

## What to expect during a routine sensitive exam for **kids** and **teens**

Frequently asked questions



## We're here for you

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At UCLA Health, we know some medical exams and procedures are more sensitive than others. We want patients to be comfortable during every exam and procedure.

We have trained chaperones to help make sure sensitive exams and procedures are done in a safe, comfortable and professional way.

If you and/or your child ever feel uneasy or you need more information about what will happen during the exam, please ask us. We are here to help.



## What is considered a “sensitive” exam or procedure?

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Any physical exam of the genitals or rectum, or breasts in female-identifying patients, is considered “sensitive.” These include exams of:

- Breasts in female-identifying patients
- Rectum
- Vulva and vagina
- Penis and scrotum
- Pubic/groin region (for a hernia)

### What does the chaperone do?

The chaperone is a specially trained member of the UCLA Health team. Their job is to ensure patient and provider comfort, safety, privacy, security and dignity during these exams or procedures. The chaperone will stand in a location where they can observe what is going on and assist as needed.

### Can I request a chaperone for exams that are not sensitive in nature?

**Yes.** You can request a chaperone for any type of exam.

### Can I decline to have a chaperone present during an exam or procedure?

**Yes.** Adults and patients who are 12 years and older and can make their own medical decisions can decline a chaperone. Patients can opt out when they arrive at their appointment.

For children 8 or younger, the parent or guardian may act as the chaperone and stay in the room.

For all patients older than 8, a chaperone must serve in that role. However, the child’s guardian may decline the presence of the chaperone for a child older than 8 and younger than 12.

The health care provider may also decide not to perform an exam or procedure unless a chaperone is present.

### Can I request a chaperone of a specific gender?

**Yes.** If you prefer a chaperone of a specific gender, let us know when you arrive for the appointment. We will do our best to honor your request.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the clinic manager.

## Privacy and dignity

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**We value our patients' privacy and respect their right to dignity during all exams.**

As a patient at UCLA Health, you should expect:

1. The door is closed during the exam. Only the people involved in the exam are present.
2. The provider and/or staff member will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after delivering care. Gloves are worn whenever there is a chance to come into contact with open wounds, blood and/or bodily fluids. Gloves are not required for touching skin only.
3. The provider and/or staff member will explain the exam or procedure. They may ask questions about the patient's medical history that are related to the exam or procedure.
4. The provider and/or staff member will ask permission prior to beginning the exam. They will explain what to expect during the visit.
5. A medical chaperone is provided for all sensitive exams and procedures, and if requested.

Please speak up if you or your child feels uncomfortable or notices any odd behavior during the exam or procedure.



## Sensitive exams

Sensitive exams involve breasts in female-identifying patients and any patient's genitals and/or rectum. They should always be done in a serious and private way. If you feel uneasy at any time, speak up.

### **For all sensitive exams, you should expect:**

- An explanation of the exam, including why it is needed, what the provider will do, and what it may feel like.
- Privacy to undress. Older children and teens should not be asked to undress in front of a provider or other staff member.
- A covering (gown or sheet/drape) for the patient if the body is exposed.
- A professional environment free from sexual remarks, hints or jokes.
- All patients may refuse any part of the exam or ask for it to be stopped at any time.

Below are more detailed descriptions of what to expect during each of the sensitive exams.

## Breast exam

A clinical breast exam is done to evaluate the breasts for changes or problems. The provider will first look at the patient's breasts and then feel the breasts, underarm area, and below the breast bone as part of the exam. At times, a provider may need to squeeze the patient's nipple to check for discharge.

### **When preparing for a breast exam, keep the following in mind:**

- Expect an explanation before all breast exams.
- Unless a medical condition or concern exists, it is not appropriate for a provider to comment on the aesthetic appearance of breasts.
- Patients only need to undress from the waist up for a breast exam.
- Providers do not need to wear gloves for a breast exam.
- A provider may need to move the patient's hair behind their shoulders or move a necklace to the back to better see the patient's breasts. The provider should explain these gestures.
- All patients may refuse any part of the exam or ask for it to be stopped at any time.

# Exam of the vulva and vagina

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The most common exam of the vulva and vagina in pediatrics is an exam of the external genitalia.

Pelvic exams are used to screen for cancer, collect samples if an infection is suspected or to help diagnose if there is bleeding, pain or other symptoms.

## **To prepare for a vulva or vaginal exam, keep the following in mind:**

- Expect an explanation before all exams of the vulva and vagina.
- Unless there is a medical condition or concern, it is not appropriate for a provider to comment on the aesthetic appearance of a patient's vulva or vagina.
- The provider will wear gloves.
- In rare instances, a bimanual or digital vaginal exam may be clinically indicated.
- The provider should not repeatedly move their fingers in and out of the patient's vagina.
- Routine vaginal exams (with a speculum) are typically not required until age 21, unless the patient has specific symptoms, conditions or has medical risks. The patient's doctor should discuss risks with them prior to the exam.
- A duck bill-shaped plastic or metal instrument, called a speculum, is often used for the internal vaginal exam. The provider should inform the patient before inserting it. It is gently inserted and opened to provide visual access into the vagina.
- All patients may refuse any part of the exam or ask for it to be stopped at any time.



