



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR

# Well-Woman Exam

TAKE A DEEP BREATH. YOU'RE DOING GREAT.

## A well-visit with a trusted healthcare provider

You shouldn't just see your doctor when you're feeling sick. One of the best ways to take your health into your own hands is by making a yearly appointment with a provider for a well-woman exam. Your provider can be a key partner in your proactive health management, so take advantage of this opportunity to practice prevention. Here's a breakdown of everything you need to know about this exam!



## Do I need a well-woman exam?

No matter your gender identity, if you have breasts, a uterus, or a vulva you should be scheduling an annual appointment with a trusted provider. Typically these appointments begin when you become sexually active or when you turn 21.



**Tip:** The well-woman exam gets pretty personal! Don't have a doctor you're comfortable with? Talk to your friends about getting a well-woman exam and ask who they see! You can also set up a "pre-visit" with a doctor you are considering for your well-woman. This appointment may not be covered on your insurance, but you can use it as a time to ask any questions you have and see if the doctor is someone with whom you would feel comfortable scheduling your well-woman exam.

## How should I schedule it?



A well-woman exam can be scheduled with your general practitioner, OB GYN, or nurse practitioner. Yes, you have to schedule this one in advance – since it's a preventive visit, you can't walk in and get this exam at your local urgent care, nor can you get it done virtually via telemedicine or an app. It often helps to schedule for a day when you don't have your period.

## How do I pay for a well-woman exam?



Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), all types of insurance are **required to provide you a free yearly well-woman exam**. If you don't have insurance, you can look for free appointments at local federally qualified health centers, Planned Parenthood, or teaching hospitals.

**BRIGHT PINK** is a national non-profit on a mission to help save lives from breast and ovarian cancer by empowering women to know their risk and manage their health proactively.

For more information or to get involved, visit [BrightPink.org](http://BrightPink.org).

## Do I need to bring anything?

This appointment is the perfect time to bring up any questions or worries you have about your health. Anything from unusually heavy periods to problems with digestion are fair game, so be sure to make a list before you go so you can get all the answers you need. You should also consider completing a **Family Health History form** and bringing your **Assess Your Risk™** results so your doctor knows more about you and your background.



**EMPOWERED  
PATIENT GUIDE:  
WELL-WOMAN  
EXAM**

## What happens during a well-woman exam?

No two exams are alike – your personal health and health history determines what happens during your well-woman exam so it may be different from your best friend's. Generally, here are some things you can expect. Interested in a more personalized visit? **Assess Your Risk** and bring the results to your provider to better tailor your exam to your unique risk factors.



### BE YOUR OWN BEST HEALTH ADVOCATE

If something doesn't feel right, or you don't feel heard, feel free to seek out a second opinion!



#### STANDARD PHYSICAL:

This normally includes height, weight, and blood pressure measurements.



#### CLINICAL BREAST EXAM:

These are optional, so speak with your provider about whether a breast exam make sense for you. The exam only lasts a few minutes and can help you learn what's normal for your breasts so you can better spot if something isn't quite right later.

#### MAMMOGRAM:

Talk to your doctor about annual mammograms beginning at age 40. But, if you have a first-degree relative who was diagnosed with breast cancer, you should begin this screening earlier - 10 years younger than the age at which your relative was diagnosed, but no younger than 25. For example, if your mom was diagnosed at 45, talk to your doctor about starting mammograms at 35.



#### FAMILY & PERSONAL HEALTH HISTORY COLLECTION:

You may fill out a form or chat with your doctor about your family & personal health history  
*\*Prepare for this part with our **Family Health History form and Assess Your Risk!***



#### PELVIC EXAM:

Your doctor may perform an abdominal and pelvic exam to make sure all of your reproductive organs appear healthy.

#### PAP SMEAR:

About once every three years beginning at the age of 21, you should also get a Pap smear to screen for cervical cancer. Talk to your doctor about if this is right for you. This test does not screen for ovarian cancer, so ask your doctor about how you can keep your ovaries healthy.

Have more questions about your annual?

Follow us on social to stay in-the-know on partnering with your provider and more prevention tips!

