

A Woman's Guide to Preventative Healthcare

LSU OB/GYN Clinic at Woman's



Woman's



Care Instructions for Well Visits

Ages 18 to 50

Well Visit Overview

Well visits, or regular checkups, are very important as they can help you stay healthy. At this visit, your doctor will check your overall health and will most likely suggest ways to take good care of yourself. Your doctor will also recommend tests to check your current health. Remember, when you're at home, healthy eating, regular exercise and other steps can help prevent illness.

Follow up is a key part of your treatment and safety. Make sure to schedule and then go to all appointments. It's also a good idea to keep a record of your test results and keep a list of the prescribed medicines you are taking. Remember, call your doctor if you are having problems or issues.

Caring for Yourself at Home

While your doctor is available to help treat any health issues that come up, the best way to keep from having health problems is to take preventative measures on your own. This means being healthy at home. Remember, the younger you start with healthy habits, the longer you will live a healthier, happier and productive life. Here are a few ideas.

- Eat healthy. Choose foods like vegetables, fruits, proteins, whole grains and low-fat dairy foods. Limiting fat—especially saturated fat—is an important action as is reducing salt in your diet.
- Limit alcohol. No more than one drink a day or seven drinks a week is best.
- Get some exercise. Walking is a good choice especially if you're just starting out. Choose other activities, like riding a bike, running, swimming, playing tennis or pickle ball or join up for a team sport. Experts recommend at least 30 minutes of exercise a day.
- Maintain a healthy weight. This will lower your risk for health issues, such as obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. If you need to lose weight, start today with small steps and you'll be surprised by the results.
- Don't smoke. This habit only makes health problems worse. Need help quitting? Ask your doctor about programs and medicines to help you stop smoking for good. You will feel better physically and mentally, we promise.
- Don't forget about your mental health. Worry and stress are normal parts of today's lifestyles, but you can learn strategies to manage stress. Deep breathing techniques, mindfulness and staying connected with your family, friends and community can all help. Do you often feel sad or hopeless? Talk with your doctor about treatments that can help.
- Get screening tests. Be active and open to screenings recommended by your doctor. These tests can help find diseases before any symptoms appear and prevent major health problems.



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- Wear sunscreen. You may not think about it, but even when it's cloudy, apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) to any exposed skin.
- Take care of your teeth. Brushing and flossing help keep your mouth healthy. Bad oral hygiene can often lead to other issues such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, respiratory conditions and more. Don't forget to visit the dentist one or two times a year for checkups and to have your teeth professionally cleaned.
- Buckle up. Wear a seat belt in the car to prevent injury or death in case of an accident.



When should you call for help?

Keep up with and monitor changes in your health. If you see any issues, problems or symptoms, contact your doctor.

Care Instructions for Well Visits

Ages 51 to 65

Well Visit Overview

Well visits or regular checkups are very important as they can help you stay healthy. At this visit, your doctor will check your overall health and will most likely suggest ways to take good care of yourself. Your doctor will also recommend tests to check your current health. Remember, when you're at home, healthy eating, regular exercise and other steps can help prevent illness.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Make sure to schedule and then go to all appointments. It's also a good idea to keep a record of your test results and keep a list of the prescribed medicines you are taking. Remember, call your doctor if you are having problems or issues.

Caring for Yourself at Home

While your doctor is available to help treat any health issues that come up, the best way to keep from having health problems is to take preventative measures on your own. This means being healthy at home. Here are a few ideas.

- Eat healthy. Choose foods like vegetables, fruits, proteins, whole grains and low-fat dairy foods. Limiting fat—especially saturated fat—is an important action as is reducing salt in your diet.
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- Get screening tests! Be active and open to screenings recommended by your doctor. These tests can help find diseases before any symptoms appear and prevent major health problems.
- Wear sunscreen! You may not think about it, but even when it's cloudy, apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) to any exposed skin.
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When should you call for help?

Keep up with and monitor changes in your health. If you see any issues, problems or symptoms, contact your doctor.

Care Instructions for Exposure to Sexually Transmitted Infections

Overview

Diseases spread by sexual contact are called sexually transmitted infections or STIs. These STIs can come from vaginal, oral and anal sex. Unfortunately, pregnant women can also spread STIs to their baby before or during birth.

There are 20 primary STIs including: syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which is the virus that causes AIDS. Some STIs can even keep you from getting pregnant in the future.

STIs caused by bacteria can be treated and cured. However, STIs caused by viruses, such as HIV, can be treated, but cannot be cured.

Follow-up care is important. Be sure to make any appointments necessary and then go to those appointments. Contact your doctor if you are having problems and make sure you know and understand your test results. Remember to keep a running list of the prescription medicines you are taking.

