

How to do a universal self exam

Brought to you by

Street Youth Rise Up



A campaign of the Young Women's Empowerment Project

Why We Made This!

Our Bad Encounter Line shows that girls and transgender girls are being denied help from health care providers. 85% of reports we got this year were from street based youth who were turned away from a medical provider.

YWEP reached out to Chicago Women's Health Center and Linda Wesp from the Broadway Youth Center to teach us how to look at our bodies and learn how to take care of ourselves when we can't get to a doctor. Tanuja Jaggernauth taught us about herbs that can help us when we can't get prescriptions.

We tried to make this booklet matter to all bodies. We are learning more information every day about how all our bodies are different. We know this is missing important information so if you have information you want to see in this booklet please email us at selfcare@youarepriceless.org

Made by Skitz Torres, Tanuja Jaggernauth, Roxy Truedeau, Linda Wesp, Dominique McKinney, Asia & YWEP Outreach Workers

The Underground Vagina

What you need

*hand-held mirror

*flashlight

*speculum (get one from Chicago Women's Health Center or YWEP!!)

*water-based lube

1. Practice opening and closing the speculum; and make sure you comfortable with how to lock it open, as well as how to unlock and close it.

2. Then sit comfortably; leaning back with your legs open, knees up, on a bed or couch.

(To get a hold of your own speculum have an appt at the CWHC and you can request to keep the one from your visit.)

3. Put some lube onto the bills (the rounded part) which you will insert into your vagina). Let your muscles relax, to insert the speculum, hold it in one hand, handles up, bills together. Using your other hand spread the labia and insert the bills of the speculum as you would a tampon.

4. When you have inserted it as far as it will comfortably go, open the bills using the mechanism on the handles that you practiced with earlier. You will feel the speculum stretch your vagina open. Lock the speculum into place. Then you can let go of it. With both your hands free, you can now look around. Shine the flashlight into the mirror so it reflects into the vagina lighting up the internal space. Or shine the flashlight directly inside. Adjust the mirror and flashlight so you can see inside. At the back of your vagina is your cervix. It looks like a small donut with a very small opening in the center.

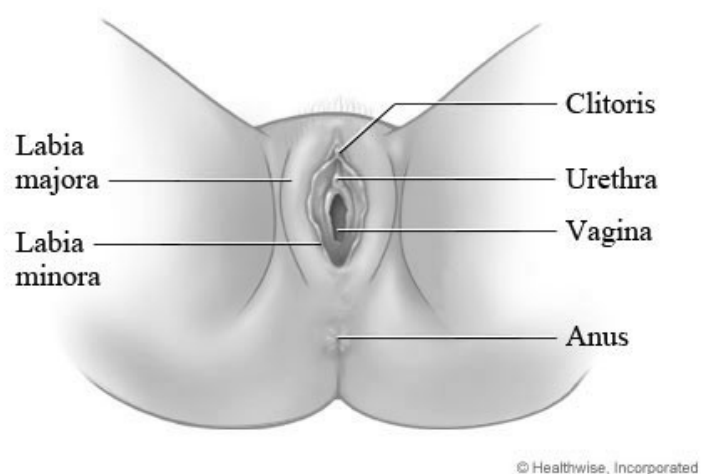
5. When you are finished, unlock and close the speculum. Then slowly and gently pull the speculum out. You may smell the speculum to become familiar with your natural smell of secretions and examine the mucus picked up on the speculum. An acidic smell is not unusual. A yeasty or fishy odor may indicate an infection.

What You Might See

The cervix appears like a knob about the size of a quarter or half-dollar. The hole or opening in the center is called the cervical OS.

*If you cannot see your cervix, after a few tries you are unable to find your cervix, wait a few days and try again. The cervix moves somewhat during the menstrual cycle and may be easier to see in a few days.

*Your cervix maybe pink and smooth or it might have reddish blemishes. It can also be uneven, rough or splotchy. All of these are normal.



