

## Your Primary Care Team

A primary care team is a group of health professionals who work closely together to meet your healthcare needs. Your care team includes:

### You, the Patient

You are at the center of your healthcare team. You will work with your PCP and other members of your care team to plan your care and treatments.

### Your PCP

A PCP is one of these providers:

- An *attending physician*: a fully-trained doctor practicing primary care;
- An *advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP)*: a registered nurse with advanced clinical training practicing primary care;
- A *physician assistant (PA)*: a practitioner licensed by the state to practice medicine with a supervising doctor; or
- A *resident physician*: a doctor who has graduated from medical school and is completing extra training under the supervision of an attending physician. If a resident is your PCP, an attending physician will also supervise your care.

### Other Staff

You may also have one or more of these staff members on your care team: a registered nurse (RN), medical assistant (MA), social worker, patient services specialist, or health navigator.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

---

---

UW Medicine

Patient Care Services

1959 N.E. Pacific St., Seattle, WA 98195

B-181

© University of Washington Medical Center  
Published PFES: 2019  
Clinician Review: 09/2019  
Reprints on Health Online: <https://healthonline.washington.edu>

## What is a primary care provider?



*This brochure explains what a primary care provider (PCP) is and why having one can help your health and well-being.*

UW Medicine

## What is a primary care provider?

Have you ever heard of a primary care provider (PCP)? A PCP is your health advocate and attends to all of your healthcare needs. Your PCP will help manage your care and make sure it meets your overall healthcare goals.

A PCP offers preventive health services, urgent care, and long-term guidance about your health. Your PCP can also help you understand your healthcare needs and the healthcare system.

Your PCP will:

- Provide routine health screenings.
- Talk with you about lifestyle changes to prevent illness, as needed. These changes may include quitting smoking, managing your weight, attending to mental health concerns, and addressing substance use.
- Diagnose and treat *acute* (short-term) and *chronic* (long-term) illnesses.

## Special Concerns

You will have an ongoing, personal relationship with your PCP.

- Your PCP will work closely with you to achieve the best possible health outcomes.

- If a health condition arises that requires care from a specialist, your PCP will help you find the right one. PCPs work closely with specialists to make sure all your healthcare needs are met.
- Your PCP can also help you with any health issues related to gender identification.
- Be sure to tell your PCP if you have any concerns about your ability to pay for your healthcare needs.



## Why is a PCP important?

### Continuity of Care

When you work with your PCP over time, they get to know you and your healthcare goals. Your PCP will oversee your health as you move through life and any treatments or therapies you may need.

### Point Person for Your Healthcare

A PCP knows your health history, helps you manage any chronic issues, and makes sure you know about medical advances. This can help you live a healthier life.

### Preventing Illness

Routine screenings are a key part of preventing future illness and disease. Regular visits with your PCP can help you catch any health issues early.

### The Bigger Picture

Your PCP can help assess what's going on from many angles. A PCP takes a *holistic* approach to find out what might be going on with you. This means that your PCP will take mental and social factors into account, not just your physical symptoms.

### Fewer Trips to the Emergency Room (ER)

Your PCP can offer treatment or testing based on your medicines, health history, and health goals. This could mean avoiding costly trips to the ER.