

# The Basic of Health for Young Women

## The Things You Need to Know About Regular Health Exams

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### Introduction

Health is something people do not take seriously until it gets serious. With increasing rates of diseases and illness as one ages, it is important for young adult women to take their health seriously now. Being a young adult woman, you think that your health is at its peak and have nothing to worry about. However, growing up with a family filled with women that had several serious health issues, it was important for me to make my health a number one priority. I spent my first two years of college with my doctor going in depth about my health and ways to better myself. I learned so much and I feel like it is important for me to share what I have learned.

From the age range of 19 to 39, there are exams you will take yearly and others you will take every three to five years. However, the amount of time between exams may change depending on age, family health history and initial health screening.

### What Should be Included in Regular Health Exams

<b>Annual Exams</b>	
Height and Weight	This will allow your health care professional to compute your body mass index (BMI) – BMI is used to indicate the amount of body fat you have and determine if you are at a healthy weight
Blood Pressure	The pressure of blood against the wall of blood vessels. The optimum number is 120/80 or under. High blood pressure is a risk factor and concern for a number of diseases
Cholesterol	Indicts the amount of Cholesterol, a waxy and fatty substance, in your body. Cholesterol is made HDL (good) and LDL (bad)
Immunizations	Yearly Flu Shot (possibly the COVID vaccine). Being up to date on childhood shots
Sexual Health	Discussion with physician about sexual activity and being tested for various sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
<b>Exams Every 3-5 Years</b>	
Pap Smear	Collection and testing of cervical cells for abnormalities. This is also accompanied with a Pelvic exam.

Breast Exam	Examination of the breasts appearance and feel for abnormal lumps in the breast, chest, and armpits
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## Prevalence

Even though women tend to live longer lives than men, they often face more cases of serious illness. See the table below that lists the Top 10 Causes of Death in the nation and state and for women specifically.

### The Top 10 Causes of Death

	National ( <a href="#">CDC 2019</a> )	North Carolina ( <a href="#">CDC 2017</a> )	National Women ( <a href="#">2017</a> )
1	Cancer	Cancer	Heart Disease
2	Heart Disease	Heart Disease	Cancer
3	Unintentional Injury	Accidents	Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases
4	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	Stroke
5	Stroke	Stroke	Alzheimer's Disease
6	Alzheimer's Disease	Alzheimer's Disease	Unintentional Injury
7	Diabetes	Diabetes	Diabetes
8	Flu/Pneumonia	Flu/Pneumonia	Flu/Pneumonia
9	Chronic Kidney Diseases	Chronic Kidney Disease	Kidney Disease
10	Suicide	Suicide	Septicemia

When this list is broken down by race and ethnicity the order of causes of death changes, but the overall list is still very similar. Heart Disease is the number one cause of death for Black, White, and American Indian/Alaskan Natives. This would make the most sense since African/Black Americans have higher rates of blood pressure than any other group but also develop it earlier and more frequently as well. White Women have higher rates of high cholesterol among women and any other groups.

Once broken down by different subgroups such as race/ethnicity, geographical location, socioeconomic status, and/or age, the ranking of the diseases can change and new causes may come into ranking.

### Associated Risks – While Annual Wellness Visits are Important

Going for an annual wellness visit is extremely important for numerous reasons. The first reason being that early signs and symptoms of diseases or causes of death may not be readily apparent. With early recognition, proper care and education, many of these diseases can be prevented early on or can be managed to cause as little damage as possible. Secondly, many of these illnesses when left unchecked could lead to serious health issues down the line and have multimorbidity. Multimorbidity is the occurrence of two or more chronic health conditions at the same time. People who have one illness will often have another. For example, people who have diabetes will often have high blood pressure because of the effect it has on the blood vessels. A third reason is that depending on your family history, race, ethnicity, age, geographical location, or socioeconomic status you can have a higher risk for certain diseases or health issues. The final reason why annual wellness health visits are important is because they help develop good health habits. You can use the information that your doctor provides you to make intentional positive changes that will improve your health for the better.

## **Recommendations**

A few tips to consider during your wellness visits are:

1. **Know Your Family History** - Before an annual exam you should have a discussion with family members to get an understanding of their health history. Illness can be genetic and be passed down through DNA. If both of your parents have high blood pressure, the likelihood of having high blood pressure increases.
2. **Build a Relationship with Your Doctor** - Your doctor should be the second biggest advocate for your health (you should be your #1 advocate!). With a good relationship with your doctor, your visit becomes less stressful and more helpful. It also allows for your doctor to have a better sense of your needs.
3. **Don't be Afraid to Ask Questions and Be Honest** - Your doctor is there to help you, so you have to ask questions about things you don't completely understand or have questions about. It's also important for you to be honest about any issues or concerns that you may have.

## **Resources**

The behaviors and habits you create now will affect you for a lifetime. The better you take care of yourself now will be beneficial for you once you get older. In the field of Public Health, preventative care is the most important. To help you develop these positive habits, here are a few resources listed below.

[Student Health Center](#) - For an on campus resource you can use the student health center. They provide the basics of health care, such as flu shots, STI testing, lab testing, and regular check ups. You can use your own personal insurance or buy school insurance

[Cone Health](#) - Cone Health is the local medical group for Guilford County and the surrounding areas. They provide full health care and specialists, but they do require insurance. Cone Health is known for its community engagement and partnership.

[Plan Parenthood](#) - If you are looking for more affordable healthcare you can use Plan Parenthood. They often provide services for free or will provide services on a sliding scale, this is based on your income.

[Triad Health Project](#) - The Triad Health Project is an LGBTQ+ organization that provides free HIV/AIDS and STI testing. They also help individuals find housing and treatment programs.

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