*There may be mucus covering the cervix or coming out of the OS. Mucus is natural. The mucus changes throughout the menstrual cycle also. It ranges from pasty-white (non-fertile) to clear and stretchy egg-white texture (fertile). It does not have a strong odor.

* The cervix may have fluid-filled sacs on it that look like blisters. These are called Nabothian cysts and are not a problem. They are caused by a blockage in the mucus-producing glands of the cervix. They do not need treatment. You may also see polyps, outgrowths of tissue that dangle on a stalk and pro-

trude through the OS. They may bleed easily but do not need to be removed unless they bother you.

*Cervical bluing may be the first sign that you is pregnant. 50% of people who are pregnant will have a blue or purplish colored cervix due to an increase in blood circulation. During pregnancy, the cervix may also look puffy and softer and the OS more open.

Anal Self Exams

What you will need for a self-anal exam

A mirror

Ability to have a good view of the area

Good lighting

Quick Tips

-Be Aware that it's really easy to injure the tissue around the Anus so be gentle with your fingers and look more than you touch

-If you see a swelling around the opening of the anus, it might be a hemorrhoid or it might be a wart—see below for more information about this

-This exam can be hard to do because arms and fingers might not reach far enough. If you have someone you trust do this with you it might improve your chances of being successful!

In the Shower... You can feel more this way

While you are in the shower reach around your back and with your middle finger reach inside your hole

Lube on your finger will help— you can also use soap (which might make you itch) if you don't have any lube available

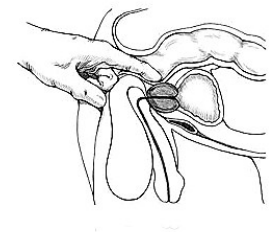
Slowly and gently rotate your finger around. Press softly and check for any lumps, bumps Or sore spots.

On the Floor.. You can see more this way

Sit down with your knees up and a mirror between your thighs

Lay back slightly so you can see your anus

Examine the outside of the area and then with your fingers push the anus open to look for any bleeding or swelling



Its good to know...

It can be hard to tell the difference between what might be normal and what might be a reason to get checked out further when it comes to an anal exam.

Red flags If you see these signs its good to see a health care provider to test for infections. Redness, warts, bumps, tears, bleeding, discharge, itching, burning or pain.

What is a wart?

They usually look like they have been stuck onto the skin, and are more rough and look like little pieces of cauliflower. When it comes to warts and HPV, it is best to treat them sooner than later because if left untreated for a long time they are much harder to get rid of. If you have a wart it is contagious from skin to skin contact - so it could be contracted or transmitted from skin touching skin (i.e. even if there is some protection like a condom there might still be skin touching skin and therefore HPV can still be spread.

What is an anal fissure?

A tear that can take a long time to heal. You might see blood on the toilet paper and have some pain too. Sometimes they are small like paper cuts and hard to see— other times they might be larger. Its good to check in with a health care provider about this. You can also take baths to help with the pain.

What is a hemorrhoid?

It is soft and more like a bump from under the skin. People can also get hemorrhoidal skin tags (where a hemorrhoid used to be) and those are really easy to mistake for a wart. Baths help hemorrhoids too— but if you having pain that wont go away then its good to check in with a health care provider.

A word about the prostate

Cis gender females do not have prostates. But everyone else does! If you notice swelling when you are doing an exam with your finger go get checked out by a health care professional. A swollen prostate can be a sign of many things—including Cancer! The prostate should feel like the flesh between your thumb and the rest of the hand when you make a tight fist. If you feel anything that is as firm as the knuckle, or a lump, bump or swelling then tell a health care provider!

8 Fierce steps to giving yourself a chest/breast exam

1. Start by standing straight with your arms to your side or at your hips. It helps to do this in the shower when your skin is warm. You can also do this exam laying down on the floor or bed.

2. Look at yourself in a mirror to see if there are any changes in your chest/breast or in the area. You are looking to see if there are any changes in the shape, color and or if there is swolleness or sore-ness area

3. Raise your arms like your touching the sky using your right hand to examine your left side and your left hand to examine your right side. You are looking for lumps or changes in the tissue. Check the texture of your left side by starting at the outer edge. Place your three fingers flat onto your skin, press down and move in small circles. Repeat this all around the area. Don't rush.



