Course Title: Well Woman Physical Assessment  
Credits: 1.0

Course Description: Through this course, the student will learn how to perform a complete physical examination relevant to the well-woman visit. This course focuses in-depth on anatomical structures that are examined during well-woman care and the skills needed to screen clients for possible abnormalities or pathology. The course is broken down into four sections: general exam, breast exam, pelvic exam and rectal exam. This course uses current research in midwifery and obstetrics to broaden the student’s understanding of the following NARM skills and MANA core competencies learned under clinical supervision:

NARM Skills
I. Midwifery Counseling, Education and Communication
   (1)-I A. Provides interactive support and counseling and/or referral services to the mother regarding her relationships with her significant others and other healthcare providers
   (3)-I C. Provides education and counseling based on maternal health/reproductive/family history and on-going risk assessment
   (7)-I G. Applies the principles of informed consent
   (8)-I H. Provides individualized care
II. General Healthcare Skills
   (21)-II A. Demonstrates Universal Precautions
   (22)-II B. Demonstrates the application of OSHA regulations as they relate to midwifery workplace
   (23)-II C. Demonstrates the application of aseptic technique
II D. Demonstrates the use of instruments and equipment including:
   (26)-II D 3. Blood pressure cuff
   (41)-II D 18. Stethoscope
VI. Well-Women Care
   (141)-VI B. Performs a thorough general physical examination appropriate to well-woman care
   (143)-VI D. Performs pelvic examination
   (144)-VI E. Provides education
   (146)-VI G. Provides opportunity for client to discuss problems or concerns
   (147)-VI H. Refers client to other health care professionals, services, agencies, or other, as indicated
   (148)-VI I. Maintains precise records

Learning Activities:

A. Student reads appropriate sections from the Learning Materials/Resources.

B. Student answers the questions listed in the Learning Objectives by researching the Learning Materials/Resources for the course and correctly cites the sources and page numbers for each of their answers.

C. Student presents answers the questions listed in the Learning Objectives for review by preceptor.
D. Student participates in preceptor elaboration/discussion of Learning Objectives.

E. The student must research, prepare & present a summary of current best midwifery care/practices appropriate to a topic covered in this course from a current journal article/study, less than 5 years old.

F. Recommended Role-playing and/or Clinical Interactions

*Note: The clinical requirement of NARM /Clinical Skills is completed at any time throughout the ASM apprenticeship during actual clinical practice and is NOT a requirement to complete this academic course.*

Activities specific to NARM skills learned in this section:

1. Observe your preceptor doing a complete physical assessment during a well-woman visit
2. Practice doing a breast exam on another student or preceptor
3. Practice doing a pelvic exam on another student or preceptor
4. Attend a course on self-breast examination in your community
5. Practice performing a pap smear on another student or preceptor

**Learning Materials / Resources:**

*Please use textbooks less than 5 years old or most recent edition.*


7. Students must find 1 article/study less than 5 years old. Recommended internet links as needed for latest developments in midwifery care: [https://www.midwiferycollege.edu/resources-national-college-of-midwi](https://www.midwiferycollege.edu/resources-national-college-of-midwi)
Evaluation Tools / Methods:
Minimum passing grade for each course is a cumulative 80% / B-. Students and preceptors are encouraged to work together until the student masters the information.

Final grade for the course is based on preceptor evaluation of the following:

A. Learning Objectives count for 50% of the final grade.
The preceptor evaluates each answer based on three elements:

1. Answers should reflect a thorough review of current literature regarding best current practices in midwifery care.
2. Each answer should be formed in the student’s own words or paraphrased from the text. The answer should be minimal, not a re-write of the entire text, but enough to show appropriate comprehension of the learning objective.
3. Student identification of sources and page numbers for each of the Learning Objectives. (Preceptor should do a random check to determine that sources cited are correctly identified.)

B. Enrichment Activities, including research essays and summaries of articles: 20%
C. Discussions: 15%
D. Tests and Exams: 15%

Course credit:
One Academic credit equals approximately 15 hours of formal time plus 30 hours of additional study or homework. Formal time is defined as the amount of time taken to answer the Learning Objectives to the level of 80% and to complete any learning activities to the preceptor’s satisfaction, including any time spent face to face with the preceptor. Informal time includes any time spent actively reading relevant sources and textbook/s, researching Learning Objectives, and studying for examinations.

Learning Objectives:

A. The student must research, prepare & present a summary of an aspect of current best midwifery care/practices appropriate a topic from this course from a current journal article/study.

