Baby Blunder

"I once asked a patient if she was having a boy or a girl. She responded, 'It was a boy ... five months ago.'"
Joke Gone Wrong

"I often jokingly comment, 'All bleeding stops eventually.' When I used that line with a patient, she replied, 'That's not funny. My brother was a hemophiliac.' Oops ..."

Foot in Mouth Faux Pas

"While greeting a 30-something male patient, I jokingly said, 'You are too old to be coming here with your mother.' The patient responded, 'That's my wife.'"
Awkward Encounters

"Sometimes patients see me out in public and update me on how they or their child is doing (It's usually something specific like, 'The cardiologist said not to worry about that murmur!'), and I have no idea who the patient is! My usual response is, 'Oh, that is great news!' or, 'Glad things worked out.'"

Poor Delivery

"I almost dropped a newborn who delivered too quickly."
Greetings Gaffe

"I sometimes realize that I've re-introduced myself to patients I've already met at previous office visits."

Unfortunate Assumption

"I entered the clinic exam room and the patient was sitting in a chair. On the back of the chair next to him was a nice coat with a purple and turquoise design. I pointed to the chair and asked if his wife was in the restroom. He looked at me, then the chair, and informed me the coat was his."
Big oversight

"As a third-year resident, I was rounding on the well newborns in the nursery. The first baby I saw that morning had obvious features of trisomy 21. I wanted to be sure of my diagnosis and educate the parents as much as I could, so I did a thorough exam and pointed out all of the atypical findings. I explained to the family that all of these features are consistent with Down syndrome and explained that further testing would be needed to confirm the diagnosis, as well as some of the long-term issues and medical problems their child was likely to have. The parents listened patiently to my explanations and then they told me, 'We know all of that, he was diagnosed months ago.' I was a little embarrassed that I had obviously not reviewed his chart before coming in to see him, but the next question from the family was the truly embarrassing part: 'What about his extra fingers?' The extra fingers I had completely failed to notice on my thorough exam."

The Name Game

"It is embarrassing when I see a patient at a store or other public place and can't remember their name. My husband now knows to introduce himself first if a patient comes up to me and I don't introduce him to the patient right away."