Breast and Pelvic Examination

Learning Activity Packet

November 2002
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*JHPIEGO Corporation*

*November 2002*
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the breast and pelvic examination learning activity packet (LAP)! This LAP is designed to help you learn how to perform breast and pelvic examinations, at your own pace and when it is most convenient for you. You may be a nursing, midwifery or medical student or a practicing provider. You may be studying breast and pelvic examination skills for the first time or refreshing these skills. You will be assisted by an instructor or trainer (called a facilitator in this packet) who will answer questions you may have, coach you during practice sessions when able, and assess your progress. Your facilitator may also give you a time limit for completing the packet.

The overall goal of this packet is to provide you with the knowledge and skills needed to become competent in performing breast and pelvic examinations with clients. To accomplish this, there are two phases that must be completed.

- **Phase One** consists of the readings, exercises, models practice and evaluation activities included in this LAP. After successful completion of Phase One, you will be competent at performing breast and pelvic examination with models. Competent means that you can correctly perform the required skill or activity. You must also complete the Evaluation Questionnaire with a total score of at least 85%.

- **Phase Two** consists of observation, supervised practice and evaluation activities with clients. The steps needed to accomplish this are outlined in the LAP, but you will need to work with your facilitator to schedule opportunities to work with clients. After successful completion of Phase Two, you will be competent at performing breast and pelvic examination with clients. Proficient means that becoming proficient at these skills requires much experience with clients.

OBJECTIVES

After finishing this LAP, you will be able to:

1. Talk with women about their reproductive health needs.
2. Use recommended infection prevention practices to protect the woman, healthcare provider and other healthcare workers.
3. Competently perform a breast examination with a model (Phase One) or client (Phase Two).
4. Teach breast self-examination.
5. Competently perform a pelvic examination with a model (Phase One) or client (Phase Two).
MATERIALS

To complete this LAP, you will need the following:

- Video Cassette or CD-ROM, *How to Do a Breast and Pelvic Examination*, JHPIEGO, 2000
- Video cassette player and monitor or computer with a CD-ROM or DVD drive
- Anatomic (breast and pelvic) models
- Individual or available copy of this LAP and blank paper to complete the exercises
- Additional supplies: examination gloves, speculae, cloths or drapes, flashlight or lamp, kidney tray, cotton/gauze swabs

How do you use this LAP?

1. **Read** this introduction.
2. **Check with** your facilitator about your time limits or proposed schedule.
3. **Complete** the reading and exercises outlined in the *Learning Activity Page* that follows this Introduction.
4. **Complete** evaluation activities as arranged by your facilitator.

Now you are ready to begin! The *Learning Activity Page* that follows will provide you with all the instructions you need to complete the LAP. The exercises included in the LAP are designed to help you learn the information you need in order to perform breast and pelvic examinations and prepare you for the evaluation questionnaire. You should read the appropriate section of the Resource Manual before completing each exercise. Refer back to the Resource Manual as needed as you work through the exercises.

Boxes with this symbol are **Things to Consider**. These exercises and role plays should be completed as you work through the LAP.

Boxes with this symbol are **Notes to the Learners**.

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper in order to check them later. Answers to exercises are provided at the end of this LAP. Be sure to complete the exercises before checking your answers. If you still have questions after checking your answers, contact your facilitator for further assistance. Once you have completed the exercises and practiced the skills with models, your facilitator will assess your knowledge and skills by the steps listed below:
Completing Phase One

- Assess knowledge using the Evaluation Questionnaire
- Assess skills using demonstration of breast and pelvic examination with models

Completing Phase Two

- Assess skills by demonstration of breast and pelvic examination with clients

Until you have completed Phase Two and been assessed as competent with clients, you are not ready to offer these services to clients without supervision.
Review the steps below to familiarize yourself with what you are expected to do. Complete each step in the order presented. As you finish each step, place a “tick” or “check” (✓) in the space given if you have your own copy. If you are using a copy that others will also use, record your progress on another piece of paper. Write your answers in a notebook or on a sheet of paper to check later. Ask your facilitator if you have questions at any time as you work through the steps.

1. _____ COMPLETE the Check Your Knowledge exercise on page 9 of this LAP.

2. _____ CHECK your answers on pages 31–32 of this LAP. Note the questions you did not answer correctly and pay special attention to this content as you work through the LAP.


4. _____ DO Exercise 1, Introduction to Breast and Pelvic Examinations. Check your answers on LAP page 33.


6. _____ DO Exercise 2, Talking with Women. Check your answers on LAP page 33.

7. _____ WATCH the breast examination portion of the breast and pelvic examination video. Use the learning guide on pages 25–26 to follow the steps in performing a breast examination as you watch the video. Watch only the breast examination portion at this time.

8. _____ CHECK with your facilitator about when breast examination skills will be demonstrated for the group. Observe the demonstration of breast examination skills prior to Step 14.


10. _____ DO Exercise 3, Anatomy and Examination of the Female Breast. Check your answers on LAP page 34.


12. _____ DO Exercise 4, Teaching Breast Self-Examination. Check your answers on LAP pages 34–35.

13. _____ REVIEW the Breast Examination Summary of Steps on LAP page 24 before you move into models practice. Be sure you have observed a demonstration of breast examination skills by the facilitator before Step 14.
14. **PRACTICE** breast examination using the learning guides. Form pairs with another learner and practice with models. As you act as “healthcare provider,” your partner should follow the learning guide and prompt you as necessary. Take turns practicing with models until you are ready to be assessed by another learner without prompting.

15. **ASK** another learner to check your skills using the breast examination learning guide as you perform a breast examination with a model and teach breast self-examination to another learner.

According to your facilitator’s instructions, complete breast and pelvic examination assessment activities separately or at one time. If your skills are being assessed separately, go to Step 30, complete the breast examination portion, and return to Step 16. If your skills are being assessed together upon completion, continue on to Step 16 now.

