

Your Primary Care Provider (PCP)

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Your primary care provider (PCP) is your main doctor. This is the person you go to for general care.

Other names for your PCP include:

- regular health care provider
- general practitioner
- general doctor
- family doctor.

Your PCP can also be a(n):

- **family medicine doctor.** These doctors specialize in caring for the health needs of all ages. They've been trained in community medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry and surgery.
- **internal medicine doctor.** These doctors specialize in chronic illness and complex conditions in adults.
- **pediatricians.** Pediatricians provide care for infants to young adults. They are concerned with the emotional, physical and social health of their patients.
- **physician assistant.** Physician assistants can provide care for all ages under the supervision of a doctor. They are trained, certified and licensed.
- **nurse practitioner.** Nurse practitioners can provide care for all ages. They are registered nurses (RNs), have advanced training and some may also specialize.

When to See Your PCP

Make an appointment to see your PCP if you have questions or concerns about:

- well visits
- general illnesses such as sore throat, cough or fever
- immunizations (shots)
- health screenings or tests such as mammograms, Pap tests and pelvic exams or prostate exams
- how to treat a long-term health condition
- how to manage pain
- small cuts or scrapes
- minor sprains or bone breaks
- minor burns or bruises
- rashes or non-food-allergy reactions
- fever
- sore throat
- migraines
- cold or flu symptoms
- infections
- back pain
- abdominal pain
- other non-life-threatening illnesses or injuries.

While focusing on your general health needs, your PCP can refer you to a specialist or community resource if needed.

(over)

Why You Need a PCP

It is important to have a PCP **before** you have a health problem. That way, if you do experience an illness or injury your PCP already knows you and can help guide you in your health care decisions.

Having a PCP can also help you to stay healthy through preventive care. They can make sure you have the regular exams, tests and screenings you need as well as talk with you about your daily habits and lifestyle choices.

How to Choose a PCP

You will want to choose a PCP whom you feel comfortable talking to about your family history, lifestyle, beliefs, etc. By knowing more about you, your PCP will be able to guide your medical care and help you to stay healthy.

When choosing a PCP, consider their:

- education and training
- experience
- communication style
- appointment schedule
- office hours
- clinic location.

You can also get referrals from friends, family, neighbors and co-workers.

Choosing a PCP at Allina Health

To find a primary care provider at Allina Health:

- visit allinahealth.org and click on *Find*
- call Allina Health Physician Referral at 612-262-3333 or 1-800-877-7878.

Insurance Information

Health care benefits change and differ from plan to plan and provider to provider. It is important for you to understand your health care benefits **before** illness or injury occurs.

Call your insurance provider and find out exactly what is and isn't covered under your plan, and how much you have to pay yourself.

Write down answers to your questions, including the name of the person who gives you this information.