
What if a Pap Smear is Abnormal?

For many women, the Pap smear is a routine part of life. Routine, that is, until a test turns up abnormal. In most cases, an abnormal Pap smear does not mean that you have cervical cancer. Remember, this is a screening test that finds early changes in cells that may lead to cervical cancer. Cellular changes that progress to cervical cancer do so very slowly. Regularly scheduled Pap smears allow health care providers to recognize a potential problem and intervene before these cellular changes progress to cancer.



Call for an appointment
with the
Women's Clinic
(479) 575-4478

Mission Statement

The Pat Walker Health Center, University Health Services provides professional and comprehensive medical care, mental health care, health education, and health promotion for a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. We, the University Health Services Staff of the Pat Walker Health Center, have a commitment to physical, mental, spiritual, social, and emotional health, the highest standards of quality, and appreciation of the value of each individual. Through these endeavors we support the educational mission of the University of Arkansas and the growth of each individual.

Pat Walker Health Center University Health Services

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Pat Walker Health Center

PELVIC EXAM



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When should I have my first pelvic exam?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend Pap smears should begin at least three years after a woman begins having sexual intercourse or by age 21 whichever ever comes first. However, an annual visit with a pelvic exam should be done by age 18. Once begun, you should make it a habit for the rest of your life.

Pelvic Exam

The pelvic exam consists of three simple steps. The speculum exam, the Pap test, and the bi-manual (two-handed) exam. To begin the exam you will lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet in foot rests. Your nurse practitioner or doctor will help you into the correct position.

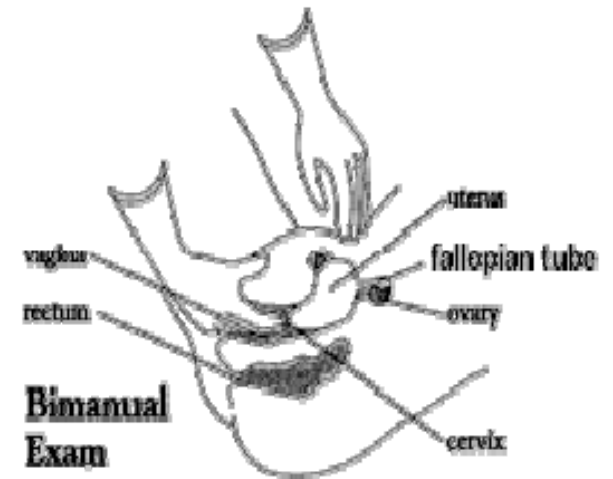
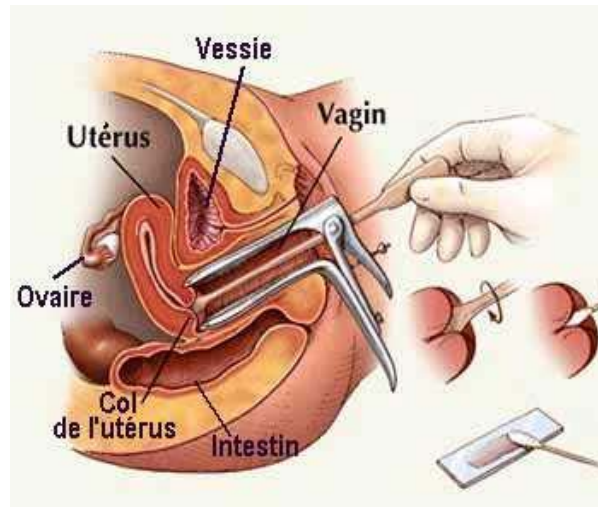
Speculum Exam

Your examiner will first look at your external genitalia and then insert the speculum into your vagina. There are a group of muscles at the opening of your vagina that you can control. If you use tampons, you probably remember the first time you tried to put in a tampon and how it just wouldn't go in until you relaxed your vaginal muscles. You will find that if you relax these vaginal muscles the speculum examination is much more comfortable. The speculum is inserted while closed and then opened in order for the examiner to examine your vagina and see your cervix.

Pap Test

During the speculum exam a Pap smear may be done. The Pap test consist of collecting some cells from the cervix. There may be some slight momentary discomfort during the cell collection. The Pap smear is sent to a pathologist for a microscopic examination to look for abnormal cells. The results are not known for 10-14 days. The Pap Smear is a screening test for precancer or cancer of the cervix.

It is not advisable to have a Pap smear during your period. During the speculum exam, your examiner may also collect some vaginal secretions on a cotton swab for a microscopic examination and/or culture the cervix to check for infections.



Bimanual Exam

After the speculum is removed the bimanual exam is done to determine the position, shape, and size of the uterus, tubes and ovaries. This is done with the examiner placing two fingers in your vagina and her other hand on your abdomen. Relaxing your abdominal muscles will help with this exam.

A rectal exam may also be done if indicated. A rectal exam consists of the examiner gently placing one finger in the rectum to feel for any abnormalities. The uterus may be more easily examined during a rectal exam.