# Rectal exam

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A rectal exam is often used to make a diagnosis for patients who have symptoms like pain in the abdomen, blood in their stool, changes in bowel habits, or for urinary symptoms. It's sometimes necessary to collect a sample to run a test for suspected sexually transmitted diseases of the rectum.

A rectal exam is done with a patient lying on their back, lying on their side, lying face down, or kneeling on or over an exam table.

## External exam

- The provider will examine the anus and the area around the anus. They look for sores, rashes or other lesions.
- The provider may ask the chaperone or medical assistant to move a light so they can see the area better.
- If testing for infections, the provider may place a swab about 1 inch into the anus/rectum, rotate it gently, and then remove it.

## Digital exam

- The provider inserts one gloved and lubricated finger into the anus to feel for lumps or anything abnormal.
- The provider may also push firmly on the prostate gland, if present, to check for pain, tenderness or nodules on it.

## Anoscopy

- To examine the rectum inside, the provider may insert a lubricated rigid, hollow instrument, called an anoscope, into the anus.
- The provider may ask the chaperone or medical assistant to move a light so they can see the area better.
- All patients may refuse any part of the exam or ask for it to be stopped at any time.

# Exam of the penis, scrotum and testicles

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The most common exam of the penis, scrotum and testicles in pediatrics is an external exam.

A provider examines the penis, testicles and/or scrotum if a patient is having pain, swelling or discharge, has sores or other symptoms, or as part of a normal skin and physical exam. It's also done to check for a hernia.

**To prepare for an exam of the penis, scrotum and/or testicles, keep the following in mind:**

- Expect an explanation before all exams.
- Unless there is a medical condition or concern, it is not appropriate for a provider to comment on the aesthetic appearance of a patient's penis, scrotum or testicles.
- The provider will wear gloves when feeling the penis and testicles.

## **Penis exam**

- During this part of the exam, the provider will examine and touch the penis. This includes moving the foreskin and/or touching the skin, tip and urethra (the urine opening in the penis).
- If the patient is not circumcised, the provider may ask them to pull back the foreskin or the provider may do this to look for sores and problems.
- The provider may feel and press all surfaces of the penis, to check for sores or problems.
- The provider may examine the opening of the urethra, called the urethral meatus. They may use a swab to gently collect a sample of any discharge.
- The provider may press along the shaft of the penis to see if they can press out any fluid.

## **Scrotum and testicle exam**

- During this part of the exam, the provider will do a visual and hand exam of the testicles and scrotum.
- The provider may feel the testicles for size, irregularities and tenderness. They may also feel along the spermatic cord, which contains the spermatic artery and vein, looking for any problems.
- All patients may refuse any part of the exam or ask for it to be stopped at any time.



## Exam of the pubic/groin area (hernia exam)

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A hernia is a weak spot where bowel might squeeze out. They are common in the groin area.

**When preparing for a hernia exam, keep the following in mind:**

- The provider will do a complete visual exam of the scrotum, groin and hip crease to look for any problems.
- The provider will feel the groin, inner upper thigh crease, lower abdomen and hip area. They will feel the scrotum which includes the testicles, lymph nodes and spermatic cord.
- During a hernia exam, while the patient is standing or lying down, the provider will place his or her fingers up against the abdominal wall and scrotum. The provider may ask the patient to cough or bear down to increase the abdominal pressure to see if they can feel the weak spot or opening.
- Gloves may or may not be worn when the provider feels the patient's abdominal wall.
- All patients may refuse any part of the exam or ask for it to be stopped at any time.



# University of California Notice of Nondiscrimination

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The University of California and UCLA Health are committed to treating each community member with respect and dignity.

Across all of its locations, including all UCLA Health clinical settings, the University prohibits discrimination and harassment, including sexual assault and other forms of sexual harassment.

UCLA Health provides equal opportunities for all patients, applicants, employees, faculty and students regardless of sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or other legally protected characteristics.

For more on the University's commitment to integrity, accountability and respect for all members of our community, please see the University's Statement of Ethical Values and Standards of Ethical Conduct at [uclahealth.org/compliance/code-of-conduct](https://uclahealth.org/compliance/code-of-conduct).

## How to report sexual harassment

If you have experienced sexual harassment, please report it.

The UCLA Title IX Office protects people's privacy, while also fulfilling its obligations to respond appropriately to all reports it receives about sexual harassment. In some situations, certain laws and University policies may require disclosure of reports to others, such as other University officials, licensing boards, law enforcement, or other agencies.

To speak with a Title IX officer, please call 310-206-3417. You may also submit an online report at [sexualharassment.ucla.edu](https://sexualharassment.ucla.edu).

