

# What is a Wellness Visit?

General health visits are a very important part of your health and wellness.

This is an opportunity for you and your primary care provider (PCP) to discuss ways to improve or preserve your overall health. You and your provider will determine together what physical exam and what testing you may need. These recommendations are based on guidelines from national experts like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Cancer Society, the United States Task Force on Preventive Services (USPSTF), and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists (ACOG).

If you have specific health problems, they should be addressed in a separate visit.

## Here is a list of common topics included in this visit

<b>General Health</b>	Blood pressure, risk for diabetes or heart disease
<b>Immunizations</b>	Make sure you are up-to-date
<b>STI Risk</b>	Routine testing often includes: Chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV; others depending on risk   Discussion about safer sex (i.e. PrEP)
<b>Sexual Health</b>	Pain or other problems with sex?   Any history of sexual assault or forced/coerced sex
<b>Menstrual Health</b>	Any problems with your period? Painful, heavy or irregular?
<b>Cancer</b>	Cervical, breast, colon   Increased hereditary risk
<b>Substance Use</b>	Concerns about alcohol or recreational drug use
<b>Healthy Habits</b>	Diet   Sleep   Exercise
<b>Mental health</b>	Depression   Anxiety
<b>Relationship health</b>	Intimate partner violence

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### What is a pelvic exam?

Routine pelvic exam Includes inspection of the external genitalia, inside the vagina, and palpation (feeling) of the uterus and ovaries in asymptomatic people (i.e., people without any symptoms such as abnormal bleeding or vaginal discharge) Most national experts do not recommend this exam if a person has no symptoms. Benefits are not proven. Discuss this with your clinician.

### Do I need a breast exam?

Clinical breast exam: a clinician palpates (examination by touch and/or pressure) the breasts to assess for abnormal growths, including cancers of the breasts. Some national experts recommend this every 1-3 years. Other experts believe there is insufficient evidence to recommend this exam. Discuss with your clinician.

### What is a pap smear?

Pap smears provide an opportunity for early detection to prevent cervical cancer. Screening starts at age 21 and is every 3 years. For people 30 and older, screening is every 3-5 years depending on the type of testing done.

### Where can I learn more about birth control methods and emergency contraception?

For more information, you can go to [bedsider.org](http://bedsider.org) or [plannedparenthood.org/learn/birth-control](http://plannedparenthood.org/learn/birth-control).

### What immunizations may I need?

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) - HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection. The majority of sexually active individuals have been exposed to HPV at some point; most of these people appear healthy and have no visible signs of infection. In most cases, the body's immune system can clear the infection within a few years with no treatment required. While HPV most often does not cause problems, it is a known precursor to dysplasia (abnormal cells on the cervix) and cervical cancer. An FDA-approved vaccine called GARDASIL is available to all students through age 26; and for selected higher-risk people 27-45. The vaccine protects against 9 types of HPV including 16 and 18 which are present in 70% of all cervical, vaginal, vulvar, and anal cancers, as well as Types 6 and 11 which are associated with 90% of external genital warts. Gardasil is available at UHS by appointment (call 643-7177) and is covered by SHIP.
- Tetanus Disease (Lockjaw) - Tetanus booster shots are recommended every 10 years.
- Influenza vaccine - Flu shots are recommended every year.