

Functional Medicine

Functional Medicine: An Approach to Integrative Medicine

Integrative medicine is a whole body approach to health care. It brings together traditional and integrative therapies to address the mind, body, spirit and promote health and healing.

Functional medicine is a specific approach to practicing integrative medicine that is based on training from the Institute for Functional Medicine (IFM).

Health care providers who specialize in functional medicine (functional medicine providers) need to have special training through the IFM.

You and your health care provider partner together. Your provider:

- treats your body as a whole system
- looks to find imbalances in your body and why they are happening to find the “root cause” of your symptoms
- educates you
- suggests lifestyle changes (such as food, sleep, stress, exercise, and relationships)
- includes you in making informed decisions about your health.

Functional Medicine Visit

In general, your functional medicine visit will include three main parts:

1. Telling your health story as a timeline. This will help you and your functional medicine provider find reasons (imbalances) for your symptoms.

2. Working with your functional medicine provider to improve or correct the imbalances, one or a few at a time.
3. Forming a long-term partnership with your functional medicine provider to improve your health and overall well-being.

Together, you will create a care plan that is right for you. Your care plan may include:

- integrative therapies such as acupuncture, massage or chiropractic care
- testing such as stool, nutrient and food sensitivity
- elimination diets
- nutrition supplements to address nutrient deficiencies
- herbal supplements
- supplements to support digestion
- sleep support
- mind-body techniques, meditation
- exercise and movement recommendations
- food and beverage recommendations. (You may also be referred to have a consult with a functional medicine dietitian.)

This care approach can be helpful if you have chronic (long-term) health problems such as:

- digestive problems
- fibromyalgia
- autoimmune problems

(over)

- thyroid problems
- hormone imbalances
- headaches or migraines
- fatigue
- weight concerns (loss or gain)
- stress
- anxiety
- depression
- being unable to sleep (insomnia)
- arthritis
- allergies
- asthma
- skin problems such as acne or eczema
- diabetes.

Functional medicine can also help if you don't have a specific health problem but if you want to improve your overall health and well-being.

Important: Functional medicine visits should not replace visits with your primary care provider or specialist. Your primary care provider, specialist(s) and functional medicine provider will work together to help you feel your best.

What to Expect

Your first visit will be about 1 hour.
Your functional medicine provider may:

- review your medical history
- ask you questions about your:
 - family health history
 - prescription and over-the-counter medicines
 - herbals, vitamins and other supplements
 - typical foods
 - lifestyle choices (tobacco, alcohol)
 - symptoms
 - stress level

- moods
- health concerns
- health goals
- order tests as needed
- work with you to create a care plan to meet your needs
- make referrals as needed.

You will have follow-up visits as needed.

Virtual Visits

Not all locations have a functional medicine provider available for in-person visits.

A virtual visit lets you see and talk with a functional medicine provider through your mobile device or computer, right from the comfort of your home or office.

You can expect to talk about the same information in a virtual visit as you would during an in-person visit.

How is this service billed?

Most insurance providers cover virtual visits, just like billing for a clinic visit.

What about privacy?

Virtual visits are not recorded.

Only you, your functional medicine provider and the nurse (if needed) can see and hear the visit.

When To Call Your Clinic

Call your clinic if you have questions, or if you need to cancel or reschedule your visit.