

## Please Read This, If You Are Considering Getting a Pap Test



A new guideline has been issued by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in regards to obtaining a Pap Smear test. Students should consider the following guidelines before making appointment for a Pap Smear test.

- **Cervical cancer** screening should begin at age 21 years (regardless of sexual history). Screening before age 21 should be avoided because women less than 21 years old are at very low risk of cancer. Screening these women may lead to unnecessary and harmful evaluation and treatment.
- **Cervical cytology** screening is recommended every 2 years for women between the ages of 21 years and 29 years. Evidence shows that screening women every year has little benefit over screening every other year.
- **Exceptions to the 21 years requirement:** those with HIV and others with weakened immune systems should begin routine cervical cancer screening right away even though they are not 21 years old, according to The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. [Click here for more information](#).

## How do I schedule an exam or a pap smear?

Your provider (physician) will advise you when to schedule your pap. If you need an appointment for an exam or pap smear, stop by at the front desk of the Campus Health Center or call 951-827-3031. Please be on time for your appointment. If you are late, you may be asked to reschedule. Allow extra time for traffic and parking, and try to arrive 15 minutes early for your appointment, to pick up your parking permit. You do need an appointment for pap smears and birth control, but we do take some “walkins” for emergencies. We have both male and female clinicians available for appointments.

## When should I schedule my exam?

You should schedule your gyn exam on a day that you will not have any bleeding. Do not have intercourse, douche, or insert anything into your vagina for 48 hours prior to your appointment.

## What should I do if I am having "female" problems?

If you are having any problems such as vaginal discomfort, discharge, spotting, bleeding after intercourse, or pelvic pain, please let the nurse and provider know so that appropriate testing can be done along with your pap smear. Even if your pap smear isn't due, but you are experiencing any of these symptoms, you should be checked by a clinician.

## How does the exam begin?

We will have you complete a “gyn history” form, asking questions about you and your family's present and past health history. If you are using birth control, you will fill out a form concerning side effects. Your pap smear appointment includes discussion of birth control, Sexually Transmitted Infections, sexuality, general health, nutrition, weight, blood pressure, and any other concerns. Menstrual problems such as cramps, skipped periods, prolonged periods, and menopause can also be addressed. Eating disorders can be evaluated and also discussed. Not all concerns, however, will be addressed at that visit. Non-urgent issues may be rescheduled for another visit. If you have counseling needs or issues, we work closely with the Counseling Center to refer and help students in need of emotional support.

- The first part of your visit is a breast exam. You will be asked to change into an examination cape and drape sheet and will be checked for