

Consent for Pelvic Examination

According to The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the pelvic examination is part of the evaluation of women presenting with many common conditions, including pelvic pain, abnormal bleeding, vaginal discharge, and sexual problems. Pelvic exams—both in the office and while under anesthesia— are also an important part of evaluation for gynecologic procedures to ensure safe completion of the planned procedure. Often, a pelvic examination is performed for women without symptoms while looking for gynecologic cancer, infection, and pelvic inflammatory disease.

A pelvic examination is an assessment of the external genitalia; internal speculum examination of the vagina and cervix; bimanual palpation of the adnexa, uterus, and bladder; and sometimes rectovaginal examination.

Reasons for a pelvic exam can include (but are not limited to) health screening, abnormal bleeding, pelvic pain, sexual problems, vaginal bulge, urinary issues, or inability to insert a tampon. Other indications include patients undergoing a pelvic procedure (e.g., endometrial biopsy or intrauterine device placement). Also, pelvic examination is indicated in women with current or a history of abnormal pap results, gynecologic cancers, or toxic exposures.

The potential benefits of a pelvic examination include the detection of vulvar, vaginal, cervical, uterine and ovarian cancers and precancers, yeast and bacterial vaginosis, trichomoniasis, and genital herpes, early detection of treatable gynecologic conditions before symptoms begin occurring (e.g. vulvar or vaginal cancer), as well as incidental findings such as dermatologic changes and foreign bodies. Additionally, screening pelvic examinations in the context of a well woman visit may allow gynecologists to explain a patient’s anatomy, reassure her of normalcy, and answer your specific questions.

The potential risks of a pelvic exam may include (but are not limited to) fear, anxiety, embarrassment (reports ranged from 10% to 80% of women) or pain and discomfort (from 11% to 60%).

There are few alternatives to pelvic examination, the alternatives are not as effective for providing diagnostic or evaluative information and carry their own set of potential risks. If you have concerns, you should discuss with your healthcare provider.

I _____ understand that this Patient Consent Form is required by law. I understand that I need to sign this form to show that I am making an informed decision to have pelvic examinations and I have read and understand the above.

The provider or their delegate has explained to me the nature, purpose, and possible consequences of each procedure as well as risks involved, possible complications, and possible alternative methods of treatment. I also know that the information given to me does not list every possible risk and that other, less likely problems could occur. I was not given any guarantee from anyone about the final results of this procedure.

Signature

____/____/_____
Date

I understand that my provider is involved in educating tomorrow’s medical professionals and that familiarizing students with the female anatomy and instilling a physician workforce with confidence in pelvic examination skills is essential. I consent to pelvic examination by the medical professional student under the supervision of my medical provider.

Signature

____/____/_____
Date