

Why do you need a primary care doctor? What is a medical home?

Primary care is the place you go to feel at “home” getting your healthcare.

A primary care medical home:

- It is the doctor and team who know you. They treat you like a whole person. They know your history, your goals, and your concerns.
- They help you learn how to stay healthy. They work on preventing illness.
- It is important to go at least once a year for a check-up.
- If they help you with a chronic illness, you may need to go more often, such as four times a year.
- They know the health system. They can help you get the right care at the right time. If you have a new health problem, call your primary care team to decide what to do next. They may help you take care of it or help you get care from other teams.
- They can help you with medicine refills, vaccines, physical forms, and organizing your care.
 - Pediatric and adult primary care offices are similar. But they don't work exactly the same. Pediatricians manage common illnesses of children like asthma and ADHD. Adult doctors manage common illnesses of adults like high blood pressure and diabetes. Ask questions to learn more.



Emergency Room or ER:

- The ER team works on problems you are having right now. The ER treats injuries, accidents, and problems that are severe. They decide when you need to be admitted to the hospital. You should learn what problems are reasons to go to the ER. Ask your primary care team.
- The ER helps you today. They do not make long-term health plans. They remind you to follow up with your primary care. After you have been in an ER or in the hospital, call your primary care to work on the long-term plan.



Specialty Care:

- Specialists help with special illnesses or a specific body part, like your heart or your lungs.
- They will tell you when you should come for another visit and how to call for questions.

Questions:

1. When did you visit your primary care doctor last? When are you going back?
2. Are you working on being as healthy as you can be? Do you ask for help at your primary care office?
3. Do you make a list of your questions before you go for a visit? It's a good idea!