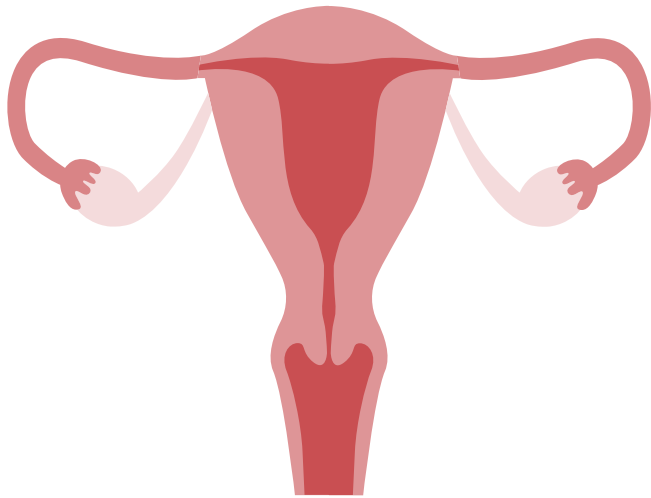


Preparing for your First OBGYN Appointment

Going to the doctor is important for staying healthy. Obstetric Gynecologists (OBGYN) are doctors that specialize in reproductive care.



It's normal to feel nervous about your first visit. Learning more about what to expect can help!

Understanding Why

Before your first appointment, it can be helpful to understand why you are going in the first place.



Our bodies change as we age. OBGYNs can answer your questions about these changes and make sure there are no problems.

Pre-Appointment Planning

Before your appointment, it can be helpful to create a list of questions and topics you want to talk about. This will help you feel prepared.

TOPICS

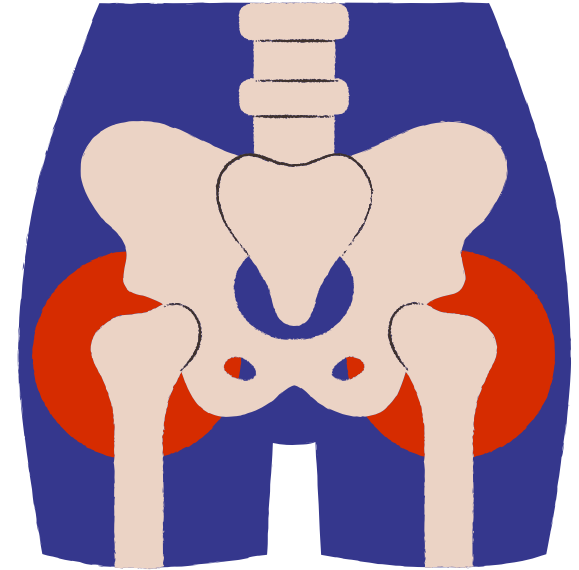
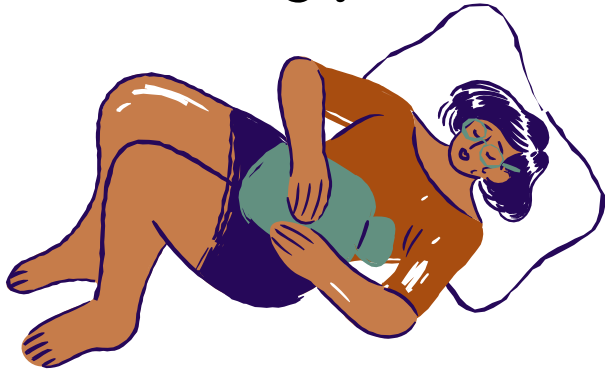
- Birth control options
- Testing for STI's
- Period or hormonal concerns
- Physical changes

If you're not sure what to ask about, you can Google "what to talk to OBGYN about."

Look through some of the articles and see which topics are important to you.

If You Are Under 21

If you're under 21 your doctor likely won't perform a pelvic exam during your first visit.