4. Gently squeeze your nipples using your finger and thumb to check for any type of discharge



5. Use your fingers in a flat together position making a circular pattern around the area of the breast/chest.

6. Start at the nipple and move your fingers around the area in a larger circular pattern until you reach the outer area

7. Make sure you feel around all the whole tissue area with a soft touch and a downward deeper motion

8. Do the same in the armpit area

More about chest exams

Signs and Symptoms to look for:

- A lump
- Swelling
- Skin irritation
- Dimpling
- Pain
- Nipple retraction (nipple turns in)
- Redness of nipple or breast skin
- Scaly nipple or breast skin
- Nipple discharge

If you have Silicone or Saline Breast Implants:

Touch your breasts lots so you will be able to feel the implants and distinguish them from your natural tissue. Notice how firm they feel and learn to locate their boundaries so that you become familiar with their shape and size.

Look for changes in:

Firmness If the implant feels tighter and firmer then it may indicate that capsular contracture is setting in.

Texture Feel for ridges and ripples on the implants. Note that ridges and ripples may start to occur after the implants have been in place for a few years as the implants age. If ridges or ripples occur sooner than this, it may indicate a problem with your implants.

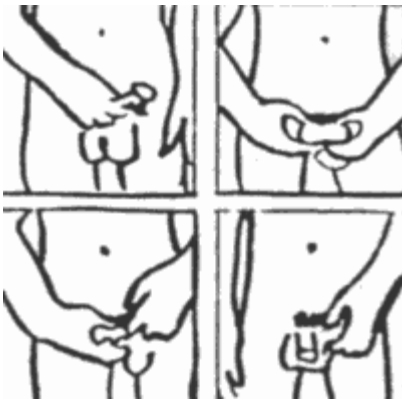
Size In particular with saline breast implants, if you notice a reduction in size, then it may indicate implant rupture or a leak.

Lumps If you notice a lump or a bump in the skin on your breasts that feels like the breast implant pushing into your skin, this may indicate breast implant extrusion

\f you have it- check it!

It's best to do this during or right after a hot shower or bath. The scrotum (skin that covers the testicles) is most relaxed then, which makes it easier to examine the testicles.

Examine one testicle at a time. Use both hands to gently roll each testicle (with slight pressure) between your fingers. Place your thumbs over the top of your testicle, with the index and middle fingers of each hand behind the testicle, and then roll it between your fingers.



You should be able to feel the epididymis (the sperm-carrying tube), which feels soft, rope-like, and slightly tender to pressure, and is located at the top of the back part of each testicle. This is a normal lump.

Remember that one testicle (usually the right one) is slightly larger than the other for most people — this is also normal.

When examining each testicle, feel for any lumps or bumps along the front or sides. Lumps may be as small as a piece of rice or a pea.

If you notice any swelling, lumps, or changes in the size or color of a testicle, or if you have any pain or achy areas in your groin, let your doctor know right away.

Lumps or swelling may not be cancer, but they should be checked by your doctor as soon as possible. Testicular cancer is almost always curable if it is caught and treated early.

What to look for if you are tucking or using a gaff

Be aware of

- Sores or open wounds can form around the area—these can lead to a higher risk for getting HIV or STD's
- Your thighs can become rough or cracked from pressure. Use lots of creams or oils to keep things moving!
- If a sore won't go away be sure to talk with a health care provider about it so you can make sure it isn't a sexually transmitted infection.

