

Pelvic & Breast Exams

Types of Exams	Pelvic	Breast
<p>WHO should be examined?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is suggested that women should get pelvic exams within 3 years of becoming sexually active or by the age of 21. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare professionals suggest that women starting at age 20 should perform a Breast Self Exam (BSE) every month, and should receive a Clinical Breast Exam (CBE) at least every 3 years, and every year starting at age 40, in addition to a mammogram.
<p>WHAT happens during an exam?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During a pelvic exam the vulva and the opening of the vagina is examined to check for any abnormal signs such as redness, or irritation. They will palpate the abdomen. A health care provider will check the inside of the vagina with their gloved fingers for any other abnormalities. A speculum is then used to open up the vaginal walls so the vagina and the cervix can be examined visually. If a woman is due for a Pap Smear the health care provider will then use a small brush or spatula to gently remove cervical cells, these cells can be used to detect cervical cancer. They may also extract cervical mucus, which can be used to detect certain STI's. 	<p>The following steps should be taken when doing a Breast Self Exam :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lie down on your back with a pillow under your right shoulder Use the pads of the three middle fingers on your left hand to check your right breast. Press using light, medium, and firm pressure in a circle without lifting your fingers off the skin. Squeeze your nipple to check for discharge, if any report to your health care provider immediately. Repeat on your left breast using your right hand. <p>Look for any changes from what's normal for you. Inspect your breasts in four steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold your arms at your side, hold your arms over your head, press your hands on your hips and tighten your chest muscles and fourth, bend forward with your hands on your hips.
<p>WHERE can an exam be performed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pelvic exams are usually performed at a gynecologists private office or can be done at a family planning clinic. For more information on places to receive pelvic exams please contact the CHOICE Hotline at 215-985-3300 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Clinical Breast Exam is to be performed by a healthcare professional, such as your doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner or physician assistant. The steps of the Breast Self Exam may be taken while showering, with soapy hands or laying down.
<p>WHEN is the best time to get an exam?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is best to schedule an exam before or after a woman's period. Having a pelvic exam done during her period may interfere with the Pap Smear and the exam itself. Using douches, tampons, vaginal medications, vaginal sprays or powders or sexual intercourse is not suggested for at least 24 hours prior to the exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSEs are best performed soon after your menstrual period ends, because your breasts will not be as tender and swollen as during your period. This makes it easier to detect any unusual changes Schedule your CSEs after your period has ended for the reasons above. Also, if you have stopped menstruating, schedule for a day that is easy for you to remember, such as your birth date.
<p>WHY is getting an exam important?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pelvic exams can be used to help detect certain STI's such as herpes, chlamydia, or gonorrhea. Vaginal infections, such as yeast infections can also be detected using pelvic exams If a pap smear is given during a pelvic exam this can help detect cell abnormalities that may lead to cancer. Pelvic Exams can help to detect any other abnormalities in the reproductive and pelvic organs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examining your own breasts is vital because you become familiar with what is <i>normal for you</i>. It makes it easy to detect abnormalities sooner. Both the BSE and CBE can be used to help detect skin changes including rashes, dimpling or redness as well as breast changes, such as lumps or thickenings. The most effective way to fight breast cancer is to detect it early. A BSE, CBE, and a mammography are that most effective tools to detect breast cancer. Know your breasts.