

Know the **BIG 5** and Thrive



Well-woman exams and discussing gynecological cancers with your provider

A well-woman exam is recommended annually and focuses on a woman's sexual, reproductive, and overall health. It may include a physical, clinical breast exam, mammogram (40 or older), pelvic exam, Pap smear, and HPV test (if applicable).

Have your first Pap test when you are 21:

- If your test results are normal, you can wait three years for your next Pap test.
- HPV tests are not recommended for women under age 30.

When you turn 30 you have your choice:

- If your test results are normal, get a Pap every three years.
- Get both a Pap and HPV test every five years.

You can stop screening if:

- You're older than 65 and have had normal Pap test results for many years.
- Your cervix was removed during surgery for a non-cancerous condition, like fibroids.

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A well-woman's exam provides an opportunity for you and your provider to talk about any concerning changes, screening options, birth control, planning for pregnancy, health goals, and more. **If you need additional support during your visit, please talk to your primary care team to find what options are available to you.**

Before your appointment it may be helpful to note and list any physical changes such as the following:

- Changes in breast tissue
- Changes in bowel movements
- Abnormal vaginal discharge or bleeding
- Pain with urination or sex
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Changes in appetite
- Increased body hair growth or scalp hair loss

Be ready to describe what your symptoms feel like, when they started and what makes them better or worse.

Here are some example questions you can ask your provider during your appointment:

- My period is or has been irregular/painful/very heavy, this seems unusual, what could be causing this?
- I have a family history of cancer and/or genetic mutations (BRCA 1, BRCA 2), do I need to start screening earlier than what is recommended, and would genetic counseling be appropriate for me?
- What screenings should I have during this visit?
- I have noticed some physical changes that are out of the ordinary for me, can we talk more about this?