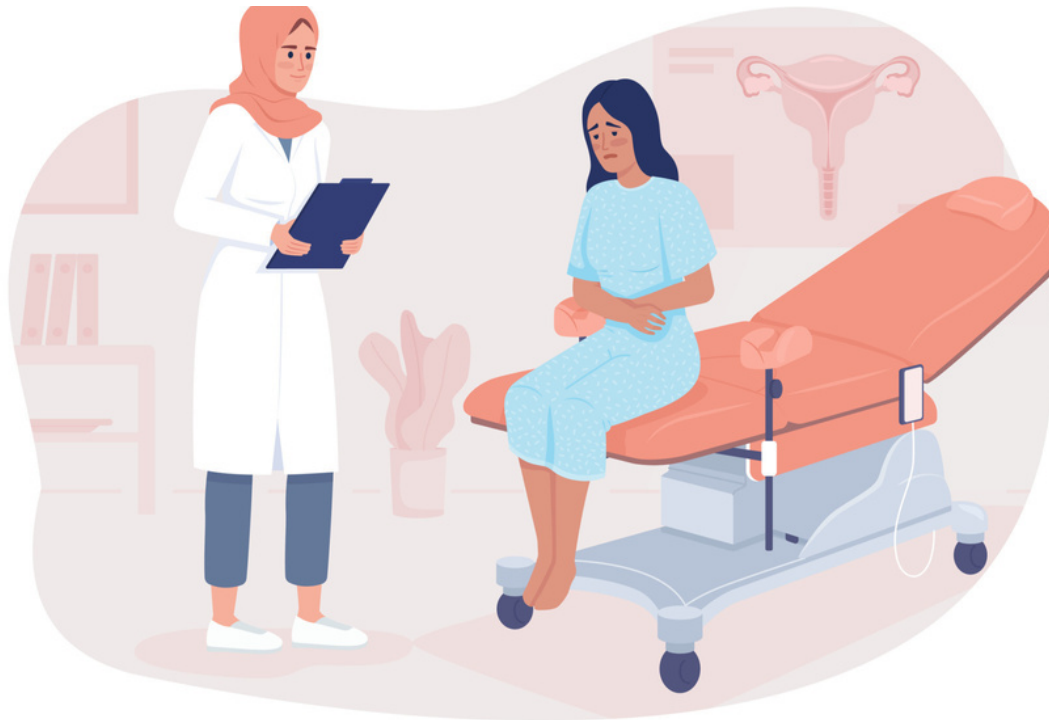


However they may perform a pelvic exam if you're:

- Sexually active
- Want STI testing
- Have specific health concerns (abnormal bleeding, painful periods)

If You Are Older Than 21

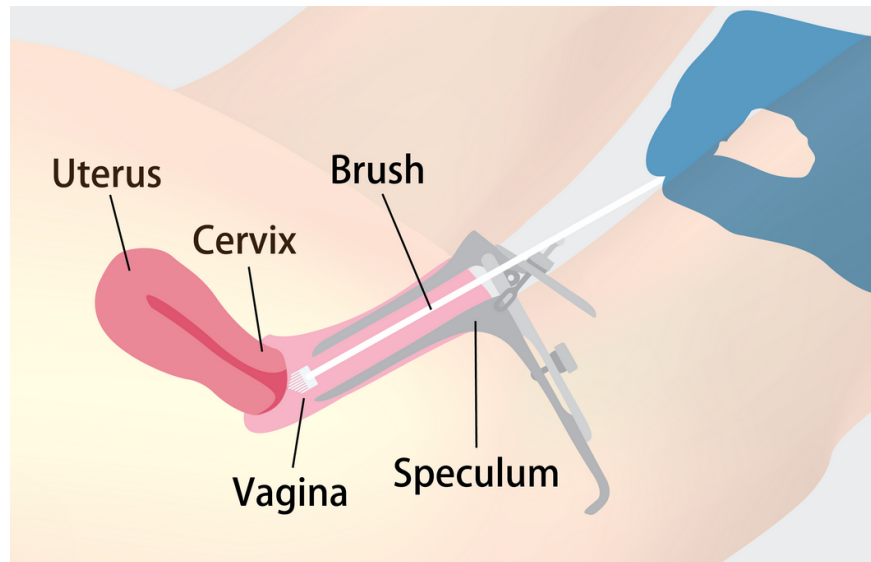
If you're over 21, your OBGYN will probably recommend a pelvic exam and/or Pap smear (also called a Pap test).



The OBGYN may also do a breast exam to scan for breast cancer.

What is a Pap Test?

Your doctor will swab the lower part of your uterus or cervix. They will use a speculum (a device inserted into your vagina to get a better view).