If you are unsure if you want to file a report, we recommend you contact one of the following confidential resources first for advice and support:

[careprogram.ucla.edu](https://careprogram.ucla.edu)  
[sexualharassment.ucla.edu/resources](https://sexualharassment.ucla.edu/resources)  
[da.lacounty.gov/sexual-assault](https://da.lacounty.gov/sexual-assault)

These offices are not required to report instances of sexual harassment to the University.

The University reviews all reports of sexual harassment in accordance with the University's Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy and other applicable policies.

See additional reporting options available to you:

[uclahealth.org/reporting-misconduct](https://uclahealth.org/reporting-misconduct)  
[police.ucla.edu/other/reporting-a-sexual-assault](https://police.ucla.edu/other/reporting-a-sexual-assault)

# UCLA Patient Care

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UCLA Health is interested in hearing about you or your child's overall care experience.

To provide general feedback about you or your child's visit or experience with a UCLA Health provider or to communicate any complaint about unprofessional conduct, please submit feedback at [uclahealth.org/patient-experience/contact-us](https://uclahealth.org/patient-experience/contact-us).

## **To obtain your medical records**

You may obtain a copy of you or your child's medical records in person or by mail. For detailed instructions, visit the UCLA Health Medical Records page at [uclahealth.org/medical-records](https://uclahealth.org/medical-records).

## **For language, hearing and visual access assistance**

We provide free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as qualified sign language interpreters and written information in other formats (large print, audio and other accessible electronic formats).

We also provide free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages. If you need these services, contact 310-267-8001 or visit [uclahealth.org/interpreters](https://uclahealth.org/interpreters).

## **Reporting obligations of UC personnel**

All University employees are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, supportive and respectful environment for patients and colleagues.

Under some circumstances, UCLA Health faculty and staff members are required by University policy to immediately report possible sexual harassment to the Title IX office.

Even those who are not subject to a mandate are urged to immediately report information regarding possible sexual harassment directly to the Title IX office or anonymously to the compliance hotline.

For more information about your responsibility to report sexual harassment as a member of the UC community, go to [equity.ucla.edu/about-us/our-teams/civil-rights-office/title-ix](https://equity.ucla.edu/about-us/our-teams/civil-rights-office/title-ix).

## **Patient protection and the Affordable Care Act Section 1557**

If you need these services, call the Office of the Patient Experience at (310) 267-9113 or TTY: (310) 267-3902.

# Patient protection and the Affordable Care Act

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If you need these services, call the Office of the Patient Experience at (310) 267-9113 or TTY: (310) 267-3902.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902)

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。  
請致電 (310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902)

CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số (310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902)

PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa (310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902)

주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. (310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902) 번으로 전화해 주십시오.

ՈՒՇԱԴՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ՝ Եթե խոսում եք հայերեն, ապա ձեզ անվճար կարող են տրամադրվել լեզվական աջակցության ծառայություններ: Զանգահարեք (310) 267-9113 (TTY (հեռատիպ)՝ 310-267-3902

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните (310) 267-9113 (телетайп: (TTY: 310-267-3902)

注意事項：日本語を話される場合、無料の言語支援をご利用いただけます。(310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902) まで、お電話にてご連絡ください。

## Patient protection and the Affordable Care Act

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تماس بگیرید. شما برای رایگان بصورت زیادی تسهیلات، کنید مگر گفتگو فارسی به زبان به کار: توجه می  
ف باشد. 310-267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902)

ਧਿਆਨ ਦਿਓ: ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਮੁਫਤ, ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹਨ. ਕਾਲ  
(310) 267-9113 (ਟੀ ਟੀ ਵਾਈ: 310-267-3902)

برقا متصل. بالمجان لك تتوافر للغوية للمساعدة خدمات فإن، للغة اذكر نتحدث كند  
إذا: ملحوظة واليكم الصم ه. (TTY: 310-267-3902) رقم: (310) 267-9113

ប្រយ័ត្ន: បើសិនជាអ្នកនិយាយ ភាសាខ្មែរ, សេវាជំនួយផ្នែកភាសា ដោយមិនគិតល្អល  
គឺអាចមានសំរាប់បំរើអ្នក។ ចុះ ឡូស៊ីញ (310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902) ។

LUS CEEV: Yog tias koj hais lus Hmoob, cov kev pab txog lus, muaj kev pab  
dawb rau koj. Hu rau (310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902)

ध्यान दें: यदि आप किसी अन्य भाषा बोलते, सहायता सेवाओं, नि: शुल्क, आप के लिए उपलब्ध हैं।  
(310) 267-9113 कॉल (TTY: 310-267-3902)

ື້ຍນ: ຖ້າທ່ານພຸດພາສາໄທທ່ານສາມາດໃຊ້ບໍລິການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອທາງພາສາໄດ້ຟຣີ ໂທ  
(310) 267-9113 (TTY: 310-267-3902)



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