

PARTNERING WITH A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

What is a Primary Care Provider?

A Primary Care Provider (PCP) is a medical doctor who is trained to prevent, diagnose and treat illness or injuries. They will be involved in your long-term care and will keep you on the path to staying healthy and creating a plan for your future health.

How do you benefit from partnering with a Primary Care Provider?

Think of your health-care providers as a team. Your PCP acts as a coach that coordinates your health throughout your life. They will partner with you on your health and wellness journey helping you stay healthy, prevent disease and guide your mental and physical wellbeing. You may work with a specialist as well, but in most cases, a primary care provider manages your overall health.

Partnering with a primary care provider ensures you keep your health top of mind. Patients with a PCP are more likely to fill prescriptions and follow a provider's recommended care plan. They are significantly more likely to complete a preventive care visit annually. Because a provider is championing their care, patients with a PCP are more likely to complete important preventive screenings for colorectal, breast and ovarian cancer.

Access to primary care helps keep people out of the emergency room where the cost of care is at least

4x higher than
outpatient
care

Who are common Primary Care Providers?

Medical terms can be confusing. It's important to know which type of provider is best for your needs.

- Family Practitioners: see patients of all ages or an entire family.
- Pediatricians: specific to children and teenagers from birth to age 18
- Internists: specific to adults aged 18 years and older
- Geriatricians: specific to older people
- Advanced Practice Providers: typically a Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner who can work in any of the above fields

Benefits of a Wellness Visit or PCP Checkup:

- Detect problems early and prevent issues or concerns from progressing
- Ensure appropriate screenings and exams are completed timely
- Treat short-term issues directly
- Provide care over the course of your lifetime
- Lower medical costs (33% lower overall health-care costs, 19% lower odds of premature death) than those who only see specialists
- Referral to a specialist for more advanced care when appropriate

What to expect during a Primary Care visit

Your Primary Care Provider is focused on getting to know you, your health history and your goals. They serve as your health advocate who can guide your overall health journey. It's important to be open and honest with your provider about your goals, questions or concerns. Remember, they are your trusted advocate and are focused on helping you.

Before (What to Know/Bring)

- Know your family medical history including medical conditions
- Know your physical and mental health conditions (or make a list)
- Know where the office is and your transportation ahead of time
- Bring your insurance card and photo ID
- Bring a list of your current medications
- Develop a list of questions, concerns or goals you would like to discuss

During (What to Expect)

- During your visit, your PCP office may:
- Check your vitals including your height, weight and blood pressure
- Perform a physical exam including listening to your heart and lungs

Have a conversation to discuss your:

- Medical history
- Family history
- Mood
- Health changes or concerns
- Medications
- Concerns around social needs like food, housing, transportation or financial needs
- Alcohol, drug and/or tobacco use

After (Continuing Your Care)

- Follow the plan that was created with your PCP
- Fill any medications post-visit
- Alert your PCP of changes, issues or concerns

If necessary, your PCP will:

- Order appropriate follow-up tests, screenings or exams
- Arrange for you to meet with a specialist and/or schedule a follow-up appointment

Find a primary care provider that is right for you at Methodist Health System or Nebraska Medicine. Visit NebraskaHealthNetwork.com/primarycare.