

Women's Preventative Services Guidelines

The Women's Preventative Services Initiative (WPSI) has issued their 2016 update to address preventative health services for all women across their lifespan as well as implementation strategies so that women receive consistent and appropriate care.

Nine recommendations from the WPSI

Recommendation 1: Breast screening for average-risk women

Average-risk women should initiate mammography screening for breast cancer no earlier than age 40 and no later than age 50. Screening mammography should occur at least every 2 years and as frequently as every year. Screening should continue through at least age 74 years. Age alone should not be the basis to stop screening. Decisions about when to initiate screening for women between ages 40 and 50, how often to screen, and when to stop screening should be based on shared decision making involving the woman and her clinician. Women with dense breasts are often advised to add breast ultrasound to their mammogram. Keep in mind, many insurance companies consider breast ultrasound "diagnostic" and may charge an out-of-pocket expense.

Recommendation 2: Breastfeeding services and supplies

Recommendation 3: Screening for cervical cancer

Average-risk women should initiate cervical cancer screening with a Pap Test at age 21 years and have testing **every 3 years from 21 to 29** years of age. Co-testing with Pap and human papillomavirus (HPV) testing is not recommended for women younger than 30 years. Women **aged 30 to 65** years should be screened with **Pap and HPV testing every 5 years** or **Pap alone every 3 years**. Women who have received the HPV vaccine should be screened using these guidelines. Cervical cancer screening is not recommended for women younger than 21 years. Women older than 65 years, who have had adequate prior screening and are not at high risk for cervical cancer, no longer need the Pap test. Cervical cancer screening is also not recommended for women who have had a hysterectomy with removal of the cervix and no personal history of severe dysplasia of the cervix within the past 20 years.

Recommendation 4: Contraception

Adolescent and adult women should have access to the full range of US Food and Drug Administration-approved female-controlled contraceptives to prevent unintended pregnancy and improve birth outcomes. Multiple visits with a clinician may be needed to select an optimal contraceptive.

Recommendation 5: Screening for gestational diabetes mellitus

Recommendation 6: Screening for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection

Adolescents and women should receive education and risk assessment for HIV annually and should be tested for HIV at least once during their lifetime. Based on assessed risk, screening annually may be appropriate.

Recommendation 7: Screening for interpersonal and domestic violence

All adolescents and women should be screened annually for both interpersonal violence (IPV) and domestic violence (DV). Intervention services should be available to all adolescents and women. IPV and DV are prevalent problems, and they are often undetected by clinicians. Hence annual screening is recommended.

Recommendation 8: Counseling for sexually transmitted infections

Adolescents and women should be assessed for sexually transmitted infection (STI) risk. Risk factors include: (1) age younger than 25 years, (2) a recent STI, (3) a new sex partner, (4) multiple partners, (5) a partner with concurrent partners, (6) a partner with an STI, and (7) a lack of or inconsistent condom use.

Recommendation 9: Well-woman preventive visits

Women should receive at least one preventive care visit per year beginning in adolescence and continuing across the lifespan to ensure that the recommended preventive services including preconception and many services necessary for prenatal and inter-conception care are obtained. The primary purpose of these visits is the delivery and coordination of recommended preventive services as determined by age and risk factors.

What does a Well-Woman Preventative Visit Include?

The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) recommends an Annual Well-Woman examination. Many of the topics are age-related. And keep in mind if any of these issues require significant more time you may be asked to come back for a longer visit and possibly follow-up visits. In some cases, a referral to a specialist may be in order.

The visit may include some of the following issues depending on your needs:

Birth Control: Learn about choosing the right birth control methods for you.

Cancer Screening: Learn more about breast cancer, colon cancer and other types of cancer.

Vaccination: Get vaccinations against the flu, human papillomavirus (HPV), and more.

Health Screening: Get screened for high blood pressure, diabetes, bone density for osteoporosis, and more.

Depression screening: Depression is a common but serious illness. Depression can be mild, moderate or severe. To diagnose depression, we will ask about your symptoms, how often they occur, and how severe they are.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Screening: STI's such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV and genital herpes are spread by sexual contact.

Concerns About Sex: Discuss what happens during intercourse, pain during sex, hormonal changes that change interest or response to sex, or different forms of sex.

Weight Control: Learn about body mass index (BMI), exercise, obesity, diet, surgery, and health problems associated with being overweight.

Issues with Your Menstrual Period: Discuss premenstrual syndrome (PMS), painful periods, your first period, heavy bleeding, absence of periods or irregular periods.

Preconception Counseling: If you are planning to become pregnant, it is a good idea to have pre-conception counseling. This will include your medical and family history, medications you take, diet and lifestyle as well as any past pregnancies.

Other Reasons: Get help with other concerns such as menopausal symptoms, urinary incontinence, getting pregnant, relationship problems, etc.

As you can see an Annual GYN exam is not simply a breast exam, pelvic exam and Pap Test. Please read about “[screening for cervical cancer](#)” on page 1 regarding the frequency of the Pap Test. At this time ACOG is still recommending a pelvic exam with the Well Woman visit but you may discuss with me at the time of your visit.