



Women's health

Get the most from your well-woman visit

Good news! Most health plans cover an annual well-woman visit at no cost to you. You can choose from any primary care provider or OB/GYN in your health plan's network without a referral.

How can you get the most out of your visit? Take a list of your medicines and know why you take them, prepare your family's health history and make a list of issues you want to discuss.

A well-woman visit is the perfect time to talk about family planning and personal habits, such as alcohol and tobacco use. You can schedule necessary tests, such as screenings for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and sexually transmitted diseases. Your provider also can help you set health goals, like being active and maintaining a healthy weight.

Your well-woman visit is an opportunity to focus on you and make your health a top priority.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health, CDC

Trivia time:

Who was the first female U.S. Surgeon General?

Answer: Antonia Novello, a Puerto Rican doctor and public health administrator, was appointed to the post by President George H.W. Bush in 1990.

5 steps women can take for better health

To improve your health, you can:

- > **See a doctor or nurse** for a well-woman visit.
- > **Get active.** Think of ways to get moving that work with your lifestyle.
- > **Eat healthy.** Focus on veggies, fruits, whole grains and lean protein.
- > **Get enough sleep** and manage stress.
- > **Avoid unhealthy behaviors**, such as smoking or texting while driving.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health

Pop quiz: Risky vs. safe behaviors

Risky behaviors can put you and your loved ones in danger. Test your knowledge of these common threats:

1. Seat belts lower your risk of dying in a car crash by:
 25% 35% 45%
2. Who is more likely to talk on the phone while driving?
 Men Women
3. Smoking causes what percentage of lung cancer deaths in women?
 40% 60% 80%
4. What percentage of opioid overdose deaths involve a prescription opioid?
 20% 35% 50%

Answers: 1. 45% 2. Women 3. 80% 4. 50%

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health

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Heart-healthy eating for women

Heart disease is the most common cause of death in women in the U.S., and poor diet is a major risk factor for heart disease. Follow these steps to protect yourself with good eating habits.

- > Choose healthy fats like those in nuts, olive oil and avocado.
- > Limit animal fats and buy lean meats, such as chicken and turkey.
- > Eat more fiber from beans, fruits and veggies.
- > Choose whole grains, which have fiber and vitamins like iron.
- > Cut back on foods that make blood sugar spike. White rice, white potatoes and white bread cause the same sugar surge as a donut!
- > Lower your salt intake to less than 1,500 mg per day.

Make wise food choices and stay active to keep a healthy weight and a strong heart.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health, Wellsource/Momentum Health Shelf

Trivia time:

When is National Women's Health Week?

Answer: May 14 to 20, 2017. Use #NWHW to follow on social media.

How to recognize and treat endometriosis

Endometriosis happens when the tissue that normally lines the uterus (womb) grows outside of your uterus and on other areas in your body where it doesn't belong. Endometriosis growths bleed in the same way the lining inside of your uterus does every month, during your period. This can cause swelling and discomfort. Symptoms of endometriosis can include:

- > **Pain**, such as very painful menstrual cramps or long-term pain in the lower back.
- > **Bleeding or spotting** between menstrual periods.
- > **Digestive problems**, such as diarrhea, constipation, bloating or nausea.
- > **Infertility**, or difficulty getting pregnant.

If you think you have any of these symptoms, consult your doctor. The first step in treatment may be birth control pills or other hormonal contraceptives. For severe symptoms, surgery to remove the endometriosis patches is an option.

For mild symptoms, your healthcare provider may recommend over-the-counter pain medications or alternative therapies, such as acupuncture and chiropractic care.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health

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Yearly exams for women save lives

Did you know that January is Cervical Health Awareness Month? HPV (human papillomavirus) is an infection that spreads through sexual activity. HPV is so common that nearly all sexually active men and women get it at some point in their lives, though many don't realize it. HPV is also a cause of cervical cancer, which affects more than 11,000 women in the United States each year. Fortunately, cervical cancer can be cured when found early and treated. Here are a few steps you can take to stay safe and healthy:

- Those in the recommended age group (9-26 years old) can get the HPV vaccine. Both girls and boys can get vaccinated.
- For women, start having regular Pap screening tests at age 21.
- Women 30 years old or older may choose to have an HPV test along with the Pap test.

Sources: Office of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Trivia time:

How many babies are born around the world each second?

Answer: Approximately 4.5 babies per second!

Cuddle up: caring for your newborn

The experience of breastfeeding offers many benefits to you and your baby. Breast milk is easy to digest and has antibodies that can protect from infections. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants, and breastfeeding helps a mother's health and healing following childbirth. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that breastfeeding continue for at least 12 months, and the World Health Organization recommends up to 2 years of age or beyond.

