



Well Woman Exam

Facts and tips for your visit

An annual exam is an important part of your health care maintenance.

If it has been more than 12 months since your last exam, please contact your health care provider to schedule an appointment.

What is a well woman exam?

A well woman exam is a once-a-year visit to your primary care provider or gynecologist for a general health evaluation. A well woman exam is also called an “annual exam,” “routine check-up,” and “preventive care visit.” A well woman exam includes the following:

- Update of your health history.
- Update of family health history.
- Update of current medications and supplements.
- General physical exam.
- Pelvic exam (depending on age and risk factors).
- Evaluation of need for health screening tests based on your age and personal and family history.
- Referrals for necessary screening tests.
- Refills of medication.
- Update on immunizations.

What if you have active health problems or questions?

The focus of the well woman exam is health screening, risk factor assessment, disease prevention, and counseling. This process will take up the entire visit. Therefore, an annual exam visit cannot include discussion of new problems or active health concerns.

Please make a separate “problem-oriented” appointment if you have active health concerns not related to prevention and screening. Examples include:

Questions?

To make an appointment for a well woman exam at the Women's Health Care Center, please call (206) 598-5500.

To find a UW Physicians provider near you, call 1-800-4UW-DOCS.

Women's Health Care Center
206-598-5500

- New health care concerns or health problems.
- A long list of questions.
- Ongoing health problems that need more attention.

Trying to accomplish both problem-focused and preventive care at the same visit limits the attention we can pay to each.

What happens if you have a significant new health problem when you come for your annual exam?

You and your provider will need to decide whether to use the time that day to address your problem, in which case your annual exam visit can be rescheduled. Otherwise, you may choose to go ahead with your annual exam, and to defer the health concern to another visit. Scheduled appointment times do not allow for both.

Insurance Coverage Issues

- Some insurance companies do not cover preventive services. Other insurance companies will not cover preventive care and problem oriented care at the same visit. You should check your insurance policy for coverage rules before you call to make an appointment.
- Most insurance companies allow for only one annual exam per 12-month period (and some will not pay for a visit even a few days before the year is up).
- If your PCP is outside our clinic, we will do only a women's health focused visit that addresses gynecological issues (including a breast and pelvic exam) rather than a full preventive medicine visit.
- Under the Washington Women's Health Act, you may self-refer for any gynecologic condition. Confirm this when you meet with your provider. If you are self-referring for women's health care, make sure you are scheduled for a "pap/pelvic/breast" exam.

Medicare Issues

- Medicare does not cover routine well woman exams. You may choose to pay for these services out-of-pocket.
- Medicare will cover Pap smears every two years, mammograms every year, colon cancer screening, and routine vaccinations.
- If you are considered high risk, Medicare will pay for annual pap smears.

The Well Woman Exam is an important part of your health care. Take time to schedule one!

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