



HEALTH UPDATE

PO Box 80076

Charlottesville, VA 22908

Gynecology: (434) 924-2773

First GYN Exam

If you are 18 years or older, or have ever been sexually active, we recommend that you have an annual gynecologic exam. The purpose of this exam is to determine that your reproductive organs are healthy, and to detect any medical conditions (such as infections or abnormal Pap tests) that could become serious if not treated.

What's included in the annual exam?

- **History taking:** Your healthcare provider will ask you many questions related to your lifestyle (including nutrition, physical activity, recreational habits, etc.), family medical history, and sexual history. This is a good time to ask questions and report any concerns you may have about your reproductive health.
- **External exam:** Your healthcare provider will check your blood pressure, thyroid, heart and abdomen, and do a breast exam.
- **Pelvic exam:** Your healthcare provider will look at and feel the shape of the external and internal reproductive organs, including the vulva (outside), uterus, and ovaries. An instrument called a speculum is inserted into the vagina so your healthcare provider can see the vaginal walls and cervix.
- **Lab tests:** If it is medically appropriate, during the exam your healthcare provider will take a sample of cells from the cervix to be sent to a lab for evaluation for any unusual changes (this is the Pap test). Screening tests may also be performed for gonorrhea and chlamydia, two sexually transmitted diseases. It generally takes 2-3 days to get back the gonorrhea and chlamydia test results, and 3-4 weeks to get back the pap test results. Our standard procedure is to notify patients only if test results are abnormal.

What other issues can be discussed during the annual exam?

- Screening for other sexually transmitted diseases, such as syphilis and HIV.
- Options for birth control methods which are best suited to your needs.

- Any concerns or questions you have about your reproductive and sexual health.

How do I schedule an appointment and prepare for the exam?

- Call the Gyn Clinic at 924-2773 to schedule your appointment approximately 6-8 weeks ahead of time. Schedule it at a time when you will not be having your period.
- Ideally, try not to use any creams, douches, spermicides, or tampons for 24-48 hours prior to your exam.
- Be prepared to ask any questions you have during your appointment.
- It is helpful to learn as much as you can about your own medical history as well as that of your parents, grandparents and siblings, prior to your appointment.
- Come to the clinic 15 minutes prior to your actual appointment time to fill out necessary paperwork.
- Allow approximately one hour for the appointment.

What does it cost to have an annual exam at student health?

- There is no fee charged for talking with and being examined by the healthcare provider - this is covered by your student activity fee. As of August 2008 the cost of lab work often (but not always) done during a routine visit (Pap test, chlamydia and gonorrhea screens) is approximately \$79. If additional tests are needed there will be additional charges. Student Health cannot directly bill any insurance other than Aetna Student Health or Southern Health. If you want any other insurance plan to reimburse you for covered lab charges, you will need to file a claim yourself.

What else can I do to help have a successful FIRST annual exam?

Some women feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or even scared in anticipation of their first annual exam. The more you know in advance, the better prepared you will be during your appointment. For this reason, we highly recommend that you schedule a meeting in advance of your appointment with a peer health educator (PHE) who will talk with you in more detail about what will happen during the exam. The PHE can also answer some of your questions in advance. PHEs are UVA students who have been especially trained to provide accurate general information about gynecologic exams, birth control methods and sexually transmitted infections. They do not provide individual medical advice.

Call our clinic at 924-2773 to schedule your *appointment* with a peer health educator, prior to your annual exam date.