Bonding with your newborn is important for mother and child right from the start, so try:

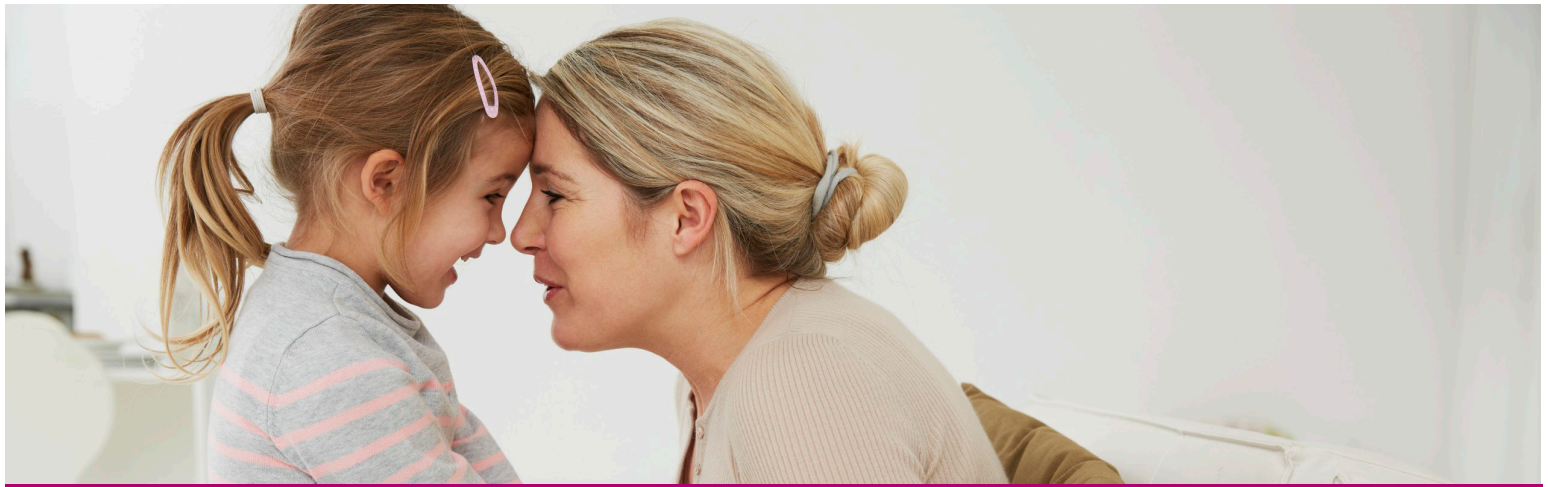
- Holding your baby to maintain skin-to-skin contact.
- Initiating breastfeeding within an hour of birth.
- "Rooming in" with your infant to stay together, even at night.

Along with making time for bonding with your newborn, new parents should also be sure infants get important screening tests before going home. Within 48 hours of your baby's birth, a sample of blood is taken from a "heel stick" in order to conduct a newborn screening for treatable diseases. A hearing screening is so easy that babies often sleep while being checked.

Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Kids Health

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Six steps for healthier skin

The skin is your largest and most visible organ, so taking care of it is a priority. Try these tips to make yours look and feel better:

- **Limit time in the sun.** Some sun can be good for you, but avoid being out during peak times.
- **Apply sunscreen.** Choose formulas with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide, which physically block the sun. Fewer rays mean fewer "age spots."
- **Wear protective clothing.** Hats, sunglasses and lightweight clothing offer shade for your face and body.
- **Try petroleum jelly to remove makeup.** Wipe off the excess with a tissue, leaving a thin layer on the skin to create a barrier and preserve moisture.
- **Avoid smoking,** which can wrinkle the skin.
- **Drink enough liquids.** Water helps the body absorb nutrients and rehydrate dry skin.

Sources: National Institute on Aging and National Institutes of Health

Trivia time:

When do babies get their fingerprints?

Answer: By 26 weeks, while the baby is still in the womb!

Depression and women: 6 things you should know

Depression is a treatable medical illness that can occur in any woman, for various reasons, regardless of age, race or income. Women experience depression at roughly twice the rate of men, likely due to certain unique biological, hormonal and social factors.

By the numbers:

- Approximately 12 million women in the United States experience clinical depression each year.
- Depression occurs most frequently in women aged 25 to 44.
- Approximately 10-15 percent of all new mothers get postpartum depression, which most frequently occurs within the first year after the birth of a child.

Although well-meaning friends or family members may tell someone with depression to "try to look on the bright side," most people need treatment to feel better, so start by making an appointment to see your doctor or health care provider. Even the most severe cases of depression can be treated with medication, psychotherapy ("talk therapy") or a combination of both.

Sources: National Institute of Mental Health, World Health Organization and Mental Health America

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