

# ———— Patient guide to ———— **SENSITIVE HEALTH EXAMS**



## **What is a sensitive exam or procedure?**

A sensitive examination or procedure is one involving the genitalia, rectum or female breast. Chaperones are provided for these exams or procedures, but can also be requested in any other circumstance.

## **Types of exams**

A **Pelvic Exam** may include visual inspection, a speculum exam or a bi-manual exam. During the latter, the provider will insert one or two lubricated, gloved fingers into the vagina while gently pressing on the outside of the lower abdomen with the other hand.

A **Breast Exam** is usually performed if you have breast symptoms, such as pain or lumps, or as an initial screening at age 20. It consists of a visual and manual examination by the practitioner.

A **Pubic/Groin Region Exam** is performed to evaluate symptoms such as pain, lumps, rashes or lesions in this area and to check for a hernia.

A **Penile Exam** is performed to evaluate symptoms such as pain with urination, rashes, sores or discharge from the penis.

A **Rectal Exam** is performed to evaluate symptoms of the abdomen, pelvis and gastrointestinal system such as pain, blood in the stool, or sores and lesions .

**The provider will explain what to expect from the examination, ask questions in order to understand your general health and gather any history which could identify risk factors that may affect your health. Through the Patient-Centered Medical Home approach, Student Health Services encourages you to get to know your provider(s), so you will feel comfortable sharing information and asking questions about your health.**

### **Medical history includes but is not limited to:**

- Goals and reason for your visit
- Symptoms and concerns
- Physical and mental health history
- Family planning and/or pregnancy prevention options
- Family health history
- Previous or current sexual assault, abuse or other interpersonal violence
- Sexual history to include partners, practices and sexually transmitted diseases
- Use of tobacco, alcohol and other drug or substances

### **Why do we have chaperones?**

The chaperone assists the patient and the health care provider in completing sensitive exams and procedures in a safe and respectful manner. The chaperone's job is to:

- Protect and enhance the patient's comfort, safety, privacy, security and/or dignity during sensitive exams or procedures.
- Protect the patient and health care professionals from misunderstandings during exams and procedures.

**A trained professional staff member will be present at all times during a sensitive health exam. You may request a staff member of a specific gender. Also, you can request to have a friend or family member present in addition to the staff member.**



**Student Health Services**  
University of South Carolina