

Description

Annual or routine pelvic exams are advised for women beginning in their late teens or those of any age who are sexually active. A pap smear will detect the presence of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). These exams are important because they can detect early signs of cervical cancer, one of the most common cancers in women. Over the last forty years, cervical cancer deaths have decreased significantly, due in large part, to the use of the exam for early detection.

For more information:

Student Health & Wellness Center.....707-654-1170

Visit Our Website at <http://www.csum.edu/web/campus-life/student-center/student-health-center>

24-hr Nurse Advice Line (Med Call).....800-877-0027

Special Thanks to San Diego State University

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My Annual Visit (Women's Yearly Health Exams)



California Maritime Academy

*A campus of the California
State University*



My Annual Visit (Women's Yearly Health Exams)

“What should I expect?”

A routine gynecologist visit will include a breast exam, a pelvic exam, a bimanual exam and a discussion of pertinent health issues and answers to questions you may have.

The breast exam is a physical exam in which your health care provider will check for any visual abnormalities or lumps in your breasts. This is also an opportunity to learn breast self exam (BSE) if you don't already practice this important preventive measure.

The pelvic exam first involves an examination for rashes and/or redness in the external or internal areas of the vagina to detect any signs of sexually transmitted diseases. Next, a plastic device (speculum) is inserted into the vagina to separate the vaginal walls so the provider can examine the cervix. The following tasks are performed during this exam:

- **Pap Smear-** This is a simple and relatively painless exam which detects abnormal cells on your cervix. A small soft brush will be used to collect some cells from your cervix. This sample will be placed on a glass slide and sent to the laboratory. Pap smears are recommended for women 21 years and older, or who have been sexually active for at least 3 years.
- **Wet Mount-** This involves using a cotton swab to collect a sample of discharge from the vaginal walls to check for a vaginal infection.
- **Chlamydia test -** This involves taking another swab of the cervical mucous to be sent for analysis and is used for detecting the presence of Chlamydia-causing bacteria. This test is included in the exam at California Maritime Academy Student Health Center. It may not be a part of the exam elsewhere. Ask your health care provider. Other cultures may be taken at this time for infections such as gonorrhea.

The bimanual exam is a physical examination of the uterus, vagina, ovaries and fallopian tubes. This is performed with one or two fingers of one gloved hand placed inside the vagina and the other hand pressing on the outer abdomen. This exam assists your health care provider in identifying abnormalities in the pelvis.

Preparing for your pelvic exam

1. A reliable Pap smear cannot be done while you are menstruating, you must reschedule your appointment if you have your period during your scheduled exam.
2. Do not have intercourse, use vaginal medication creams or douche 72 hours before your appointment. It is difficult to get reliable samples following any of these activities. If any of these activities occur, call and reschedule your appointment.
3. Please arrive on time for your appointment. If you are late, you may be asked to reschedule for a later date.
4. Be sure to have all of your paperwork filled out prior to your appointment time. You will be provided with this paperwork from one of the staff members at the appointment desk.
5. Be prepared to spend at least one hour in the clinic to complete your exam. Bring the following items/information with you on the day of your exam:
 - Dates of any abnormal Pap smears (and what kind of abnormality if known)
 - Date of last menstrual period
 - The name of your pills or pill packet, if you are taking oral contraceptives, as well as the names of any other medications you may be taking.
 - Your questions regarding birth control and/or sexual health issues.

GYN Appointment

If you have never had a pelvic exam and/or if you wish to begin the use of a prescription birth control method for the first time, you must make your appointment at CMA Student Health & Wellness Center.

This appointment will review in detail what will happen during your exam and provide a forum for discussing the pros and cons of various contraceptive methods. You will learn the latest on sexually transmitted disease prevention and have an opportunity to have all your questions answered in a confidential setting.

Remember

This appointment is the time to ask your provider any questions regarding STDs, pregnancy and birth control. Although it may be uncomfortable to discuss these issues, the staff at the Student Health Center are comprised of various health professionals that are here to help you.

