

Live Well to  
Learn Well

Web:  
[health.cornell.edu](http://health.cornell.edu)

Phone (24/7):  
607-255-5155

Fax:  
607-255-0269

Appointments:  
Monday–Saturday

*Check web for hours,  
services, providers,  
and appointment  
information*

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Ithaca, NY  
14853-3101

The Well Woman Visit is designed to ensure a woman is healthy inside and out. What your check-up involves depends upon the discussion you have at the appointment with your clinician.

The visit may consist of a brief physical assessment to check thyroid, heart, blood pressure and lungs, a breast exam to check for lumps or soreness, and a pelvic examination to assess the condition of the external and internal reproductive organs and screen for certain health problems.

The exam may or may not include a “Pap smear” (a collection of cells from the surface of the cervix to screen for cervical cancer). Both the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Cancer Society recommend a first pap smear at age 21. Current recommendations for women ages 21–29 (with no history of an abnormal pap) are for testing once every three years after that. For women over age 30 with no abnormal history, screening is advised every 5 years.

However, even without a pap, there are many good reasons to schedule a Well Woman Visit. Some women use these visits to address questions or concerns about menstrual periods, vaginal health, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

## Topics for discussion

During your exam, you will be asked specific questions related to your sexual development and activity. While these questions are personal, they are also medically necessary in order to fully assess your health needs. The kinds of questions the clinician might ask will involve your menstrual history, whether or not you are sexually active (with men, women, or both), and the contraceptives and/or safer sex products you use. If you are unsure why your clinician asks a particular question, please ask.

## Confidentiality & comfort

Remember, your discussions and health records are protected by strict confidentiality laws and procedures. We will not disclose information about your health care to anyone without your permission, even if you are under age 18. If you have questions about confidentiality and how it applies to your annual exam, medical bills, or health insurance, talk with us.

Our goal is to make you as comfortable as possible with the gynecological exam. We will listen to your questions, values, beliefs, and experiences with



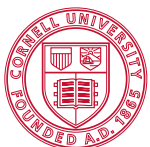
*Get the information and support necessary to address this important aspect of your health.*

respect, and will do our best to accommodate any special needs that you have (e.g., seeing a particular provider, bringing a friend or partner with you).

## Other sexual health appointments

Several other appointments are available to address other sexual health concerns. Some are with a nurse; others require a clinician:

- Contraceptive Options:**  
Students may meet with a sexual health nurse to learn about contraceptive options. This appointment is an opportunity to explore which method may be best-suited to your needs. You can call or go online (myCornellHealth) to schedule a birth control options appointment with a nurse. Because this is a nurse visit, no exam is done, and no prescriptions will be given at that time. (Note: If you choose a *prescription* method of contraception, you may be given an appointment with a clinician at another time.)
- STI Testing & Information:**  
If you *have symptoms* of an STI (genital discharge, itching, rashes, bumps, etc.) call and make an appointment for evaluation by a medical clinician (call 607-255-5155). If you *do not* have symptoms of infection but would like to learn more about STIs and be tested for infections, you may do so in a nurse visit (call 607-255-5155 or schedule an appointment via myCornellHealth).
- Prescription Refill:**  
If you need a refill of a prescription contraception but do not need/want an exam, call 607-255-5155 or go online to myCornellHealth and schedule a “contraception only” appointment with a clinician.



- **Sexual Relationships & Sexual Function:**

Cornell Health's clinicians are available to meet with students (and their partners, if desired) to discuss a wide range of sexual topics including sexual identity, sexual function, and partner intimacy.

We want to be sure you have the information and support necessary to address this important aspect of your health. You can find information about other dimensions of sexual health and health care at [health.cornell.edu](http://health.cornell.edu). Be sure to review our Fact Sheet Library.

If you cannot find what you need on our website, or if you prefer to speak directly with a clinician, call Cornell Health during business hours.