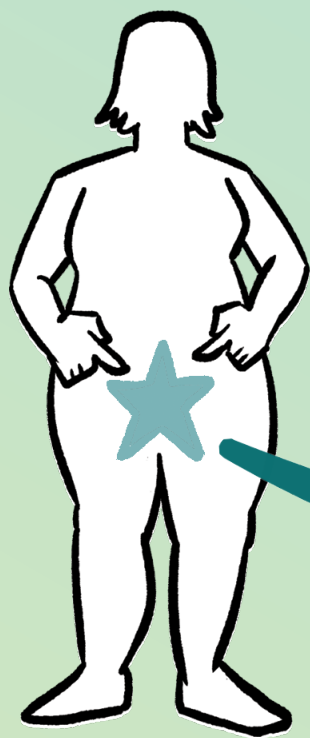
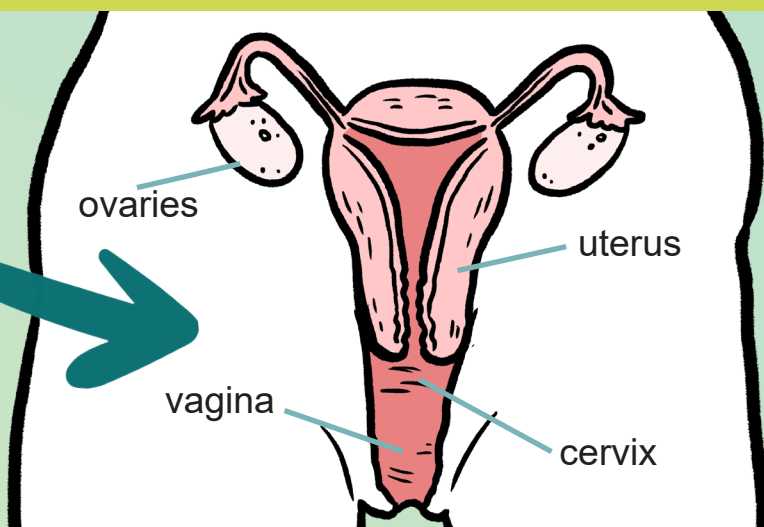


A Self-Advocate's Guide To Pelvic Exams



What is a pelvic exam?

A pelvic exam checks the vagina, uterus, ovaries, and cervix for signs of sickness and health.



Who should get a pelvic exam?

People between the ages of 18 - 65.

Where do I go for a pelvic exam?

The exam should only take place in a health clinic or doctor's office.

Why should I get a pelvic exam?

Your body is important!

- Even if you are not having sex with another person, your pelvis area needs to be checked to stay healthy.
- People with disabilities have a higher risk of cancer because they do not get regular check ups.

When should you get a pelvic exam?

Your healthcare provider will tell you if you need to have a pelvic exam. Some people have a pelvic exam once every 3 years. Others need an exam every year. Your healthcare provider may also recommend a pelvic exam for the following reasons:

- Family history of cancer.
- Pelvic pain.
- Unusual vaginal discharge or bleeding.
- Concerns about sexually transmitted diseases or infections (STIs).
- You are pregnant.

What should I expect during a pelvic exam?

A doctor, nurse or physician's assistant will check your vagina. They will use a medical tool called a speculum to make it easier to see inside your vagina.

- You may feel pressure or discomfort.
- You may bring support person with you during the exam.
- You may ask to take some medicine that will help you relax during the exam. You can also ask to be put to sleep.
- This exam should not take longer than 10 minutes.
- It is okay to ask questions to understand the process.
- It is okay to use your voice if you're uncomfortable.



For more information:

Contact your **primary care provider** or nearest **Planned Parenthood** with questions. Contact **You First** at **800-508-2222** to learn more about eligibility for free screening.



Created by the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council.

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This project was supported, in part by grant number 2201 VTSCPH-00, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