16. **WATCH** the pelvic examination portion of the breast and pelvic examination video. Use the learning guide on pages 27–30 to follow the steps in performing a pelvic examination.

17. **CHECK** with your facilitator for when pelvic examination skills will be demonstrated for the group. Observe the demonstration of pelvic examination skills prior to Step 27.


19. **DO** Exercise 5, Pelvic Anatomy and Overview of Pelvic Examination. Check your answers on LAP pages 35–36.


23. **DO** Exercise 7, Speculum and Bimanual Examination. Check your answers on LAP page 37.


26. **REVIEW** the Pelvic Examination Summary of Steps on page 24 before you move into models practice. Be sure you have observed a demonstration of pelvic examination skills by the facilitator before Step 27.
27. **PRACTICE** pelvic examination using the learning guides on pages 27–30. Form pairs with another learner and practice with models. As you act as “healthcare provider,” your partner should follow the learning guide and prompt you as necessary. Take turns practicing with models until you are ready to be assessed by another learner without prompting.

28. **ASK** another learner to check your skills using the Learning Guide for Pelvic Examination as you perform a pelvic examination with a model.

29. **TELL** your facilitator when you are ready to be observed and evaluated. Your facilitator will arrange a time for your knowledge and skill evaluation.

**Phase One Evaluation Activities**

30. **TAKE** the Evaluation Questionnaire. **Breast Portion** **Pelvic Portion**

   See your facilitator for instructions. Your facilitator will score the Evaluation Questionnaire and discuss it with you. Your final score will be based on the breast and pelvic examination portions combined as a total whether they were taken separately or at one time. If you do not score higher than 85%, your facilitator will arrange for a review session and a time to retake the Evaluation Questionnaire.

31. **DEMONSTRATE the breast examination** with a model for your facilitator. Your facilitator will evaluate your skills using the Checklist for Breast Examination. This should include teaching your “client” how to do breast self-examination. If you are unable to perform the skill competently, your facilitator will use this time as a coaching session rather than as a final assessment and arrange for additional practice before trying again.

32. **DEMONSTRATE the pelvic examination** with a model for your facilitator. Your facilitator will evaluate your skills using the Checklist for Pelvic Examination. If you are unable to perform the skill competently, your facilitator will use this time as a coaching session rather than final assessment and arrange for additional practice before trying again.

33. **SCORED** a total of 85% on the Evaluation Questionnaire.

34. **ASSESSED** as competent in both breast and pelvic examination skills with models.

**CONGRATULATIONS!** You have successfully completed Phase One of this LAP on performing breast and pelvic examinations! You are now **competent with models**. Please move on to Phase Two.

- Until you have completed Phase Two and have been evaluated as competent with clients, you are not yet ready to offer those services to clients without supervision.
Welcome to Phase Two of the LAP. You will need to work with clients during this phase. You may have access to clients during a short inservice training period or over a longer period of time during a preservice educational clinical rotation. Begin this phase when you have access to clients. Perform breast or pelvic examinations only with clients who need or ask for them. Clients should not undergo unnecessary breast or pelvic examinations simply as a training experience or only to provide cases for learning.

Breast Examination

35. _____ OBSERVE your facilitator or a provider performing a breast examination with a client. Use the checklist and follow along during the examination.

36. _____ PERFORM a supervised breast examination with a client. If possible, perform several breast examinations with supervision and coaching from your facilitator.

37. _____ ASK your facilitator to evaluate your breast examination skills using the breast examination checklist. Your facilitator will tell you if you performed the breast examination competently or if you need to try again.

38. _____ ASSESSED as competent in breast examination skills with clients.

Pelvic Examination

39. _____ OBSERVE your facilitator or a provider performing a pelvic examination with a client. Use the checklist and follow along during the examination.

40. _____ PERFORM a supervised pelvic examination with a client. If possible, perform several with supervision and coaching from your facilitator.

41. _____ ASK your facilitator to evaluate your pelvic examination skills using the pelvic examination checklist. Your facilitator will tell you if you competently performed the pelvic examination or if you need to try again.

42. _____ ASSESSED as competent in pelvic examination skills with clients.

CONGRATULATIONS! You have successfully completed Phase Two of this LAP on performing breast and pelvic examinations! You are now competent with clients. You are now qualified to provide these services to clients. You will need to continue to work with clients to improve your skills and become proficient.
# CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

*Instructions: In the space provided, print a capital T if the statement is true or a capital F if the statement is false.*

## TALKING WITH WOMEN

1. During the clinic visit, the primary purpose of talking with the woman is to give her instructions.  
   _____  Learner Objective 1

2. Both verbal and nonverbal means of communication are important in talking with women.  
   _____  Learner Objective 1

3. The healthcare provider has the responsibility of sharing medical information with the woman’s partner.  
   _____  Learner Objective 1

## BREAST EXAMINATION

4. A provider should always wear new examination or high-level disinfected surgical gloves when performing a breast examination.  
   _____  Learner Objective 2

5. It is important to look at the breast in different positions to check for skin puckering or dimpling.  
   _____  Learner Objective 3

6. Swelling, increased warmth or tenderness in either breast may suggest infection.  
   _____  Learner Objective 3

7. A provider should use her/his whole hand to feel the breast tissue when palpating the breast.  
   _____  Learner Objective 3

8. If no changes or lumps in the breast are found while palpating the breast, it is not necessary to palpate the axilla.  
   _____  Learner Objective 3

9. The best time for a woman to examine her breasts is during her menstrual period.  
   _____  Learner Objective 4

## PELVIC EXAMINATION

10. The mons pubis, clitoris, labia majora and perineum are all part of the external female genitalia.  
    _____  Learner Objective 5

11. The internal female genitalia include the fallopian tubes, ovaries, uterus, and the labia minora.  
    _____  Learner Objective 5

