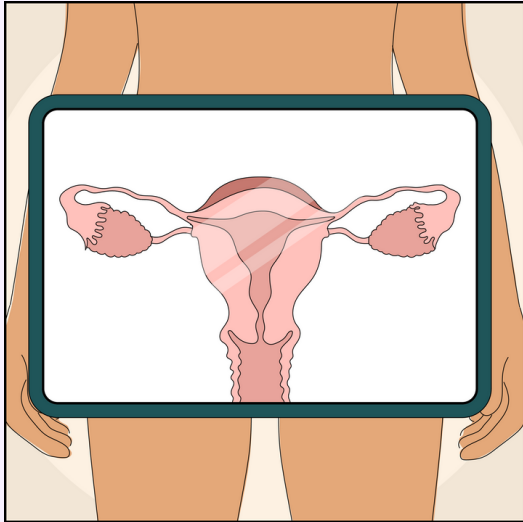


Pelvic Exam Social Story



A pelvic exam is a common physical health exam that is done to make sure your body is healthy. It is done at a doctor's office where a doctor will examine the inside and outside of your vagina.

1



Once you arrive at the doctor's office, you will need to check in and may need to wait for a short period of time. When it is time for your exam, you will go to a private room and meet with a nurse and your doctor.

While appointments may vary in time, the exam should only take about five minutes.

2



It is normal to have questions or to feel anxious about your exam. Talk with your doctor about how you are feeling and ask any questions you have. You can discuss ways they can make the appointment more comfortable or provide you with accommodations. You can ask them to explain what they are doing during the exam so that you know what to expect.

3



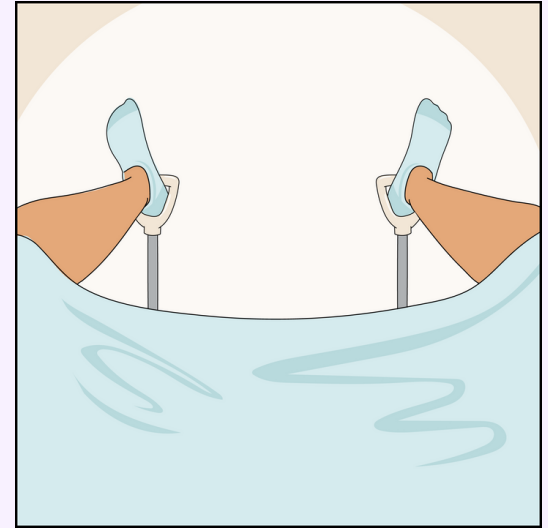
You may be asked to undress and put on a hospital gown to prepare for your exam. The doctor and nurses will give you privacy to change.

4



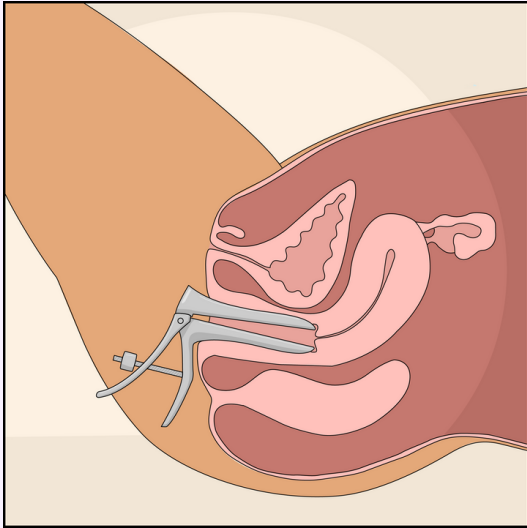
Once you are ready for the exam, you will be asked to sit on the exam table. Your doctor may examine other parts of your body before examining your vagina. They may listen to your heart and lungs and examine your abdomen, back, or breasts.

5



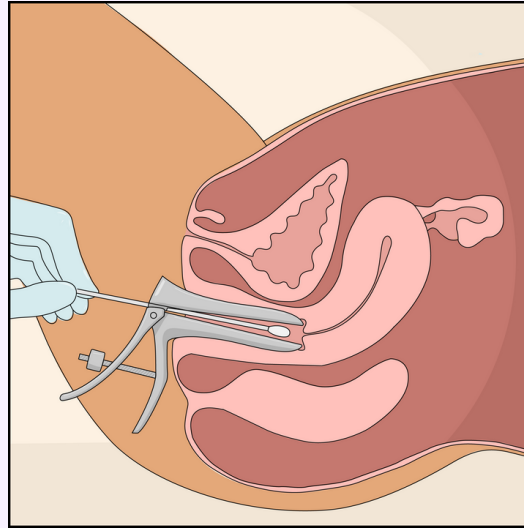
You'll lie down on the exam table and place your feet on the corner of the table or in stirrups (part of the table that holds up your legs). Your knees will be bent and wide apart. Your doctor may give you a sheet to lay over your lap for added privacy.