Caring for Yourself at Home

- If you are prescribed a medicine, be sure to follow the exact directions so it is most effective.
- Take any antibiotics exactly as directed by your physician. Just because you feel better, don't stop taking them. Completing the full course of antibiotics ensures they will be fully effective.
- Since douching changes the normal balance of bacteria in your vagina, do not douche. Douching may make it more likely to spread the infection to your uterus or other reproductive organs.

Preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Waiting to have sex with a new partner (or partners) until you've each been tested is a key way to help prevent STIs. Another key to prevention is limiting your sex partners to one person who only has sex with you. You should also be sure to use either male or female condoms.

When Should you Call for Help?

Seek immediate medical care or call your doctor if:

- You discover a new pain in your pelvis or belly.
- You feel you may have urinary tract infection symptoms, which include:
 - Pain or burning during urination.
 - A frequent need to pee without being able to pass much urine.
 - Pain just below the rib cage and above the waist on either side of the back.
 - Blood in your urine.
 - A fever.
- You experience a new or worsening pain or swelling in the scrotum.

If you notice any changes in your health, be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You experience unusual vaginal bleeding.
- You have a discharge from the vagina or penis.
- New symptoms appear like: rashes, bumps, sores, warts or blisters.
- You have pain, tingling, itching or burning in the genital or anal area.
- You believe you may have an STI.

Care Instructions for Breast Self-Exam

Checking your own breast for lumps or changes is important and doing it regularly can help you learn how your breasts normally look and feel. You may not realize it, but most breast changes or issues are not because of cancer. However, it's important to understand that a breast self-exam is not a replacement for a mammogram. Regularly scheduled breast exams from your doctor along with mammograms help improve your chances of pinpointing any breast problems you may have.

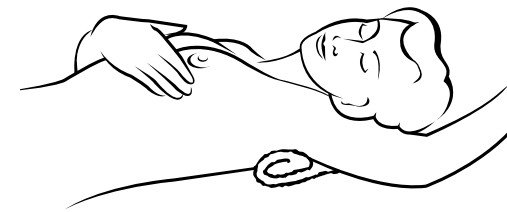
When it comes to self-exams, everyone is different. Some women find that setting an exact schedule each month to perform a breast self-exam works best, while others are a little less formal where they might check their breast while in the shower or when brushing their hair. The most important thing is to do it regularly and let your doctor know if you notice any changes in your breasts.

Follow-up is key. Keep all your appointments and talk to your doctor if you are having any issues. And be sure to know your test results and maintain a list of all the prescription medicines you take.

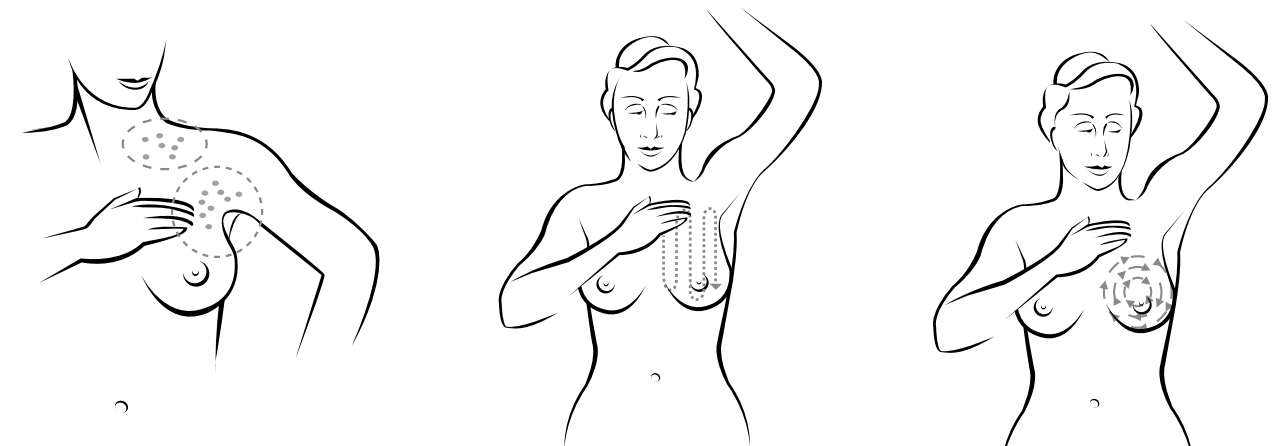


Performing a Breast Self-Exam

- Around a week after your menstrual period begins is the best time to examine your breasts since they won't be tender. If you don't have periods, just pick a specific day of the month that is easy for you to remember.
- Examining your breasts:
 - Take off your clothes above the waist and lie down. In this position, your breast tissue spreads evenly over your chest wall so you can easily feel all your breast tissue.
 - You may be tempted to use your fingertips but be sure to use the pads of the three middle fingers. Use the left hand to check your right breast and vice versa. Then, slowly move your fingers in small coin-sized circles that overlap.
 - Three levels of pressure should be used to feel your breast tissue. 1) For the tissue close to the skin surface, use light pressure. 2) To feel a little deeper, use medium pressure. 3) Finally, use firm pressure to feel the tissue that is closer to your ribs and breastbone. Go through each pressure level to feel your breast tissue and then move on to the next spot.
 - Slowly move up and down like you are following a strip from the collarbone to the bra line and then from the armpit to the ribs. Repeat this process and make sure you have covered the entire breast.
 - Repeat this procedure for the opposite breast, again making sure to use the pads of the three middle fingers of your opposite hand.