12. Examination of the lower abdomen should include both light and deep pressure during palpation.  
    _____  Learner Objective 5
13. A provider should wear new examination or high-level disinfected surgical gloves before examining the external genitalia. Learner Objective 2

14. Palpation of the Bartholin’s and Skene’s glands are included in the examination of the external genitalia. Learner Objective 5

15. The speculum examination includes looking at the vaginal walls, cervix and cervical os. Learner Objective 5

16. After using the speculum, it should be soaked in 0.5% chlorine solution for 10 minutes. Learner Objective 2

17. One purpose of the bimanual examination is to check the size, shape and position of the uterus. Learner Objective 5

18. It is not important to assess the adnexa during a bimanual examination. Learner Objective 5

19. A provider should always do a rectovaginal examination after performing the bimanual examination. Learner Objective 5

20. The rectovaginal exam will help determine the size of the uterus. Learner Objective 5
EXERCISE 1:
INTRODUCTION TO BREAST AND PELVIC EXAMINATIONS

1. List three of the five purposes stated in the Resource Manual for performing breast and pelvic examinations. Write them on your answer sheet.

2. Talking with a woman during breast or pelvic examinations provides a good opportunity to counsel her about which one of the following? Note the correct letter on your answer sheet.
   A. Her problems at home
   B. Condom use if at risk for sexually transmitted diseases
   C. Her diet
   D. Her overall health

3. The following steps should be done immediately before performing a breast or pelvic examination. Write them in order from 1 to 5, 1 being your first step on your answer sheet.

   _____ Help her onto the table and make sure she is comfortable.
   _____ Be sure the woman has emptied her bladder and washed her abdominal and genital area if necessary.
   _____ Wash your hands with soap and water and allow them to air dry or dry with a personal towel.
   _____ Ask the woman to remove only as much clothing as necessary for the examination.
   _____ Be sure the room has enough light and a source of clean water.

CHECK your answers on LAP page 33. If any are wrong, reread the material and be sure you understand it before continuing. Ask your facilitator for assistance if necessary. Go to the next step on the Learning Activity Page if you understand the material.

Things to Consider. Imagine that you are having a pelvic examination. If you are working with other learners, find another learner and ask what five things they would like the provider to do to make them feel more at ease. Tell the other learner what five things you would like a provider to do during a pelvic examination to make you feel more at ease. If you are alone, list five things that would make you feel more at ease. If you are a provider, ask your clients what things make them feel more comfortable with breast and/or pelvic examinations. Look in the Resource Manual for tips to make a client feel at ease. Remember these tips when practicing with models or working with clients.
EXERCISE 2:
TALKING WITH WOMEN

1. In the examples listed below, choose which provider behaviors described help to create a trusting relationship with a woman. Write “yes” or “no” for each example below on your answer sheet.

A. A new client complains of lower abdominal pain. The provider thinks that the client has had a pelvic examination before, so she performs the pelvic examination quickly and doesn’t give the client any information during the procedure.  
   Yes  No

B. After completing the pelvic examination, the nurse-midwife asks the client “Do you have any questions about the examination I just did? Is there anything that you would like to ask me?”  
   Yes  No

C. Before performing the breast examination, the provider locks the examination door to be sure that no one can enter during the examination.  
   Yes  No

D. At a busy public clinic a woman being prepared for a pelvic examination complains to the provider that the privacy screen is not big enough. The provider responds, “We don’t have enough money for a separate room for these examinations. Go to a private clinic if you don’t like this one.”  
   Yes  No

2. Talking with women during clinic visits helps them to: Write three answers on your answer sheet.

3. When talking with women, what are two nonverbal communication skills you can use to make them feel comfortable? Write them on your answer sheet.

4. Describe one way to keep client information confidential. Write it on your answer sheet.

CHECK your answers on LAP page 33. If any are wrong, reread the material and be sure you understand it before continuing. Ask your facilitator for assistance if necessary. Go to the next step on the Learning Activity Page if you understand the material.
**Things to Consider.** If you are working with other learners, find another learner and practice communication skills. One of you should act as the provider and the other the client. The client is a shy woman who has been married 1 year and has one child. She came to see you because she is interested in an IUD. You just did her pelvic examination and discovered purulent cervical discharge. Role play how you would discuss this condition with her. Reverse roles and then discuss with your partner. If you are alone, write down questions you would ask and things you would do to create a trusting relationship with the woman. Use the tips listed in How to Talk with Women in the Resource Manual. If you a provider, use the tips listed as you talk with clients.
EXERCISE 3:  
ANATOMY AND EXAMINATION OF THE FEMALE BREAST

1. The breast is made up of three different kinds of tissue. What are they? Write them on your answer sheet.

2. In the diagram below, areas of the breast are labeled with a letter. On your answer sheet write the corresponding area for each letter. On your answer sheet, circle the area where cancer most often occurs.

3. Much of the lymph system drains toward the ________________. Write on your answer sheet.

4. The greatest amount of glandular tissue is found in which quadrant of the breast? Write the answer on your answer sheet.
   A. Tail
   B. Upper, outer quadrant
   C. Lower, outer quadrant
   D. Upper, inner quadrant

5. You should wash your hands before and after each breast examination, but wearing examination gloves is necessary only if the client has open sores or nipple discharge. Choose one and write it on your answer sheet:  True     False

6. You should look at a woman’s breasts for abnormalities in what three positions? Write them on your answer sheet.

7. When you are inspecting a woman’s breasts, one thing you are looking for is: Write the correct answer on your answer sheet.
   A. Skin dimpling
   B. Breast size
   C. Cysts or masses
   D. Size of the nipples
8. When you are palpating the woman’s breasts, what three things are you looking for? Write them on your answer sheet.

