

Women’s Health Through the Years



Screening tests save lives. When caught early, most diseases and cancers can be treated. That’s why women’s health experts at the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommend the screening tests in the chart to the right for women through the years.

Screening tests are often performed during an annual exam. Getting an annual exam is important, even if you are not due for a screening test.

“Whether you see a family practitioner or a gynecologist, it’s important to have a yearly visit with a doctor. Annual GYN exams give doctors a chance to assess the health of your reproductive organs and check for risk factors,” says Dr. Scott Ellis, OB/GYN with TMH Medical Clinic.

Recommendations changed recently for certain tests such as the Pap test and mammograms. If you have concerns or a family history of a certain disease, talk with your doctor about getting a test more frequently.

“Screening tests are not always pleasant, but they make a huge difference on health outcomes. When caught early, we can often treat conditions with minor procedures rather than major surgeries or cancer treatments,” Ellis concludes.

If you are due for an annual exam or screening test, commit to making an appointment soon. TMH Medical Clinic offers a wide range of gynecological services. Visit thememorialhospital.com/medical-clinic for more information or to make an appointment.

TEST	WHY NEEDED	WHEN
Pap Test	Swab of cervix to check for cervical cancer	At age 21, every 3 years; less frequently after age 65 if normal
STD Testing	Check for HIV, HPV, Chlamydia, gonorrhea plus others	Ongoing after women become sexually active—no set schedule for most, except HPV every 3 years at age 30
Clinical Breast Exam	Manual check for breast cancer	Age 20 – 40, every 1 to 3 years; 40 and older, every year
Mammogram	Digital check for breast cancer	At age 40, every year; after age 65 case-by-case basis
Thyroid-stimulating Hormone Screening	Check thyroid gland	At age 50, every 5 years
Colorectal Cancer Screening	Check for cancer in colon or rectum	At age 50, colonoscopy every 10 years; other tests every 1 to 5 years
Bone Density Scan	Screening for osteoporosis	At age 65, every 2 years

**All of these tests are available at The Memorial Hospital and the TMH Medical Clinic. Visit thememorialhospital.com/medical-clinic/womens-health.*

Had a Mammo Lately at TMH?

If so, you no doubt noticed, and tasted, the improvements. While the remodel is still in the works, women are greeted with a renewed waiting area complete with a mural and fountain. Upon arrival women receive a rose and better yet, chocolate. To schedule a mammogram, call your doctor for an order then call the Scheduling Department at 826-3150 – do something good for yourself, and get something good in return.



January is Cervical Health Awareness Month...

Avoid Cervical Cancer with Regular Pap Tests



Lowering your risk for cervical cancer is pretty straightforward: get regular Pap tests. Cervical cancer is preventable if detected and treated early.

Regular Pap tests detect cervical cancer before it develops. In fact, most women who get cervical cancer have not had a Pap test in the last five years, or ever.

“Pap tests are one of the true public health victories in the last 100 years. Cervical cancer used to be common. Now, it’s fairly rare,” says Dr. Jim Summers, OB/GYN with TMH Medical Clinic. Women should get a Pap test every three to five years starting at age 21.

“The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists used to recommend Pap tests annually but we know so much more about how pre-cancers behave today that it isn’t needed as often,” adds Summers.

A big player in cervical cancer is the human papillomavirus, or HPV—a common sexually transmitted disease. Over half of all sexually active men and women will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives. The virus has been linked to about 70% of all cervical cancers.

“Usually HPV infections clear on their own, but when we get an abnormal Pap test we often check for HPV,” he concludes.

You can protect yourself against the HPV virus by getting an HPV vaccine. Check with your doctor at your next annual exam. Also, talk to your child’s doctor for more information about the risks and benefits of teens getting the vaccination.

To HPV or Not? Teens and the HPV Vaccine

HPV is a nasty set of viruses—about 150 to be exact. At least 12 are labeled high risk, having such serious consequences as cervical, vaginal, vulval, penile and anal cancer—not to mention uncomfortable genital warts.



Dr. Kristie Yarmer,
TMH Pediatrician

“While the body usually fights off more mild forms of HPV, its ability to do so decreases with high risk forms,” says Dr. Kelly Follett, Pediatrician with the TMH Medical Clinic. The virus is passed by direct skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity.



Dr. Kelly Follett,
TMH Pediatrician

So why not get the vaccine for your teens? Some parents are afraid it will condone sexual activity. Other parents of boys believe it only applies to girls.

“Boys are just as susceptible to genital warts from HPV as girls, and they can get cancer as well,” says Dr. Kristie Yarmer, Pediatrician with TMH Medical Clinic.

Both pediatricians highly recommend parents of teens say yes to the HPV vaccine. “The vaccine is more effective before becoming sexually active,” adds Yarmer.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends routine HPV vaccinations for girls and boys ages 11 to 12.

Easy Solutions for Uneasy Ailments

Some health topics are hard to talk about—even to a doctor.

