

The Female Annual Gynecological Exam

Why women need them

Annual gynecological exams are recommended for women who are sexually active or age 21 and older. The exam allows a healthcare provider to assess normal development of reproductive organs and screen for certain health problems. It provides an opportunity for a woman to talk with her clinician about any sexual health or reproductive concerns and to discuss general women's health care.

The following sections explain the details of the examination. Please read:

- [Scheduling and preparing for the exam](#) (both are links to more pages)
- [Gynecological exam detail](#)

Staying healthy is important. Whether you identify as lesbian, straight, bisexual, trans, questioning, etc., good gynecological care is an important part of overall health.

Many University of Chicago students come to the Student Care Center for their annual exams because:

- they want to take charge of their health
- they know routine gynecological care will prevent illness and discomfort
- the exam is recommended (by the SCC, as well as the American College of obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Cancer Society) for all women who are sexually active or have reached 21 years of age
- they want to be sure they're healthy inside and out
- they have been having unusual symptoms or discomfort in the pelvic/reproductive organ area.
- they have symptoms or pain that requires medical attention

What to do if you have concerns about your care

Talk with your clinician or one of our nurses. They want to answer your questions, address your concerns, and help make you comfortable. If your annual exam was difficult or unsatisfactory, or you are left with questions about the quality of your care, we encourage you to discuss your experience with us. We'd also like to hear the good news if you are particularly impressed by your clinician.