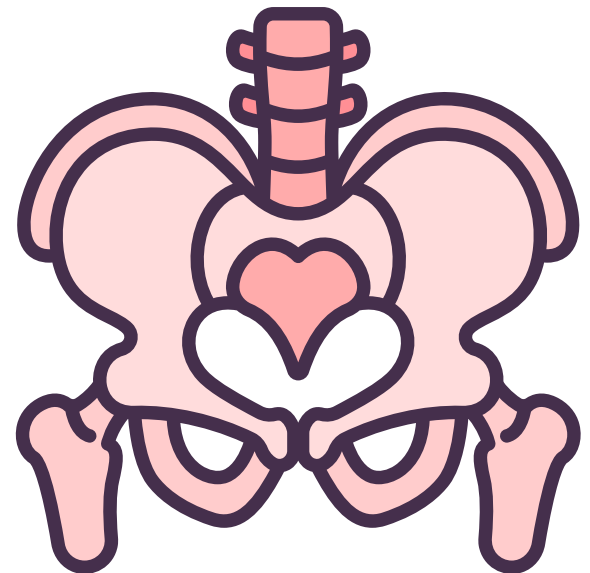


The swab collects cervical cells which they send to the lab to test for abnormalities. It can be uncomfortable, but it is important to keeping you healthy.

What Happens During a Pelvic Exam

Here's what to expect during a pelvic exam:

- An external exam to review your vulva (labia, clitoris, and opening of your vagina)
- A vaginal and cervical exam using a speculum
- A physical exam of your reproductive organs



Pelvic Exam Process

1

Lie on back with feet in stirrups



2

Doctor examines outside of vaginal area



3

Speculum separates vagina walls; doctor examines cervix



4

Doctor inserts 2 fingers to check uterus and ovaries

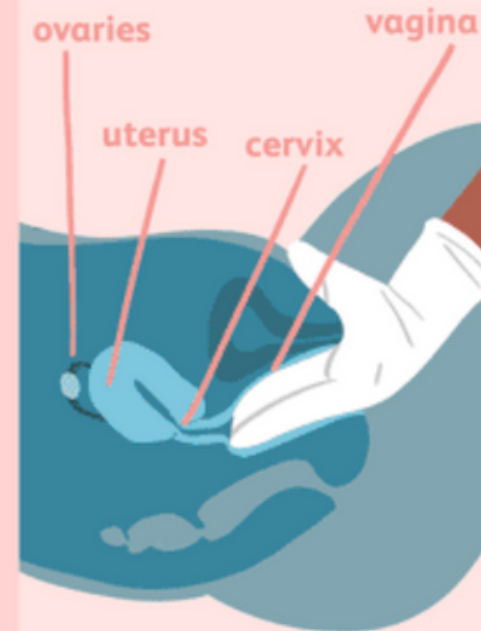
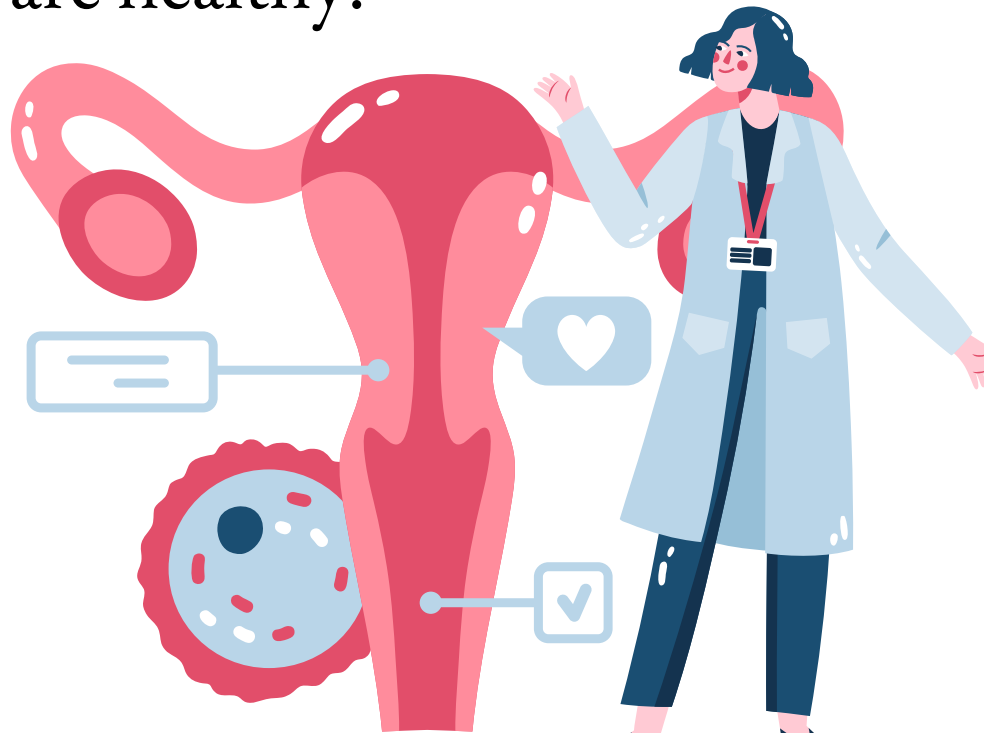