Quick TIPS for TUCKING

***The idea is to gently push the testicles up inside the body, and then pull the penis back between the legs. You can keep in place with tight fitting underwear or surgical tape.**

***Tucking lowers your sperm count because heat affects your sperm production.**

***Sitting must be practiced, sit to hard it'll feel like you got kicked in the groin.**

***ONLY USE SURGICAL TAPE, other tape can take off your skin. And cut your hair in your groin real short when you use it.**

Herbs and Vitamins for Treatment and Prevention of STDs/STIs

There are lots of ways you can take care of yourself using herbal home remedies. These ideas are just a few of the many you can find out there. Most of these you can get at Walgreens or a natural health store for pretty cheap. They are great to have on hand to prevent symptoms from STIs or treat signs and symptoms that come up. Each of these may come in either capsule, tablet or oil form, so look for the dosage instructions on the container and be sure to notice if your symptoms get worse. If so, do contact someone who can troubleshoot your situation with you.

Feel free to email selfcare@youarepriceless.org if you would like any herbal self care support.

VITAMINS

ZiNC: you can take these as lozenges to boost your immune system

B vItaMiNS: essential for maintenance of hormone production, energy of your cells, and your nervous system. Great for supporting memory and mental health. Especially important to take if you do not eat meat.

VItaMiN C: great antioxidant and another great way to keep your immune system strong

HERBS

Cranberry: excellent to take as a tablet at the first sign of a UTI. Cranberry prevents the bacteria from attaching to the lining of your urethra and helps to flush out the bacteria from your system.

Uva Ursi: a great antibacterial herb that you can use with cranberry to treat UTIs. Best in tablet form.

Astragalus: a great herb to boost your energy and immune system. You can find it in tablets or if you can find it in root form, you can include it in soups and stews to create healing meals.

Garlic: an amazing herb and food that maintains your immune system and helps to get rid of the signs and symptoms of Chlamydia. When you notice itching, burning, or any oozing of sores, take one teaspoon three times a day for a week. Symptoms should dissipate after a week. We suggest that you talk to a self care support person as you begin this treatment.

Goldenseal: Fantastic for any infections, externally or internally. Not meant to be used long term as it may upset your stomach.

Echinacea: Wonderful for preventing infections and keeping your immune system strong. You can use this right away when you are first noticing signs that an infection is coming back.

Wild Oregano Oil: Great for any infections due to viruses or fungus, like herpes, HIV, and Candida, thrush, or yeast infections

Tea Tree Oil: excellent for douching when you have an infection. You can also find suppositories of tea tree oil that work like a charm.

Chicago Clinic Information

Chicago Women's Health Center
3435 N. Sheffield Avenue, Suite 206A
Chicago, IL 60657-1641
Phone: 773.935.6126
Fax: 773.935.7145
9am - 4pm by appointment



- *Sliding scale fees and flexible payment plans
- *Longer appointments which allow time to focus on health education
- *Emphasis on preventive/self care including breast and cervical self-exam
- *Education about and referrals for alternative health care
- *Street-level accessible exam room for women with physical disabilities
- *Feminist therapy services
- *Affordable emergency contraception's

Services

- *Gynecology
- *Counseling
- *Outreach & Education
- *Alternative Insemination
- *Childbirth Education
- *Fertility Awareness
- *Acupuncture
- *Transgender Health Care

BYC Medical
3179 N. Broadway 2nd floor
Drop in hours are M, W, Th, F 1-5pm
and 6-8pm
Phone 773-935-3151
Services are free of charge
no appointment necessary



Services Offered

- *Physical exam and consultation with a licensed medical professional (MD, PA or NP)
- *Evaluation of STD symptoms (i.e. look at something and tell folks if it is an STD or not)
- *Treatment for Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, Trich and syphilis FREE
- *Testing for syphilis (blood draw)
- *Testing for gonorrhea, Chlamydia and rapid *HIV* done by BYC health education department M-F 1-8pm.
- *Treatment for HPV (warts) or HSV (herpes)
- *Treatment for a yeast infection or bacterial vaginosis
- *Evaluation and treatment of minor health conditions (strep throat, skin infections, cold/flu etc)
- *Urine pregnancy tests
- *Rapid strep throat tests
- *Emergency birth control (but not free unless we have samples - which right now we do not)
- *Removal of stitches
- *Cervical pap smears on the 1st Monday of every month from 6-8pm only