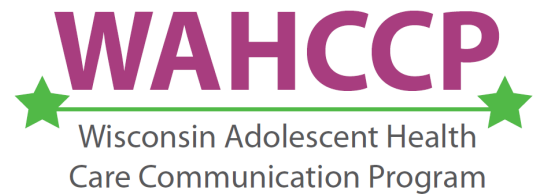


# A Health Care Guide for Teen Patients



## About the Appointment

- For males: physical exams should be done every year for those who are participating in any type of sexual activity with another person such as oral, anal, or vaginal sex, or when you turn 18 (whichever comes first).
- For females: you should schedule your first pelvic exam after you participate in any type of sexual activity with another person such as oral, anal, or vaginal sex, or when you turn 21 (whichever comes first).
  - Do not have sex, use vaginal creams, or douche for 24 hours before the exam.
- All throughout your life, it is important to do regular check-ups with a health care provider and if you have any health concerns, you should always tell your doctor or schedule an appointment.
- A provider may find problems you didn't know you had. When problems are found in the early stages, they are easier to treat.
- While the exam may feel uncomfortable for some people, it should *never* hurt. If you do feel any discomfort, don't be afraid to tell your provider. They want you to feel comfortable!

## Talking with your Provider

- You should feel comfortable asking your provider for information about contraception for pregnancy prevention and protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- If you have any questions about sex, masturbation, sexual preferences, or anything else, take this opportunity to ask! The most important thing about this visit is that you get the chance to talk freely with your provider.
- You should feel comfortable with your provider so you can discuss any and all health concerns.
- Providers should respect your confidentiality. What is discussed is private and not shared with others, including your parents or guardians.
- It is important to be honest with your provider so you can receive the best possible care.
- Know your health center's phone number so you can have simple questions answered without scheduling an appointment.

## The Physical Exam for Males

- The provider will likely look for signs of cancer by gently touching your testicles.
  - They are looking for hard bumps or lumps, or one testicle that is much larger.
- Be aware that you may have an erection during the exam. This is a normal reaction to being touched in the genital area and there is no need to feel embarrassed.
- You may ask your provider how to perform monthly self-exams.

(over)

- When you are asked to “turn your head and cough,” the provider is looking for a hernia.
  - A hernia is an opening in your stomach muscles where a small part of your bowel can poke through.
  - Repairing a hernia can be a simple, yet important procedure.

### **The Physical Exam for Females**

- The breast exam
  - The provider will gently press against each breast, looking for lumps. Lumps may be a sign of cancer.
- The pelvic exam
  - Your provider will first check your genitals for signs of infection.
  - Then your provider will use a speculum to open your vagina to see your cervix.
  - Cells may be collected with a brush and then tested in the lab for cancer or STIs.
  - You may ask your provider how to perform monthly breast and pelvic self-exams.
- The uterus/ovary exam
  - The provider will insert two fingers into your vagina and place their hand on your belly.
    - They are looking to feel your cervix, uterus, and ovaries to make sure they are healthy.

### **After the Exam**

- Your provider will see if you have any questions and talk about medications.
- Check to make sure the provider has your contact information. If you want them to contact you privately, make sure you set up a way to do this. For example, give them your cell number or set up a secret code so they know when it’s okay to talk about confidential information.
- Discuss when and how to make your next appointment.