9. You palpate the breast using the spiral technique. Which answer correctly describes the spiral technique? Write it on your answer sheet.
   A. Use the palm of your hand to gently press around the woman’s breasts.
   B. Use the edge of your hand to palpate the breast from left to right.
   C. Use your fingertips to palpate the breast from the nipple outwards.
   D. Use the pads of your fingers to palpate the breast moving in a circular motion around the breast.

10. If you find a lump while examining a woman’s breasts, you should document its location in the breast and three things about it. Those things are size, ________________ and ________________. Write the other two answers on your answer sheet.

   ► **CHECK** your answers on LAP page 34. If any are wrong, reread the material and be sure you understand it before continuing. Ask your facilitator for assistance if necessary. Go to the next step on the Learning Activity Page if you understand the material.
EXERCISE 4:
TEACHING BREAST SELF-EXAMINATION

1. A woman should examine her breasts at what time during the month? Write the correct answer on your answer sheet.
   A. Seven to ten days after her menstrual bleeding begins
   B. On the day her menstrual bleeding begins
   C. Anytime during the month is fine
   D. Four to seven days after her menstrual bleeding begins

2. The **most** important reason a woman should examine her breasts monthly is so that she can notice any changes. Choose one and write it on your answer sheet:  **True**  **False**

3. What **three** things should women look for when self-examining their breasts? Write them on your answer sheet.

4. What are **five** of the seven warning signs of breast cancer that a woman should watch for during breast self-examination? Write them on your answer sheet.

**CHECK** your answers on LAP pages 34–35. If any are wrong, reread the material and be sure you understand it before continuing. Ask your facilitator for assistance if necessary. Go to the next step on the *Learning Activity Page* if you understand the material.

**Things to Consider.** If you are working with other learners, find another learner for this role play. One of you should act as the provider and the other as the client. The client is a 28-year-old woman with three children who has come for a general physical examination. When you talk to her about breast self-examination, she informs you that she has never had a breast examination or examined her own. Role play with your partner what you would tell this client about why regular breast examination is important. If you are working alone, write key points you would discuss on your answer sheet. If you are a provider, ask your female clients about breast self-examination practices if you haven’t already incorporated that into your practice.
EXERCISE 5:
PELVIC ANATOMY AND OVERVIEW OF PELVIC EXAMINATION

1. Label the diagram below or write on your answer sheet the name of the structure of the external female genitalia that corresponds to each number—labia majora, labia minora, mons pubis, clitoris, urethral opening, opening of Skene’s glands, opening of Bartholin’s glands, vaginal opening, perineum and anus.
2. Label the diagram below or write on your answer sheet the name of the structure of the internal female genitalia that corresponds to each number—fallopian tube, ovary, fundus, cervix, cervical canal, cervical os and endometrium.

3. Write the letter of the rationale that corresponds to the appropriate step on your answer sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ___ Examine lower abdomen and groin area.</td>
<td>A. Check for sores, swelling, urethral discharge or discharge from Bartholin’s or Skene’s glands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ___ Examine external genitalia.</td>
<td>B. Check for vaginal or cervical discharge or lesions; collect specimens if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ___ Perform speculum examination.</td>
<td>C. Check for scars or other abnormalities; check for swollen lymph nodes or tenderness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ___ Perform bimanual examination.</td>
<td>D. Check for number of pregnancies carried to term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ___ Perform rectovaginal examination (if necessary).</td>
<td>E. Check for uterus position if bimanual findings are confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. Check for cervical motion tenderness and position of the uterus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHECK your answers on LAP pages 35–36. If any are wrong, reread the material and be sure you understand it before continuing. Ask your facilitator for assistance if necessary. Go to the next step on the Learning Activity Page if you understand the material.
**Things to Consider.** Many women may feel uncomfortable about having a pelvic examination. If you are working with other learners, ask them why regular pelvic examinations are important. Ask them how they would talk to a woman about the importance of regular pelvic examinations. What would they say to a woman about why it’s important? If you are working alone, what would you say? Write your answers on your answer sheet.
EXERCISE 6:
LOWER ABDOMINAL, GROIN AND EXTERNAL GENITAL EXAMINATION

1. It is important to **palpate** the groin area in order to: Write your answer on your answer sheet.
   A. Look for buboes (swollen lymph nodes)
   B. Check for rashes or lesions
   C. Make the client feel comfortable before doing the speculum examination
   D. None of the above

2. You should **palpate** the lower abdomen to look for tenderness or masses. Choose one and write it on your answer sheet:
   True      False

3. What are two purposes for examining the external genitalia? Write them on your answer sheet.

4. The Skene’s glands are on either side of the _______________. Write the correct answer on your answer sheet.

5. Which of the following is the correct technique for checking for discharge from the **Skene’s glands**? Write the letter of the correct answer on your answer sheet.
   A. Insert your index finger (facing up) into the vagina and gently push upward and milk the gland from inside outward.
   B. Palpate the lower edge of the vaginal opening between your thumb and forefinger.

6. Put the following steps of this portion of the pelvic examination in order by listing them from 1 through 7. The first one has been marked for you already. Write the numbers in order on your answer sheet.
   ___ Check Skene’s glands for discharge or tenderness.
   ___ Inspect the abdomen for masses, abnormal coloring, rashes and lesions.
   ___ Check Bartholin’s glands for discharge or tenderness.
   ___ Palpate the abdomen for tenderness or masses.
   ___ Examine the labia and perineal area for lesions, scars, warts or lice.
   ___ Palpate the groin for masses.
   ___ Examine the labia minora, clitoris and urethra for discharge, redness or sores.

