Do I Really Need A Primary Care Provider?

What is a primary care provider?

Primary care providers or PCPs, are health care professionals who either treat or coordinate treatment for all aspects of a person's medical care. They treat chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease as well as brief illnesses such as strep throat or the flu. They also provide routine health screenings, vaccines, and counseling on lifestyle changes to help you stay healthy. If you need additional care for an illness or condition, your PCP can help direct your care with other medical specialists.

People can also receive primary care services from other providers. Obstetrician-gynecologists and geriatricians are two examples of health care providers who can be considered a primary care provider if they treat or coordinate all aspects of a person's health needs.

- **Geriatricians** provide comprehensive medical care for older adults. They are specially trained in the aging process.
- **Obstetrician-gynecologists,** referred to as OB/GYNs, diagnose and treat disorders of women's reproductive systems, monitor pregnancies and supervise childbirth.

Why do I need a primary care provider?

Don't wait until you get sick to find a health care provider! The best time to start taking care of your health is before you get sick. Regular exams with your PCP ensure that you receive the preventive care you need when you need it and help you develop a relationship with your health care provider. If you do get sick, your PCP can treat you or help you find a specialist if you need one.

Several different types of health care providers serve as PCPs. You can choose which type works best for you:

Pediatricians specialize in the care of children from infancy through young adulthood.

Family medicine doctors are trained to provide care for the whole family, from birth to old age. Some family doctors also provide maternity care for pregnant women.

Internists take care of adults of all ages.

Internal medicine-pediatrics doctors, usually called Med-Peds, are trained in internal medicine and pediatrics and can care for children and adults.

Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine are fully licensed physicians who practice their unique whole-person approach in every medical specialty. DOs consider how lifestyle and environmental factors impact your well–being not only looking at symptoms.

Nurse Practitioners are registered nurses (RNs) who have completed advanced education and training in diagnosing and treating medical conditions. Nurse Practitioners can also care for children and adults and provide primary health care.

univera® HEALTHCARE

How do I find a primary care provider?

Before you look for a PCP, decide what type of health care provider you want, and whether there are any characteristics that are important to you: gender, age, languages spoken, location of the practice, hours open. Do you want a health care provider who will be your partner in your health care, or someone who is more of a trusted leader? Once you have decided on what is most important to you in a health care provider, use these suggestions to help you find a PCP:

- The best way to find a new health care provider is to talk to people. Ask friends and relatives for recommendations. Find out why they like their health care provider and what the practice is like.
- Ask another health care provider you already know, such as your child's pediatrician or your OB/GYN. Because they already know you, they may be able to recommend a PCP who would be a good fit for you.
- Use the online search tool at UniveraHealthcare.com.
- Use the "find a health care provider" search tool on your local hospital's website.

Once you find a health care provider that meets your criteria, confirm whether the health care provider accepts new patients and also accepts your insurance. Sometimes practices that no longer take new patients will make an exception for someone referred by an existing patient or another health care provider. If the practice has a website, look it over to see what the practice's philosophy of health care is and what the practice policies are. Some health care providers offer the option for you to make an appointment to "interview" them. This can help you decide whether the health care provider seems like a good fit for you.

Remember, ***you are the customer,*** so take the time to find a health care provider who is right for you.

univera HEALTHCARE

Our Health Plan complies with federal civil rights laws. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, origin, age, disability, or sex.

Atención: Si habla español, contamos con ayuda gratuita de idiomas disponible para usted. Consulte el documento adjunto para ver las formas en que puede comunicarse con nosotros.

注意：如果您说中文，我们可为您提供免费的语言协助。
请参见随附的文件以获取我们的联系方式。

UN-2689/14483-20HCNM
Reviewed 12/2020