Please contact our Practice Manager, Liat Kabel at 646-317-0019 and she will gladly assist you. Alternatively you can contact Dr. Thomas Herzog, Director Division of Gynecologic Oncology to assist you in any compliment, complaint, and resolution process.

Can I just stop by the office?

We strongly encourage you to call before stopping by our office if you require any services. Our staff is always available to you but is usually assisting other physicians and clinics in the practice. We want to make sure whoever you need is able to give you as much time and attention that you require. Calling ahead of time and making an appointment can ensure they are available to you if you need to come in to speak with them.

We promise to take excellent care of you. We have an extremely devoted and talented team of physicians and staff that are here for you. Always feel free to call us with any questions or concerns. We want you to feel as comfortable as possible throughout your treatment with us.

Thank you for choosing Columbia University Gynecologic Oncology for your care.