



What is a PCP (primary care provider)?

A PCP is a doctor who manages your day-to-day health needs. They are trained to prevent, diagnose, and treat a broad array of illnesses, injuries and health concerns.

What to look for in a PCP

A primary care provider acts as your go-to health expert and also your health advocate. But finding the right person to fill this important role can take time. The best PCPs ...

- **Are receptive listeners.** They won't speak over you, stop you from talking or make you feel rushed.
- **Respect your wishes.** You should be the one to make the final decisions on your health choices without coercion from your health care provider.
- **Take the time to explain.** Your doctor should be able to fully explain your diagnosis and treatment options without confusing you.
- **Know when to ask for help.** Some medical scenarios require additional expertise. A good PCP will be humble enough to admit when your condition warrants seeing a specialist.

PROTECT YOUR HEALTH: Why you need a PCP

Most people remember the old saying: An apple a day keeps the doctor away. But the best way to actually keep the doctor away, is to visit them *more* – at least once per year. These regular visits with your PCP are key to preventing and/or diagnosing health problems before they become serious. Here are four key reasons you need a PCP:

1. PERSONALIZED HEALTH ADVICE.

There's no health care provider who will know you as well as your PCP. They understand your health goals, habits, medications, family health history, personality, preferences and more.

2. CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION.

Unfortunately, chronic diseases are becoming more and more common – in fact, six in 10 adults in the U.S. are living with at least one.¹ Your PCP will order blood work as part of your annual wellness exam to screen for health risk indicators, such as [elevated cholesterol](#) and glucose levels. Catching health risks like these early is key to preventing chronic disease.

3. COLLABORATIVE CARE.

Should you ever experience more advanced health care needs – for conditions such as cancer, heart disease, reproductive issues, serious infections, etc. – your PCP may refer you to a specialist. Both doctors work together to share information and provide care, but your PCP will act as the main coordinator of your overall health – you'll be glad to have them in your corner should the situation arise.

4. LOWER HEALTH CARE COSTS.

Evidence shows us those who regularly visit their PCP tend to see a decrease in more expensive types of health services, such as hospitalization and emergency department visits.² This comes from improved overall health outcomes and results in less money spent on medical costs in the long run.



HOW TO FIND A PCP

1 Visit [Wellmark.com/Finder](https://www.wellmark.com/Finder) to find primary care providers near you. Try asking friends and family for referrals and read reviews from previous patients online.

2 Use this checklist to narrow your list of potential candidates based on criteria that's important to you:

Accepting new patients

Accepts my insurance

Accessible location

Compatible office hours

Offers e-visits

Preferred gender

Online scheduling options

Preferred specialty experience (e.g., family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, etc.)

3 Make an appointment with the provider you selected. If you are due for your annual wellness exam this appointment will be no cost to you.

4 After your visit, take time to reflect on how it went overall.

- Are you comfortable with the facilities and staff?
- Do you trust them to manage your health care?
- Did their personality make you feel at ease?
- Do you feel comfortable asking questions?

Don't give up! Finding a primary care provider is something everyone has to do at some point in their lives. Take the process slow and keep looking until you find the right fit.



Want to learn more?

Visit tinyurl.com/3b9p9uz8 to watch a video about how to choose a personal doctor.

Taking care of your health pays

Through the State employee well-being program, [LiveWellSD](#), you can earn \$500 in HRA or HSA contributions when you and your covered spouse complete your Biometric Screening and online Health Assessment. Complete the Biometric Screening Form with your provider during your annual wellness exam and submit as instructed on the form.

[!\[\]\(291e070cef6c4d5e78fefe4696ef53be_img.jpg\) Click here to download the Biometric Screening Form](#)

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease>

2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3820521/>

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