B. Student answers the questions below and cites the sources and page numbers.

General exam

1. Discuss how Body Mass Index (BMI) is determined.
2. Explain how to locate the thyroid and what a normal thyroid feels like upon palpation.
3. Explain briefly the cardiopulmonary exam that is done during a well-woman exam.
4. Explain briefly how to examine the abdomen during a well-woman exam and how the
major abdominal organs are located.

5. Explain what aspects of the skin are noted on a general physical exam.

6. Describe the elements of a neuromuscular evaluation that is relevant to a well-woman exam.

7. Describe how a general physical exam might be different for a post-menopausal woman than a woman of child-bearing age.

8. Describe how a general physical exam might differ for an adolescent at menarche.

9. What adaptations to the performance of the physical exam can help put the client at ease or reduce anxiety while still enabling the practitioner to perform a complete exam?

Breast exam

10. Briefly discuss why a breast exam is performed as a routine part of an inter-conception or well-woman appointment.

11. Discuss the importance of explaining each step of the breast exam before and during the examination.

12. When is the optimal time during the menstrual cycle to perform a breast exam?

13. Discuss the purpose of having the client assume the three following positions during a breast exam: arms over-head, hands pressed on hips, lean forward.

14. Discuss the characteristics of the breast skin that are examined.

15. Describe which part of the midwife’s hand should be used to palpate the breast tissue.

16. Describe the general palpation pattern with which the midwife should examine the breast.

17. Discuss the anatomical parameters of the tissue that should be examined as part of a breast exam.

18. Describe the variations of consistency in normal breast tissue.

19. Discuss the finding of tenderness during a breast exam and when this is normal.

20. Describe the characteristics of irregular breast tissue that should be noted during a breast exam. Include how to describe location, size, shape and consistency.


22. Describe the adaptations in a routine breast exam that must be made for women who
have undergone mastectomy or breast augmentation.

**Pelvic exam**

23. What position should the client assume for the successful performance of a pelvic exam?

24. Discuss briefly how universal precautions are observed during a pelvic exam.

25. What external anatomical structures are examined during a typical well-woman pelvic exam?

26. Describe the general appearance of the external structures of the female genitalia.

27. Describe the normal consistency of pubic hair.

28. Describe how to palpate the Bartholin’s (greater vestibular) glands.

29. What internal anatomical structures are examined during a typical well-woman pelvic exam?

30. Describe how to assess the support of the vaginal walls.

31. What is the significance of bulging or swelling of the vulva or vagina?

32. Describe which hand maneuver is employed to palpate the cervix.

33. Describe what characteristics of the cervix are noted upon palpation.

34. Describe the hand positioning that is employed to palpate the uterus during a well-woman exam.

35. What characteristics of the uterus are noted upon palpation?

36. Describe the physical exam findings that are consistent with a mild uterine prolapse.

37. Describe the hand positioning that is employed to palpate the ovaries.

38. What characteristics of the ovaries are noted upon palpation?

39. Describe a method for assessing the strength of the pelvic muscles.

40. Describe the purpose of a rectovaginal exam.

41. How is the rectovaginal exam performed without cross-contamination of harmful bacteria?

42. Briefly describe how to examine for a groin hernia.
43. Describe how to modify a bimanual exam for a woman who has a small vaginal introitus.

44. Describe the characteristics of the cervix that can be observed visually upon a speculum exam. (see AP basic skills for questions on speculum technique)

45. Describe the variations in the shape of the cervical os that are considered normal as a result of age and parity.

46. Describe the abnormal variations of the consistency of cervical tissue that warrant further investigation and lab testing.

47. Describe how to collect cervical cells with a brush or paddle for cytology purposes.

48. Describe the characteristics of the vaginal tissue that can be observed visually upon a speculum exam.

49. Describe the consistency and odor of vaginal discharge that is considered normal.

50. Describe the consistency and odor of vaginal discharge that is consistent with candida vaginitis.

51. Describe the consistency and odor of vaginal discharge that is consistent with bacterial vaginosis.

**Rectal exam**

52. Briefly describe why the rectal exam is an important part of well-woman care.

53. Describe how the external sphincter and perineum is examined.

54. What characteristics of the external sphincter and perineum should be noted?

55. Describe how to examine the anus and rectum.

56. What characteristics of the anus and rectum should be noted?

57. What internal structures of the female genital tract are palpable upon a rectal exam?

**Preconception Counseling:**

58. What physical examinations would you preform for a woman who has come to you for preconception counseling?

59. What labs would you suggest running for a woman who has come to you for preconception counseling?