**CHECK** your answers on LAP pages 36–37. If any are wrong, reread the material and be sure you understand it before continuing. Ask your facilitator for assistance if necessary. Go to the next step on the **Learning Activity Page** if you understand the material.
EXERCISE 7:
SPECULUM AND BIMANUAL EXAMINATION

1. In which two situations listed below is it appropriate to do a pelvic examination? Write the corresponding letters on your answer sheet.
   A. A woman complains of vaginal itching.
   B. A woman wants to use oral contraceptives.
   C. A woman wants to talk about family planning options.
   D. A woman complains of pain during sexual intercourse.

2. Put the steps for inserting the speculum below in numerical order on your answer sheet, beginning with 1.
   _____ Insert the speculum with gentle pressure down toward the rectum.
   _____ Insert an index finger and gently press down toward the rectum while inserting the speculum vertically and at an angle.
   _____ Gently open the blades until the cervix comes into view.
   _____ Gently rotate the blades to a horizontal position.

3. While carefully removing the speculum, you should keep the blades partially open and rotate the speculum 90° to examine the anterior and posterior vaginal walls. Write your correct answer on your answer sheet.
   True   False

4. What are three reasons for doing a bimanual examination? Write them on your answer sheet.

5. If a woman has pain when you move the cervix back and forth, the cause could be ___________________. This pain is called _________________________________. Note the correct answers on your answer sheet.

6. What do you check for when palpating the uterus? Write four things on your answer sheet.

7. If the uterus is anteverted, you will most likely feel the fundus: Write the correct answer on your answer sheet.
   A. Immediately above the pelvic bone
   B. 1 cm below the umbilicus
   C. You won’t feel the fundus
   D. About 2–4 cm above the pelvic bone

8. What can you ask a woman to do to help her relax during the bimanual examination? Write the correct answer on your answer sheet.

9. You should be able to feel the ovaries in every woman. Choose one and write it on your answer sheet: True   False
CHECK your answers on LAP page 37. If any are wrong, reread the material and be sure you understand it before continuing. Ask your facilitator for assistance if necessary. Go to the next step on the Learning Activity Page if you understand the material.

Things to Consider. As mentioned earlier, some women may feel uncomfortable with having a pelvic examination. Think about the way women in your country feel about privacy and modesty. What are aspects of your culture that may prevent women from regular pelvic examinations? What can you do or say as a provider to make the experience less difficult and more accepted as part of regular health maintenance? Discuss this with another learner, if possible.
EXERCISE 8:
RECTOVAGINAL EXAMINATION AND INFECTION PREVENTION

1. When is it necessary to perform a rectovaginal examination? Write the answer on your answer sheet.

2. What do you want to tell the woman before this examination to prepare her? Write the answer on your answer sheet.

3. Prevention strategies should focus on what two ways of controlling infection? Write them on your answer sheet.

4. Which one of the following is a correct infection prevention practice related to pelvic examination? Write the correct answer on your answer sheet.
   A. Wash hands before gloving for the procedure.
   B. After the examination, remove your gloves and move directly to another patient.
   C. The cleaning staff picks up the used speculum without gloves on.
   D. After using the speculum, it is immediately rinsed and then cleaned with soap and water.

5. You work in a very busy clinic that often has trouble with water supply. When you request that other providers wash their hands, they reply that there isn’t enough water. What can you do to solve this problem? Write the answer on your answer sheet.

6. The purpose of decontamination of instruments after they have touched blood or body fluids is to sterilize them. Choose one and write it on your answer sheet: True False

7. After completing the bimanual examination or rectovaginal examination, gloves should be: (Write the answer on your answer sheet.)
   A. Thrown directly into the trash
   B. Immersed in 0.5% chlorine bleach solution
   C. Washed immediately
   D. Set aside on the equipment tray

8. The most important procedure in preventing infection is hand washing. Choose one and write it on your answer sheet: True False

CHECK your answers on pages 37–38. If any are wrong, reread the material and be sure you understand it before continuing. Ask your facilitator for assistance if necessary. Go to the next step on the Learning Activity Page if you understand the material.
BREAST EXAMINATION SUMMARY OF STEPS

- **INSPECT** for shape and size, skin puckering, rashes, sores, or swelling. Inspect with arms over head, hands on hips and leaning forward.

- **PALPATE** using the spiral technique from the outermost edge inward. The woman should be lying down with her arm above her head. Examine for changes in the breast, nipple discharge, lumps, or tenderness. Repeat with the woman seated if necessary. Palpate the axilla when the woman is sitting up with her arm over her head.

- **TEACH** the woman how to perform breast self-examination. She should repeat the demonstration for you.

PELVIC EXAMINATION SUMMARY OF STEPS

- **LOOK** at the abdomen for bulges, discoloration, rashes and lesions.

- **PALPATE** the abdomen and groin for masses, swelling and tenderness.

- **CHECK** the external genitalia for sores, ulcers and swelling.

- **PALPATE** Skene’s and Bartholin’s glands for discharge.

- **PERFORM** speculum examination and check for discharge, sores, discoloration and condition of cervix.

- **PERFORM** bimanual examination and check for cervical motion tenderness; determine size, shape, position and consistency of the uterus; check for adnexal masses or tenderness.

- **PERFORM** rectovaginal examination ONLY if bimanual results confusing.
LEARNING GUIDE FOR BREAST EXAMINATION

Rate the performance of each step or task observed using the following rating scale:

1. **Needs Improvement**: Step or task not performed correctly or out of sequence (if necessary) or is omitted
2. **Competently Performed**: Step or task performed correctly in proper sequence (if necessary) but learner does not progress from step to step efficiently
3. **Proficiently Performed**: Step or task efficiently and precisely performed in the proper sequence (if necessary)

