



What 'primary care' really means

Your primary care doctor is one of your best healthcare resources. Here's what you can expect from primary care.

- 1. Patient focus.** Primary care gives you complete, coordinated care and support to help you live healthfully. As the patient, you are central.
- 2. First contact.** Your primary care provider (PCP) is your first point of contact when you need care. They can be a medical doctor (MD), doctor of osteopathy (DO), nurse practitioner (NP), or physician assistant (PA).
- 3. Group effort.** Your PCP may be part of a practice that includes other professionals who can help you if your doctor isn't available. These clinicians work together to give you quality care.
- 4. Patient empowerment.** Your doctor is your partner, which means you play a significant role in your own care. By combining the information your doctor gives you with your own research, you can take charge of your health.
- 5. Health promotion.** Primary care isn't limited to just getting care when you're sick. It also includes things like health maintenance, counseling, and education.
- 6. Disease prevention.** Through regular checkups and conversations about your lifestyle, your doctor can help you prevent chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.
- 7. Care coordination.** If you have a health condition that requires more care, your primary care team will coordinate care and make sure important information is shared with all those who are caring for your health.
- 8. Healthcare advocacy.** Your PCP can help you navigate the healthcare system and figure out how to meet your healthcare needs in a cost-effective way. This includes working with other providers and your health insurance company.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians



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