

Primrose



Women's Health

Please do not avoid asking questions - there are no embarrassing questions or questions I have not been asked before. This is a non-judgmental zone. No question is too personal or dumb. I would much rather you ask me and we can find an answer together than have you google your question and be led down a rabbit hole of misinformation. These are questions I am asked daily.

Will my pap smear hurt?

No, it should not. It will be pressure and discomfort but there shouldn't be pain or pinching. If there is, please say something. I will tell you what is happening without surprises

What is a pelvic exam versus a Pap smear?

A pelvic exam includes a speculum exam to examine your tissue and cervix. It also includes palpation of your cervix, ovaries and uterus. This is a lot of pressure but shouldn't be painful. A pap smear is the collection of cells from your cervix. It is a screening for Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Most people who are sexually active will have a type of HPV in their lifetime. Most of the time our bodies fight it off like any other virus. But, there are a few types of HPV that we know are high risk and can lead to cervical cancer. The pap smear is screening for abnormal cells and the higher risk types of HPV that could lead to cervical cancer.

Do I need a pap every year?

It depends. I follow the ASCCP guidelines. They are the most up-to-date research for screenings. If your pap and HPV screens are negative then no. But I still think it's important to see you yearly so we can do a pelvic exam, breast exam and evaluate if you need other screening, contraception, health/lifestyle changes, etc.

My daughter is a teenager, when should she come in?

Pap smears start at age 21 regardless of sexual activity. If she is not 21 yet and is having abnormal periods (no periods, skipping periods, frequent periods, heavy bleeding) or painful periods please bring her in. If she is sexually active I would love to talk to her about safe sex practices, contraceptive options, and do STI screening (which likely will be off of her urine). She typically won't have an exam unless she is having something unusual or abnormal discharge.

Why do you offer me STI screening?

The CDC recommends annual screening of sexually active women under the age of 25 or women above the age of 25 that are at increased risk. You don't always have symptoms with a gonorrhea or chlamydia infection. Gonorrhea and chlamydia left untreated can lead to scarring which can lead to infertility and pain in the future. I would rather test and tell you that you don't have it than leave you untreated with problems for the future.