

Most Well Woman Exams are too little, too late. Is yours?

By Dr. David Minkoff of LifeWorks Wellness Center, Clearwater, FL.

Are you one of the many thousands of women for whom a well woman exam is only an annual Pap smear and a manual breast exam? Then read on.....

Who can name the three biggest killers of women?

#1 is Cardiovascular disease ASVD (heart attack and stroke) and hypertension.

#2 is Cancer.

#3 is Lung disease, obesity, diabetes and bone fractures.

A thorough Well Woman Exam should be able to reveal the pre-cursors to all three. It should be an opportunity to ask any questions about issues which may be causing you concern, from fertility to cancer signs to inherited disorders. It should provide you with an annual report on your overall state of health, and not just give the "ok" to your breasts and reproductive organs. Identifying a minor issue which may have the potential to develop into a serious illness, is what a Well Woman Exam should do.

Here is what a comprehensive Well Woman Exam should include:

1. Detailed Health Screen (Lipid profile to check for lipids, Complete Metabolic Profile to check for liver or kidney disease and electrolytes, Fibrinogen to test blood clotting factors, Hemoglobin A1C to show fasting blood insulin and metabolic syndrome measurements, Homocysteine test to show levels of the amino acid, High Sensitivity CRP to highlight any areas of inflammation, a Thyroid profile and a Ferritin test to show iron levels.)
2. A Vitamin D blood test to determine level. A deficiency can result in serious health problems.
3. Estronex test to check how you metabolize estrogen – an early indicator that you may be at high risk of female cancer.
4. Bone resorption (urine test) to check for bone loss, to help prevent osteoporosis.
5. A Thermogram should be ordered to check breast health.
6. Usual pap and pelvic and breast exam.
7. If over 40, EKG should be performed to highlight potential cardio-vascular problems.
8. Body composition analysis to record percentages of: fat, muscle, bone, water, visceral fat, metabolic rate and physique rating.
9. Colonoscopy over 50.
10. Hormone evaluation to test balance of estrogen, progesterone, cortisol and DHEA.
11. Dental evaluation referral, if required for those with mercury fillings or root canals.
12. Advice on stopping smoking, excessive use of alcohol or drug abuse.

Print this sheet and use it as your guide when you are scheduling your next Well Woman Exam. Find a practitioner who will offer you this complete menu of tests and exams. Early detection of a potentially life-threatening issue is so much easier to handle than chronic illness!

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