



HEALTHY PRACTICES FOR WOMEN UNDER 26

Your yearly Ob/Gyn visit is **very** important to detect and treat any new or ongoing health problems in addition to helping to **prevent** future issues from developing. Yearly exams check your health in regard to nutrition, physical activity, sexual practices, and high risk behavior depending on your personal needs. Your exam includes your height, weight and blood pressure. And, depending on your age and health risks, your physical exam may also include a breast, abdominal, pelvic exam, and Pap test.

PAP SMEAR / CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING:

- Cervical cancer is caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). The HPV vaccine, Gardasil, is recommended between the ages of 9-26 years old to decrease the risk for cervical cancer.
- A Pap smear test is NOT the same as a pelvic (internal) exam. Pap smears screen for cervical cancer and pre-cancerous changes in the cells of the cervix.
- Pap smear screening begins at age 21. The frequency of your Pap smears will depend on your individual medical history and Pap smear results. If normal, the Pap screen should be done every 3 years for most women.
- **All women need a yearly Well Woman exam with their Ob/Gyn provider** regardless of whether or not a Pap test is being done since the Pap test is just one part of staying healthy.

SEXUAL HEALTH:

- **Routine Gonorrhea* and Chlamydia* testing every year is recommended as a standard of care for every woman who is sexually active through the age of 25.** We will be providing this screening service to you. * **Please note: Though most of the time it is a covered benefit, insurance plans do not always cover this screening.** If you have any questions, please ask your provider.
- There are about 19 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) each year in the U.S. Many have no symptoms, so it is possible to have an infection and to infect others without either person knowing it.
- STIs can result in pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which increases the risk for future infertility and tubal pregnancies. Therefore, routine screening is important to detect and treat before complications occur.
- You should not feel pressured to engage in sexual behavior. Please tell us if you are being abused.
- Be sure to use contraception if pregnancy is not desired.
- Emergency contraception is available without a prescription. If you need it and have difficulty getting it at the drug store, please call our office.
- Condoms help prevent sexually transmitted infections as well as pregnancy.
- Consider HIV testing if you have, had sex, had any sexually transmitted infections, or used intravenous drugs.

BREAST HEALTH:

- Breast "awareness" means that if there is a new breast mass, fullness, area of tenderness, nipple discharge or skin changes you **MUST** let us know and we will help address this.

DIET AND EXERCISE:

- Limit fat and cholesterol. Emphasize fruits and vegetables.
- 6 - 8 glasses of water daily will improve your health in many ways.
- 30 grams of daily fiber intake improves weight management, reduces constipation and bloating.
- Exercise for 30 minutes daily. Include both aerobic exercise & weight training if possible.
- Stay at a healthy weight. Balance your caloric intake with calories burned.
- Obesity increases risk of infertility, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, sleep problems and some cancers like breast and colon cancer.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE:

- Do not smoke. If you do smoke, ask us for assistance in quitting.
- Recreational alcohol or drug use (marijuana, cocaine, etc.) is dangerous and can be habit-forming.
- Once 21 years of age, a safe intake of alcohol is considered 1 drink or less each day. Alcohol should be avoided when working, driving, boating, or swimming.

BONE HEALTH / OSTEOPOROSIS PREVENTION:

- Osteoporosis (severe thin bones) is preventable and healthy habits are important at all ages.
- Consume 3 servings of calcium-rich foods daily (milk, yogurt, cheese, green leafy vegetables) or use calcium supplementation for adequate calcium and Vitamin D intake.
 - ❖ Vitamin D intake of 600 IU per day is necessary for calcium absorption.
 - ❖ Calcium intake of 1,200mg a day (age under 19) or 1,000mg a day (age 19 – 26).

INJURY PREVENTION:

- Avoid distractions while driving, such as texting. **DO NOT TEXT AND DRIVE.** If you really must make a call while driving, ALWAYS use a hands-free device. Driving while texting is six times more dangerous than drunk driving.
- Seat belts should be worn at all times, even during short trips “around the block.” ☞ Wear a helmet when using a bicycle, motorcycles, roller blades, ATVs, or skiing.
- Place smoke detectors in your house and replace the batteries twice a year.
- Store guns and firearms unloaded, in a locked area. Trigger locks should also be used.
- Consider CPR training for household members.
- **If you are currently in a relationship where you feel threatened or unsafe, please discuss your situation with us.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

- Influenza vaccine is advised yearly.
- A pertussis, or “whooping cough”, vaccine is recommended once as an adult, as well as during every pregnancy. It is given in combination with Tetanus/diphtheria (Tdap).
- A tetanus/diphtheria (Td) booster shot is otherwise recommended every 10 years.
- The HPV vaccine series is recommended between the ages of 9-26. We currently offer this vaccine.
- A Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine is indicated for non-pregnant women born after 1956 unless there is documentation of previous immunization or proof of immunity.
- Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for high-risk individuals.

DENTAL HEALTH:

- Schedule regular visits to the dentist for check-ups.
- Floss and brush with fluoride toothpaste at least twice daily