

# Making the most of a well-woman checkup

January 2 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter

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(HealthDay)—Don't wait until you get sick to see a doctor—wellness visits for women can catch problems before they become serious, as well as make sure you're taking all the right steps for good health.

A well-woman checkup focuses on [preventive care](#). It may include immunizations, screenings to check your [blood pressure](#), cholesterol levels and other health markers, and advice for setting wellness goals.

Your health-care provider will document your health habits and health history and give you a physical exam. Depending on your age, he or she may do a breast exam. Your age and lifestyle will determine when you need a pelvic exam.

Be prepared to answer questions about:

- Your personal medical history, such as any illnesses and/or surgeries you've had.
- Your family's health history, including illnesses your siblings, parents and grandparents have had.
- Your use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, including prescription and over-the-counter medications, such as supplements.
- Your mental [health history](#).

Prepare for the visit by also writing out a list of questions *you* want to ask. Depending on your goals, this might include: how to eat healthier and get in more exercise; steps to take before getting pregnant or a plan for birth control; and help for any emotional issues you're facing, like stress or anxiety. Bring paper and pen to take notes.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act (sometimes called "Obamacare"), many health plans include a yearly wellness exam at no charge, so there's no reason to put it off. You may be covered for a primary care visit as well as an ob-gyn visit, along with some screenings and types of counseling, such as a dietitian appointment. Contact your insurance provider for the specifics or visit [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov).

**More information:** Healthcare.gov has detailed information on [preventive screenings for women](#).

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