

The Annual Exam...

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The visit always starts with a nurse calling my name and leading me back to the first and perhaps the most stressful part of my exam...the weigh in. The nurse and I exchange niceties and when we reach that big, impersonal piece of gadgetry I say the same thing I always say, "Wouldn't this be easier if I told you how much I weigh instead of me getting on the scale?"



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She shows little emotion, gives a half hearted laugh and stands there -chart in hand- patiently waiting for me to climb on. Before she can start moving the weight slide further over to the right than I’d like, the excuses start exiting my mouth like customers going through the automatic door at Target on Black Friday. “I’m a little bloated today. I had sushi and lots of soy sauce last night. I think this is the scale that always says I weigh five pounds more than I do. Would it be ok if I just brought my scale from home next time?”

I make it through the weight check without a panic attack or passing out and then I’m led back to my next destination-the exam room.

As warm as decorators try to make these rooms they seldom succeed. If a physician wants to make you feel comfortable it makes more sense to have the latest issue of People Magazine and chocolate in the exam room rather than blown up photographs of a woman’s uterus and a paper gown.

When I enter the nurse follows and begins to make notes on my chart as I respond to her questions. I make a mental note to grab the chart when she’s not looking to see what she’s really writing about me. She takes my blood pressure then tells me the doctor will be in to see me shortly which is my cue to “suit up.”

A few minutes go by and I hear a knock on the door and then in comes the doctor. The banter we exchange is even more uncomfortable than the conversation I have with the nurse. After the exam I vow to never ever schedule a “yearly” in the winter months again without first giving the doctor warming gloves.

Before taking my chart to the front desk I sneak a peek making sure there’s nothing too incriminating. I hand it over and continue on my quest to make small talk to anyone who will listen at this office. The clerk sits expressionless as she goes through my file trying to find the amount of my co-pay. After paying my fee she mutters a half hearted “thank you.” I’m convinced that is an invitation for more conversation so I try to make more small talk. Before I can get out another word she cuts me off and says, “Do you want to schedule your next appointment for 2009?” Eager to get a smile I say, “Sure, it’s not like I come here for affection.” She doesn’t find

my joke nearly as funny as I do so I decide to leave with what little dignity I have left and prepare to store more up for next years visit.

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