- Examining your breasts while in the shower:
 - Choose a side and place one arm over your head and lightly soap your breast.
 - In the same strip pattern described above, gently move your hand over your breast, feeling carefully for changes or lumps. Be sure to use the pads of your fingers.
 - Repeat the same procedure for the other breast.
- Remember, if you notice any irregularities or changes, see your doctor so they can determine if there is a need for further testing.



Breast Cancer Screening

What You Should Know

Breast Cancer Screening

A person experiences breast cancer when cells that are not normal grow in one or both of your breasts. Cancer is much easier to treat when it's found sooner rather than later and doctors use screening tests to help in early detection. It is common to be concerned about breast cancer and you should take the time to meet with your doctor and determine when to start and how often to get screened for breast cancer.

How is Breast Cancer Screening Performed?

There are several screening tests for breast cancer.

Mammograms

Mammograms check for signs of cancer using X-rays and can often discover tumors that are too small for you or your doctor to feel. During the process, a machine gently squeezes your breasts making them flatter and easier to X-ray. Pictures are taken of each breast from the top and the side.

3-D Mammograms

3-D mammograms are called digital breast tomosynthesis. During this procedure, your breast is placed on a flat plate with a top plate pressed against your breast to keep it in position. An X-ray arm moves above the breast to take a variety of pictures. The pictures are uploaded into a computer, which uses the X-rays to create a 3-dimensional image.

Clinical Breast Exam

During a clinical breast exam, your doctor checks for lumps or other changes by carefully feeling your breasts and under your arms.

Should you be Screened for Breast Cancer?

Mammograms are the best screening test for people at average risk of breast cancer, but there are differences in opinions on the age that screening should start and the frequency (every one or two years varies).

Some recommendations from experts include starting:

- By age 40 with a mammogram each year.
- At age 45 with a mammogram each year.
- At age 50 with a mammogram every 2 years.

Another decision you need to make is when to stop having mammograms. Seek your doctor's advice on the right age to begin and end screening based on your overall health and personal preferences.

What is your Risk for Breast Cancer?

It is very important to know your risk of breast cancer. You can either ask your doctor about it or look it up online at: [cancer.gov/bcrisktool](https://www.cancer.gov/bcrisktool).

If you have a high or very high risk of breast cancer, ask your doctor about ways to reduce it. These efforts include taking medicine, receiving extra screenings or having surgery. Be sure to ask your doctor about genetic testing if you have a strong family history of breast cancer.

Taking Steps to Stay Healthy

Your age and being female are things that increase your risk of breast cancer. These factors cannot be controlled, but there are some things you can do to stay as healthy as possible.

- Be familiar with what your breasts normally look and feel like. Tell your doctor if you notice any changes.
- Any amount of alcohol may increase your risk for some types of cancer. If you do drink alcohol, limit how much you drink.
- Quitting smoking lowers your chances of getting many types of cancer. If you smoke, quit.

Eat healthy foods, be active every day and try to remain at a healthy weight. All these proactive measures add up to helping prevent cancer.

About Mammogram Tests

What You Should Know

Mammogram Tests

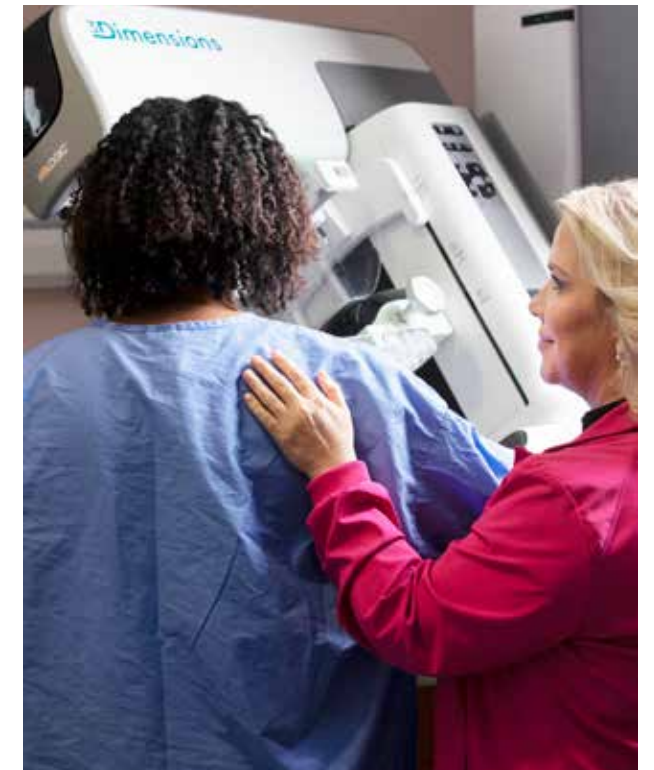
The best way to screen for breast cancer is through a mammogram test. This test is a X-ray of the breast that can detect tumors too small for you or even your doctor to feel. It is very important to schedule regular mammograms to find cancer at its earliest stages when it is most easily treated.