### GETTING READY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP/TASK</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Greet the woman respectfully and with kindness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tell her you are going to examine her breasts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask the woman to undress from her waist up. Have her sit on the examining table with her arms at her sides.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry them with a clean, dry cloth or allow them to air dry. If there are open sores or nipple discharge, put new examination or high-level disinfected surgical gloves on both hands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BREAST EXAMINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP/TASK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Look at the breasts and note any differences in:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- shape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- nipple or skin puckering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- dimpling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check for any swelling, increased warmth or tenderness in either breast.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Look at the nipples and note size, shape and direction in which they point. Check for rashes or sores and nipple discharge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask the woman to raise her arms over her head and look at her breasts. Note any differences. Have the woman press her hands on her hips and look at the breasts again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ask her to lean forward to see if her breasts hang evenly.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have her lie down on the examining table.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Place a pillow under her left shoulder. Place the woman’s left arm over her head.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Look at the left breast and note any differences from the right breast. Check for any puckering or dimpling.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# LEARNING GUIDE FOR BREAST EXAMINATION

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Using the pads of your three middle fingers, palpate the entire breast, starting at the top outermost edge of the breast, using the spiral technique. Note any lumps or tenderness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Use the thumb and index finger to gently squeeze the nipple. Note any clear, milky or bloody discharge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Repeat these steps for the right breast. If necessary, repeat this procedure with the woman sitting up and with her arms at her sides.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Have the woman sit up and raise her arm to shoulder level. Palpate the tail of the breast by pressing along the outside edge of the left pectoral muscle while gradually moving your fingers up into the axilla. Check for enlarged lymph nodes or tenderness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Repeat this step for the right side.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. After completing the examination, have the woman cover herself. Explain any abnormal findings and what needs to be done. If the examination is normal, tell the woman everything is normal and healthy and when she should return for a repeat examination.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## TEACHING BREAST-SELF EXAMINATION (BSE)

| 1. Explain to the woman why regular BSE is important. |       |
| 2. Explain the steps in BSE and demonstrate it using a breast model. If breast model is not available, explain steps and demonstrate BSE on self (without removing clothing.) |       |
| 3. Assess the woman’s present understanding of BSE by asking her questions about her present knowledge. |       |
| 4. Add to the woman’s missing information and correct wrong information about BSE timing, technique and what to look for during BSE. |       |
| 5. Ask the woman to demonstrate the procedure on herself and provide positive and corrective feedback. |       |
LEARNING GUIDE FOR PELVIC EXAMINATION

Rate the performance of each step or task observed using the following rating scale:

1. **Needs Improvement**: Step or task not performed correctly or out of sequence (if necessary) or is omitted

2. **Competently Performed**: Step or task performed correctly in proper sequence (if necessary) but learner does not progress from step to step efficiently

3. **Proficiently Performed**: Step or task efficiently and precisely performed in the proper sequence (if necessary)

### GETTING READY

1. Explain why the examination is being done and describe the steps in the examination.
2. Ask the woman to empty her bladder and wash and rinse her abdominal and genital area.
3. Check that the instruments and supplies are available.
4. Ask the woman to undress and help her onto the examining table.
5. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry them with a clean, dry cloth or allow them to air dry.

### LOWER ABDOMINAL AND GROIN EXAMINATION

1. Ask the woman to lie down on the examining table with her arms at her sides.
2. Expose the entire abdomen.
3. Note any swelling or bulges in the abdomen. Note the location and shape of the umbilicus.
4. Inspect the abdomen for abnormal coloring, scars, stretch marks or rashes and lesions.
5. Using light pressure with the pads of your fingers, palpate all areas of the abdomen. Identify any masses, areas of tenderness or muscular resistance. Record your findings.
6. Using deeper pressure, determine size, shape, consistency, tenderness, mobility and movement of any masses. Record any masses and areas of tenderness.
7. Identify any tender areas. If abnormal tenderness is present, check for rebound tenderness.
8. If open sores are present on groin, put new examination or high-level disinfected surgical gloves on both hands before examining groin. Palpate both groin areas for bumps, buboes or swelling.

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**Breast and Pelvic Examination Learning Activity Packet** 27
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXTERNAL GENITAL EXAMINATION</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ask the woman to place her heels in the stirrups. If there are no stirrups, help her place her feet on the outside edges of the end of the table. Reposition the drape so that it covers the woman’s knees.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry them with a clean, dry cloth or allow them to air dry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Turn on the light and direct it toward the genital area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Put new examination or high-level disinfected gloves on both hands.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Touch the inside of her thigh before touching any of the genital area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Inspect the labia, clitoris and perineum.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Separating the labia majora with two fingers, check the labia minora, clitoris, urethral opening and vaginal opening.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Palpate the labia minora. Look for swelling, discharge, tenderness, ulcers and fistulas. Feel for any irregularities or nodules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Check the Skene’s glands for discharge and tenderness. With the palm facing upward, insert the index finger into the vagina and gently push upward against the urethra and milk the gland on each side and then directly on the urethra. (If discharge is present, take a smear for Gram’s stain and tests for gonorrhea and chlamydia, if laboratory facilities are available.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Check the Bartholin’s glands for discharge and tenderness. Insert index finger into vagina at lower edge of opening and feel at base of each of the labia majora. Using your finger and thumb, palpate each side for any swelling or tenderness. (If discharge is present, take a smear for Gram’s stain and tests for gonorrhea and chlamydia, if laboratory facilities are available.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ask the woman to bear down while you hold the labia open. Check for any bulging of the anterior or posterior vaginal walls.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Look at the perineum. Check for any scars, lesions, inflammation or cracks in the skin.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>SPECULUM EXAMINATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Select a bivalve speculum and show it to the woman. Explain what you are going to do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Insert the speculum fully and open the blades. Look at the vaginal walls and note any inflammation, ulcers or sores. Check for any discharge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Look at the cervix and os and note the color, position, smoothness or discharge. If the cervix bleeds easily or there is mucopus, obtain a specimen for Gram's stain and tests for gonorrhea and chlamydia, if laboratory facilities are available.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LEARNING GUIDE FOR PELVIC EXAMINATION

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Remove the speculum.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Place the speculum in 0.5% chlorine solution for decontamination.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

BIMANUAL EXAMINATION

1. Wet the index and middle fingers of the hand that will be inserted in the vagina (pelvic hand) with clean water or vaginal secretions.

