Physical disabilities can include mobility, vision, hearing, and communication impairments. Women with physical disabilities have the same reproductive health care needs as other women.

- Most physically disabled women live independently and direct their own care. They are often experts on their bodies. Respect and use their input.

- Basic health care must consist of routine pelvic exams, mammograms, pap smears and other screenings, and weight measurements.

- Accessible medical equipment, such as adjustable exam tables and accessible scales enable quality health care. (See resources at right.)

- Recognize that disabled women are women and may be sexually active. Reproductive health care for disabled women must address sex, birth control choices, AIDS and other STDs, pregnancy, motherhood, and menopause.

- Sexual problems or concerns may or may not be related to disability. Think flexibly and together with your patient.

- Watch out for and report signs of abuse. Physically disabled women and teens experience a higher rate of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

- Seek training for yourself and your colleagues in the social and personal issues of disability.

- We need providers and facilities to accept Medicaid.

Learn more:
- Center for Research on Women with Disabilities
  www.bcm.edu/crowd
- Importance of Accessible Examination Tables, Chairs and Weight Scales
  www.cdihp.org/products.html
- Encyclopedia of Nursing and Allied Health
  www.enotes.com/nursing-encyclopedia/sexuality-disability
- Sexuality and Disability
  www.springer.com/psychology/commuity+psychology/journal/11195
- Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health for Persons with Disabilities
  www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/general/9789241598682/en/
- Women with Disabilities Center
- Access to Medical Care DVDs
  www.wid.org/amc

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