Why are Mammograms Done?

- A mammogram is used to detect breast cancer when there are no visible symptoms.
- A mammogram can be conducted to find breast cancer when there are signs.
- Signs of breast cancer may include a lump, thickening in the breast, dimpling of the skin on one area of the breast, or nipple discharge.
- A mammogram is also utilized in an area of suspicious breast tissue to remove a tiny portion to examine under a microscope. This is called a biopsy.

How to Prepare for a Mammogram

First, you should request that any past results from your last mammogram at another clinic be sent to your new appointment (or bring them with you). Don't use any deodorant on the day of the mammogram. Also, refrain from using powders, perfume or ointments near or on your breasts since the residue of these substances on your skin may interfere with the X-rays.



How is a Mammogram Conducted?

- All jewelry must be removed that could interfere with the X-ray pictures.
- All clothes above the waist should also be removed. However, during the test, you will be provided a cloth or paper gown to use.

What Does Having a Mammogram Feel Like?

Though rarely painful, a mammogram can be a little uncomfortable. Let the technician know beforehand if you have sensitive or fragile skin, or a skin condition. If you regularly have menstrual periods, the procedure should be done within two weeks after your period has ended so it will be more comfortable. Although having your breasts flattened is usually not the most comfortable feeling, it's necessary as it helps the technician get the best images.

How Long Does a Mammogram Take?

- You will probably be in the clinic for about an hour, but the actual test only takes about 10 to 15 minutes.
- The technician will often ask you to wait a few minutes while the images are checked to make sure you don't need a retake.

What Happens After the Test?

In most cases you will be able to go home right away and resume your normal activities. Follow-up care is key. Be sure to make all your necessary appointments and then keep them. In addition, contact your doctor if you are having problems. Another good idea is to keep a list of the medicines you take. Finally, feel free to ask your doctor when your test results will be ready for review.

Learning About Cervical Cancer Screening

Cervical Cancer Screening Tests

The lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina is called the cervix. Cervical cancer screening tests are procedures used to check the cells on the cervix for specific changes that could lead to cancer.

Two tests used alone or together can screen for cervical cancer.

A Pap Test

This test looks for changes in the cells of the cervix that could possibly lead to cancer.

A Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Test

This test looks for the HPV virus, some of which may be high-risk and could cause cell changes that lead to cervical cancer.

When Should you Have a Screening Test?

If you do have a cervix, you will most likely need cervical cancer screening. Screening will depend on a variety of factors based on your age.

Age	Screening Options
21 to 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Pap Test: If you receive normal results, you can wait three years to have another test.• An HPV Test: Beginning at age 25. If you receive negative results, you can wait five years to have another test.
30 to 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Pap Test: If you receive normal results, you can wait three years to have another test.• An HPV Test: Beginning at age 25. If you receive negative results, you can wait five years to have another test.• A Pap test and an HPV test. If you receive normal results, you can wait five years to be tested again.
65 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you've always had normal screening results and are 65+, you may not need screening. However, it is always best to talk to your doctor.

What do the Results of Cervical Cancer Screening Mean?

You may receive results showing minor or serious changes to your cervix cells. Minor changes may go away on their own, especially if you are younger than 30.

If you have an infection of the vagina or cervix or have low estrogen levels after menopause that are causing cells to change, you may have an abnormal test result.

You may need more tests if you have a high-risk type of human papillomavirus (HPV) or cell changes that could turn into cancer. You may need to wait to be retested, have a colposcopy or treatment right away. Your physician will help you make this decision.

Ultimately, based on your results and your age, your doctor will recommend a follow-up plan.

Follow-up care is key. Make sure you schedule and then keep all appointments and contact your doctor if you are having problems. Make sure you keep up with and understand all your test results and maintain a list of all your prescribed medicines you take.





Woman's

Founded in 1968, Woman's is a nonprofit organization, governed by a board of community volunteers, providing medical care and services in order to improve the health of women and infants, including community education, research and outreach.

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womans.org