2. Separate the labia with two fingers of the abdominal hand and insert the tips of the index and middle fingers of the pelvic hand into the vagina.

3. While exerting pressure downward, wait for the perineal muscles to relax. Gradually insert fingers fully or until the cervix is touched.

4. Turn your palm upward and follow the anterior vaginal walls until you feel the cervix.

5. Feel the length, size and shape of the cervix. Note its position and consistency.

6. Move the cervix gently from side to side between your fingers. Note whether the woman feels pain.

7. With the palm up, place the fingers of your pelvic hand in the space behind the cervix to feel the body of the uterus.

8. Place your other hand flat on the abdomen, midway between the umbilicus and the pubic bone.

9. Slowly slide your abdominal hand toward the symphysis pubis, pressing downward and forward with the pads of your fingers. At the same time, push inward and upward with the fingers of the pelvic hand, trying to trap the uterus between your hands. If you cannot feel the uterus, it may be retroverted.

10. Palpate the uterus and check for:
   - Size
   - Shape
   - Location
   - Consistency
   - Mobility
   - Tenderness

11. Locate an ovary by placing the fingers of the pelvic hand inside the lateral fornix. Move your abdominal hand to the same side and lateral to the uterus. Press down with the abdominal hand and reach up with the fingers of your pelvic hand. Gently bring the fingers of both hands together and move them toward the symphysis pubis.

12. Determine size, consistency and mobility of ovary.

13. Repeat this procedure for the other ovary.

14. Check the size, shape consistency, mobility and tenderness of any masses in the adnexa.
## LEARNING GUIDE FOR PELVIC EXAMINATION

### RECTOVAGINAL EXAMINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP/TASK</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Explain to the woman what you are going to do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. If you need to change your gloves, immerse both hands in 0.5% chlorine solution, then remove them by turning them inside out.  
  - If disposing of them, place them in a leakproof container or plastic bag.  
  - If reusing the gloves, submerge them in 0.5% chlorine solution for decontamination. |       |
| 3. Slowly insert the middle finger of the pelvic hand into the rectum and your index finger into the vagina. Ask the woman to exhale to help her relax. |       |
| 4. Press down firmly and deeply with the abdominal hand above the pubic bone while the vaginal and rectal fingers are pushing anteriorly on the cervix. |       |
| 5. Feel the surface of the uterus and check to see if it is smooth. |       |
| 6. Check for tenderness or masses between the uterus and rectum. |       |
| 7. After you have completed the examination, remove both fingers slowly. |       |
| 8. Immerse both gloved hands in 0.5% chlorine solution, remove the gloves by turning them inside out and dispose of them in a leakproof container or plastic bag. |       |

### COMPLETING THE PELVIC EXAMINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP/TASK</th>
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</tr>
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</table>
| 1. If rectovaginal examination was not performed, immerse both gloved hands in 0.5% chlorine solution, then remove gloves by turning them inside out.  
  - If disposing of gloves, place them in a leakproof container.  
  - If reusing the gloves, submerge them in 0.5% chlorine solution for decontamination. |       |
| 2. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry them with a clean, dry cloth or allow them to air dry. |       |
| 3. Help the woman to sit up on the examining table and ask her to get dressed. |       |
| 4. After the woman is dressed, discuss any abnormal findings and what, if anything, she needs to do. If the examination was normal, tell her that everything is normal and healthy. |       |
CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE ANSWER KEY

COUNSELING

1. During the clinic visit, the primary purpose of talking with the woman is to give her instructions. **FALSE** Learner Objective 1

2. Both verbal and nonverbal means of communication are important in talking with clients. **TRUE** Learner Objective 1

3. The healthcare provider has the responsibility of sharing medical information with the woman’s spouse. **FALSE** Learner Objective 1

BREAST EXAMINATION

4. A provider should always wear new examination or high-level disinfected surgical gloves when performing a breast examination. **FALSE** Learner Objective 2

5. It is important to look at the breast in different positions to check for skin puckering or dimpling. **TRUE** Learner Objective 3

6. Swelling, increased warmth or tenderness in either breast may suggest infection. **TRUE** Learner Objective 3

7. A provider should use her/his whole hand to feel the breast tissue when palpating the breast. **FALSE** Learner Objective 3

8. If no changes or lumps in the breast are found while palpating the breast, it is not necessary to palpate the axilla. **FALSE** Learner Objective 3

9. The best time for a woman to examine her breasts is during her menstrual period. **FALSE** Learner Objective 4

PELVIC EXAMINATION

10. The mons pubis, clitoris, labia majora and perineum are all part of the external female genitalia. **TRUE** Learner Objective 5

11. The internal female genitalia include the fallopian tubes, ovaries, uterus, and the labia minora. **FALSE** Learner Objective 5

12. Examination of the lower abdomen should include both light and deep pressure during palpation. **TRUE** Learner Objective 5

13. A provider should wear new examination or high-level disinfected surgical gloves before examining the external genitalia. **TRUE** Learner Objective 2

14. Palpation of the Bartholin’s and Skene’s glands are **TRUE** Learner Objective 5
15. The speculum examination includes looking at the vaginal walls, cervix and cervical os. **TRUE** Learner Objective 5

16. After using the speculum, it should be soaked in 0.5% chlorine solution for 10 minutes. **TRUE** Learner Objective 2

17. One purpose of the bimanual examination is to check the size, shape and position of the uterus. **TRUE** Learner Objective 5

18. It is not important to assess the adnexa during a bimanual examination. **FALSE** Learner Objective 5

19. A provider should always do a rectovaginal examination after performing the bimanual examination. **FALSE** Learner Objective 5

20. The rectovaginal exam will help determine the size of the uterus. **TRUE** Learner Objective 5
ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

EXERCISE 1: INTRODUCTION TO BREAST AND PELVIC EXAMINATIONS

1. Any **three** of the following are correct.
   1) Look at the breasts and check for abnormalities.
   2) Check the lower abdomen and groin for abnormalities.
   3) Look at the external genitalia and check Bartholin’s and Skene’s glands for discharge.
   4) Look at the vagina and cervix for infection, tears or other abnormalities.
   5) Check the pelvic organs for infection and abnormalities.