“Pelvic organ prolapse and urinary incontinence are what we gynecologists call the silent shames that women endure. I am amazed how many women will not seek care because they are embarrassed or think, ‘I had kids, I just have to live with it.’ That’s not the case. There are a lot of treatments for prolapse and incontinence that are simple and can bring great relief,” says Dr. Scott Ellis, OB/GYN, TMH Medical Clinic.

As women age (especially those who have had babies) bladder and pelvic muscles weaken. According to the National Association for Continence (NAFC), 13 million Americans are incontinent and 85% are women. Also, 50% of women will experience some degree of pelvic organ prolapse, or POP.

The good news is that most cases of prolapse and incontinence can be cured or improved. The gynecologists at TMH offer several options, ranging from behavioral management exercises, to pelvic floor rehab and surgery.

“We perform nearly all types of gynecological surgeries at TMH—there are only a few we refer out to specialists in Denver,” Ellis says.

There are different types of urinary incontinence. Stress incontinence is common, and is caused by a weakness in the neck of the bladder.

“We can place a sling to support the bladder so it will not leak when women cough, sneeze or laugh,” Ellis says. The simple surgery is often completed in a single day – patients come in the morning and go home in the afternoon, unless other procedures are being done at the same time. Dr. Ellis only performs surgery when it is absolutely needed.

“My biggest concern is that we do the right procedure for the right person,” he adds.

TMH offers advanced laparoscopic surgeries for incontinence and prolapse, and for removing diseased reproductive organs. Ellis paved the way in northwestern Colorado for total laparoscopic hysterectomies and has been performing them for many years.

“With laparoscopic surgery, incisions are smaller, less invasive and patients heal much more quickly. In the past, women had to take six weeks to recover from a hysterectomy. Now it is one week,” says Dr. Jim Summers, OB/GYN, TMH Medical Clinic.

Laparoscopic techniques are also used to diagnose pelvic pain, remove cysts and fibroids, lessen scar tissue and treat endometriosis.

“We’ve got all the advanced equipment and training that we need. The only technique we don’t offer is robotic surgery, but in my mind it is not that necessary for most GYN procedures,” Ellis states.

If you are struggling with incontinence or prolapse, see your doctor. There are solutions that will let you get back to an active life.

“I have seen hundreds of women with prolapse or incontinence issues who avoid going to the grocery store or traveling for fear of not having access to a bathroom. I know it feels embarrassing, but your doctor will act with compassion and help you. If needed, a couple of well-placed stitches can quickly improve your problem,” Summers concludes.

Why a GYN?

Gynecologists, or GYNs, specialize in everything having to do with women’s reproductive health. While general physicians can also provide some OB/GYN services, it’s great to know an expert is available when you need one.

“As an OB/GYN, I am there to answer questions, to act as a consultant and to go in depth with patients when it comes to women’s health topics. That’s where the true value of a gynecologist lies,” states Dr. Jim Summers, OB/GYN, TMH Medical Clinic.



Dr. Jim Summers,
OB/GYN



Dr. Scott Ellis,
OB/GYN

“Gynecologists are trained to perform surgeries and laparoscopic procedures,” adds Dr. Scott Ellis, OB/GYN, TMH Clinic.

Both gynecologists have been with TMH for several years. Dr. Scott Ellis joined the TMH Medical Staff in 2008 and is the Chief Medical Officer. He has served on the TMH Medical Staff’s Executive committee as Chief of Staff and is currently the

Secretary/Treasurer. He was also appointed Moffat County Medical Officer in 2010. Dr. Jim Summers saw patients in Craig from 2003 to 2008 and returned in 2012 to head up TMH Women’s Health Services at The Memorial Hospital and TMH Medical Clinic with Dr. Ellis in 2012.



the memorial hospital
at craig

750 Hospital Loop
Craig, CO 81625
(970) 824-9411

www.thememorialhospital.com

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Upcoming Events

February 1st – Friday

Wear Red Day

Wear red in honor of heart health month!

February 19th – Wednesday

What to Expect

6:00 p.m.

FAQs on expecting a baby and optional Birthing Center tour.

April 19th – Saturday



Brought to you by The Memorial Hospital and the Craig Lions Club

Community Health Fair

Come to The Memorial Hospital's annual health fair and receive tips & tools to improve your health.

Women's Health Services at TMH and TMH Medical Clinic

- Ablation-Cryotherapy
- Adolescent gynecology
- Advanced laparoscopic surgery
- Advanced prolapse surgery
- Annual and pelvic exams
- Birth control consultation
- Bladder urodynamics
- Bone density screenings
- Colposcopy
- Endometrial biopsy
- Essure
- In-office endometrial ablation
- Outpatient tubal sterilization
- In-office hysteroscopy and cytology
- LEEP
- Mammograms
- Routine health and wellness exams
- Teen and/or parent consultations
- 3D ultrasonography
- Total laparoscopic hysterectomy
- Treatment for pelvic pain/interstitial cystitis
- Treatment for urinary incontinence