Illustration by Emily Roberts, Verywell

Purpose of a Pelvic Exam

Doing this exam allows your OBGYN to see if your uterus and ovaries are healthy.



If at any point you feel uncomfortable or need a break, say something! The doctors want you to have a good visit.

Talking About Birth Control

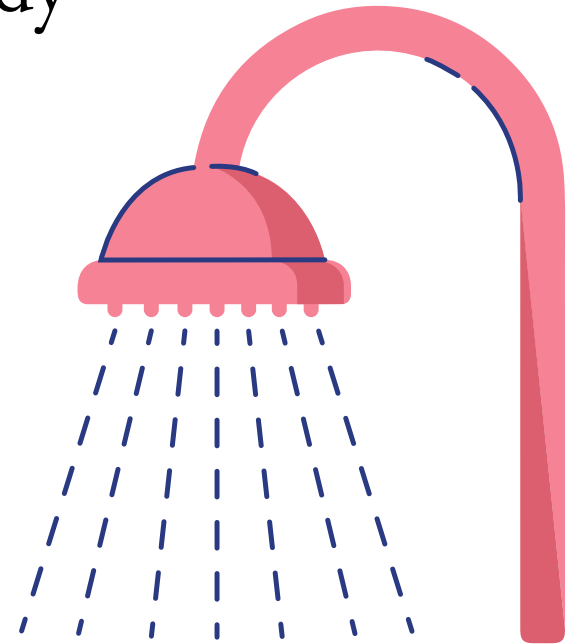
You can talk about birth control options with your OBGYN. They will explain the options available to you.

They will ask you about your sexual activity and history to help decide which form is best for you!



Don't Worry about Appearance

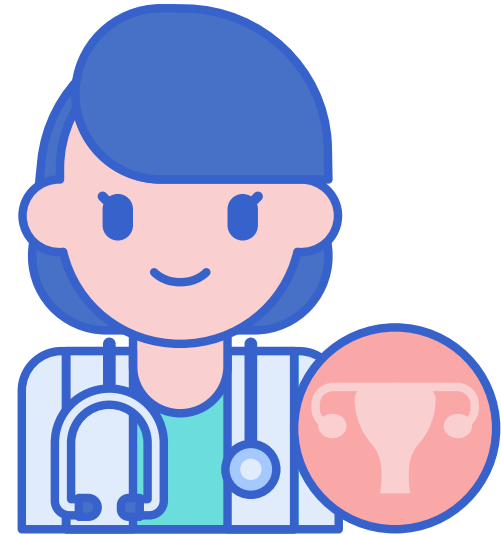
Try not to worry about how your body looks. While it's normal to feel self-conscious, remember that doctors are professionals.



It is a good idea to shower and rinse the outer portion of your genitalia so that you are clean for your appointment.

Questions your OBGYN May Ask

Your doctor will ask you a lot of personal questions. Below are some things they might ask you about:



- Dates of your most recent menstrual cycle
- Any changes in cramps or pain levels
- Changes in flow levels of your menstrual cycle
- Mood changes
- Sexual history and current sexual activity



You are in Control!

If you are feeling nervous you can have a family member or a friend in the room with you.

If you're nervous about a specific procedure, you can ask the doctor to explain step-by-step.

They won't force you to do anything. If you need to take a break you can. If you need to leave, you can!