



# The Importance of Having a Primary Care Doctor

**T**here are many ways to stay healthy. One of the best things you can do to safeguard your health is to have a primary care doctor.

A Primary Care Provider or Primary Care Physician (PCP) is the cornerstone of your medical care. Primary Care Providers sometimes have different titles, like family doctors (who treat all ages) or pediatricians (who treat children and teens). When you establish a relationship with your provider, they can make the best recommendations for your health.

Studies have proven the value of primary care for patients, as those with a primary care doctor are more likely to receive regular screenings, continue their maintenance medications, and perform the other activities necessary for a healthy lifestyle.

## How do I find a Primary Care Provider?

Your PCP is a partner in your long-term care, so choose one who is attentive and responsive to your needs and one with whom you'll feel comfortable sharing your concerns. To find an in-network provider, please visit [ufcwtrust.com](http://ufcwtrust.com), select "Participants" at the

top of the home page and then click on "Find a Provider".

In addition to using [ufcwtrust.com](http://ufcwtrust.com) to find an in-network PCP who accepts your health plan, you can search online for reviews of different providers to find the best options. You can also talk to other health care providers you already visit, as well as family and friends in the area, for their recommendations.

Once you have selected a PCP, you still can ask them questions to make sure they are the right fit. You may be interested in their qualifications and certifications, their approach to preventive care, their responsiveness, their office hours, their practice and more.

## How often should I visit my Primary Care Provider?

You should schedule a visit with your PCP at least once each year for an annual physical examination.

## Why is having a Primary Care Provider important?

Rather than waiting until an emergency strikes and scrambling to find care – from someone who is not well versed in your medical history – be proactive and establish

a connection with a Primary Care Provider.

Your PCP can establish a medical relationship with you over months and years and will understand your unique needs. They may be able to recommend any lifestyle changes you might make to prevent disease.

During your routine checkup, they will likely be the first person to identify any medical issues you have developed, and may either recommend treatment or refer you to the appropriate specialist. They will know which disease screenings you should receive based on your age and other factors.

PCPs are especially important for people with chronic health conditions who need careful monitoring of their symptoms and the ability to adjust their treatment plans when necessary. These conditions include:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Mental health issues

Because PCPs are at the center of your medical care, they can oversee all

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your medications, including different prescriptions for multiple conditions, and make sure there are no potentially harmful interactions between them. They can also help you coordinate care among specialists in the event you are admitted to or discharged from the hospital or are diagnosed with a new medical condition.

## Your primary care visit

When you visit your PCP, they will likely ask about your family medical history as well as your current health and any concerns you have. By learning about your life, they can help you avoid chronic conditions by recommending lifestyle changes and preventive care.

If you already have chronic health conditions, they can help you manage them. They can order the appropriate preventive screenings for you based on their evaluations and make sure your vaccines are up to date to prevent future illnesses.

## The right choice

Not only may it improve your health, but having a Primary Care Provider has been shown to lower the costs of health care. This is a benefit both for you, as you save on out-of-pocket costs, and the Trust Fund, which can stay financially strong for generations to come.

When it comes to your health, you don't have to tackle it alone. You have access to experts ready to guide you, and it's covered by your health benefits. Set up a meeting with a Primary Care Provider today!

### Sources:

- Cleveland Clinic  
([my.clevelandclinic.org](http://my.clevelandclinic.org))
- Harvard University  
([health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu))