6



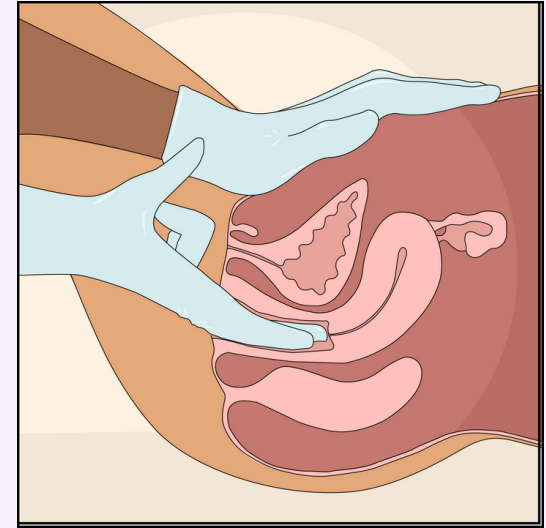
Your doctor will then use a speculum to carefully open your vagina. A speculum is usually made of plastic or metal and looks like a duckbill. This tool helps the doctor to see the inside of your vagina and your cervix. It is normal to feel some pressure from the speculum, but it is not usually painful. If you feel pain, speak up and let your doctor know.

7



Your pelvic exam may include a pap test. For a pap test, the doctor will use a long cotton swab to wipe the end of your cervix. This cotton swab collects cells, also called a "sample," that will later be tested to make sure your cervix is healthy. After this, the speculum will be removed from your vagina. Your doctor will share the results of this test with you at a later date.

8



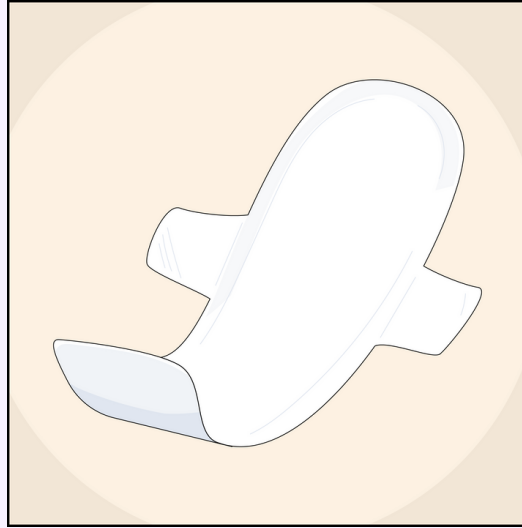
Next, your doctor will conduct a physical exam of your pelvis. Because your doctor cannot see your uterus and ovaries, they need to touch your abdomen and pelvis in order to examine them. While wearing a glove, the doctor will insert two fingers into your vagina. They will use their other hand to gently press on your abdomen. Both hands will feel around the inside and outside of your body to make sure everything is healthy.

9



When the physical exam is finished, the doctor and nurses will give you privacy to change back into your clothes.

10



You may have a small amount of clear or bloody vaginal discharge after your exam. This is normal. You may want to bring a menstrual pad to wear after your appointment. If you experience a large amount of discharge or pain, call your doctor.

11

This social story was designed by SexEdVA in collaboration with the Health Education Design Group (HEDG), both programs at the Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services at James Madison University.



Institute for
INNOVATION
in Health and Human Services
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



**Disability-inclusive
Sexual Health Network**

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Glossary



Accommodation - A change made to help someone with a disability participate fully and equally in different parts of life. This can include changes to spaces, tools, or the way things are done. Some examples include different styles of physical exam tables, sign language interpreters, or providing information in words, pictures, or out loud.



Cervix - a small, ring-like tube that connects the uterus and the vagina.



Pelvis - The part of your body that connects your upper body to your legs. It forms a basin shape and contains your hip bones and reproductive organs like the vagina and uterus.



Pelvic exam - A check-up done by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional to check your health and look for any problems in the vagina, cervix, and other parts of the body. They ask questions, do tests, and look at your body to make sure everything is okay. It is important to get pelvic exams done every year to keep you healthy and find any problems early on.



Speculum - A metal or plastic tool used by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional to gently open the vagina so they can see the cervix and inside of the vagina to do a pelvic exam. Speculums look like a duckbill and come in different sizes.



Stirrups - Special foot rests used in pelvic exams to make sure your legs are in the correct position for the doctor or nurse to do the exam. There is one foot rest on each side of the exam table and they help to spread your legs apart. They are often padded and can be moved to help make you more comfortable.



Uterus - An organ in the lower part of the abdomen. This is where a baby would grow and develop during pregnancy. The lining of the uterus sheds during menstruation.



Vagina - The vagina is an organ in the reproductive system. It is located between the legs. The vagina is a pathway to the uterus. It allows menstrual blood to leave the body during periods. It is also where a baby can come out during childbirth.