2. **B.** Condom usage if at risk of sexually transmitted diseases

3. The steps are in the following order: 4, 2, 5, 3, 1.
   4) Help her onto the table and make sure she is comfortable.
   2) Be sure the woman has emptied her bladder and washed her abdominal and genital area if necessary.
   5) Wash your hands with soap and water and allow them to air dry or dry with a personal towel.
   3) Ask the woman to remove only as much clothing as necessary for the examination.
   1) Be sure the room has enough light and a source of clean water.

EXERCISE 2: TALKING WITH WOMEN

1. The following behaviors encourage a trusting relationship.
   A. No
   **B. Yes**
   C. Yes
   D. No

2. The following should be covered:
   1) Making choices about her reproductive health and fertility.
   2) Using family planning longer and more successfully.
   3) Feeling more satisfied with services received.

3. Nodding and smiling. These are from the Resource Manual; others you may have identified from your experience could include: eye contact, not turning away from the client while talking, attentive posture.

4. Either one is correct:
   1) Do not discuss client’s questions, choices or examination findings with client’s family or friends unless the client asks you to do so.
   2) Do not share client information with other healthcare providers not directly involved in her care.
EXERCISE 3: ANATOMY AND EXAMINATION OF THE FEMALE BREAST

1. Fat, glandular tissues, fibrous tissues

2. The **tail** of the breast is most often affected by cancer. See figure below:

![Diagram of the female breast showing different quadrants](image)

3. Axilla

4. **B.** Upper, outer quadrant

5. True

6. Arms over head, hands on hips, leaning forward

7. **A.** Skin dimpling

8. Thickening, fluid filled cysts, or masses (tumors)

9. **D.** Use the pads of your fingers to palpate the breast moving in a circular motion around the breast

10. Consistency and mobility

EXERCISE 4: TEACHING BREAST SELF-EXAMINATION

1. **A.** Seven to ten days after her menstrual bleeding starts

2. True

3. Change in shape or size, puckering or dimpling of the skin, lump or thickening in the underarm area
4. Any **five** of the seven signs are correct.
   1) Unusual increase in size of one breast
   2) One breast hangs unusually lower than other
   3) Puckering of skin
   4) Dimpling of nipple or areola
   5) Swelling in upper arm
   6) Change in appearance of nipple
   7) Milky or bloody discharge from nipple

**EXERCISE 5: PELVIC ANATOMY AND OVERVIEW OF PELVIC EXAMINATION**

1. See figure below:
2. See figure below:

3. Match the following steps of pelvic exams with the correct rationale for that task.
   
   C  1. Examine lower abdomen and groin area.
   A  2. Examine external genitalia.
   B  3. Perform speculum examination.
   F  4. Perform bimanual examination.
   E  5. Perform rectovaginal examination (if necessary).

**EXERCISE 6: LOWER ABDOMINAL, GROIN AND EXTERNAL GENITAL EXAMINATION**

1. A. To look for buboes (swollen lymph nodes)

2. True

3. The following should be covered:
   1) Examine for lesions, sores or warts.
   2) Check for tenderness, swelling or discharge from Bartholin’s and Skene’s glands.

4. Urethra

5. A. Insert your index finger (facing up) into the vagina and gently push upward and milk the gland from inside outward.
6. They should be in the following order: 6, 1, 7, 2, 4, 3, 5.
   6  Check Skene’s glands for discharge or tenderness.
   1  Inspect the abdomen for masses, abnormal coloring, rashes and lesions.
   7  Check Bartholin’s glands for discharge or tenderness.
   2  Palpate the abdomen for tenderness or masses.
   4  Examine the labia and perineal area for lesions, scars, warts or lice.
   3  Palpate the groin for masses.
   5  Examine the labia minora, clitoris and urethra for discharge, redness or sores.

EXERCISE 7: SPECULUM AND BIMANUAL EXAMINATION

1.  A. A woman complains of vaginal itching.
    B. A woman complains of pain during sexual intercourse.

2. They should be in this order: 2, 1, 4, 3.
   2  Insert the speculum with gentle pressure down toward the rectum.
   1  Insert an index finger and gently press down toward the rectum while inserting the speculum vertically and at an angle.
   4  Gently open the blades until the cervix comes into view.
   3  Gently rotate the blades to a horizontal position.

3. True

4. The following should be covered.
   1) Determine size, shape, position and mobility of the uterus.
   2) Check for pregnancy or uterine abnormalities.
   3) Assess the adnexa for enlargement or tenderness.

5. Infection, cervical motion tenderness

6. Size, shape, location and consistency

7. D. About 2–4 cm above the pelvic bone

8. Take a deep breath and breathe out.

9. False

EXERCISE 8: RECTOVAGINAL EXAMINATION AND INFECTION PREVENTION

1. If the bimanual examination is confusing

2. It may make her feel as if she has to move her bowels

3. The following should both be listed: preventing the spread of infection to clients, and protecting
the healthcare worker by providing a safe environment.

4. **A.** Wash hands before gloving for the procedure.

5. Either of the following are acceptable. Keep a bucket with a tap, soap and a basin below available for times when water is in short supply, or make an alcohol scrub solution and keep it available.

6. False

7. **B.** Immersed in 0.5% chlorine bleach solution

8. True