

Female Exam and Pap Smear

A female exam is done to check for diseases of the vagina, cervix, uterus and ovaries. A pap smear is a test that checks for changes in the cervix, which may be an early sign of cancer. A breast exam may also be done.

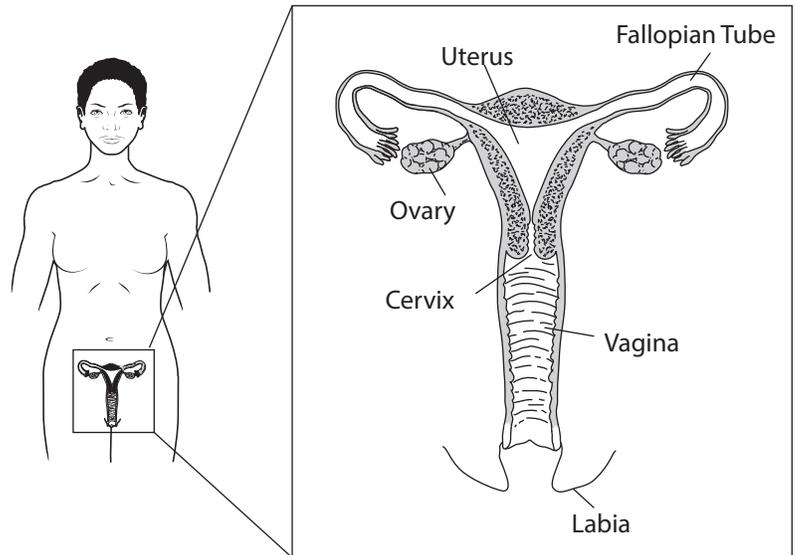
Female Pelvic Exam

This exam is done to check your:

- Vagina
- Cervix - opening into your uterus
- Uterus - also called the womb
- Ovaries

A pelvic exam is not the same as a pap smear (pap test). Other tests may be done during this exam, such as a pap smear or testing for infection.

Reschedule your annual exam if you are having your period.



Day Before Your Exam

For 24 hours before you have this exam, you need to avoid:

- Having sex.
- Vaginal douches or rinsing your vagina.
- Use of any perfumed sprays or powders around your vagina.

Having the Exam

- Go to the bathroom and empty your bladder before this test.
- You will be asked to undress from your waist down and will have a paper sheet to cover you.
- You will be asked to lie down on the exam table and place your feet in holders at the end of the table, called stirrups.
- Let your knees fall to the sides. Take slow, deep breaths to relax the muscles around your vagina during the exam.



- Your provider will examine the skin around your vagina, called the labia, for signs of infection or other problems.
- A plastic or metal duck-bill shaped tool, called a speculum, will be placed into your vagina to allow the provider to see inside your vagina. If other testing is needed, such as a Pap Smear, it will be done while the speculum is in place. The speculum is then removed.
- Using gloves, your provider will place 2 fingers into your vagina and the other hand will be placed on your lower abdomen to feel the size and shape of your uterus and ovaries.
- When the exam is done, the provider will remove the gloves and ask you to get dressed.
- Your provider will review the results of the exam with you.

Pap Smear (Pap Test)

This test is done to look for changes in the cells of your cervix, the lower end of your uterus. This checks for cancer of the cervix.

Women are encouraged to have a Pap Smear during their annual female pelvic exam, starting at age 21 and every 3 to 5 years after that. Based on your age and health history, your provider may make other recommendations.

Having the Test

During your pelvic exam, your provider will look at your cervix. A small brush will be used to pick up cells from your cervix that will be sent to the lab for testing. This test is often painless.

The lab will send a report to your provider. Your provider will share the results with you and discuss any needed follow-up care or more tests that may be needed.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.