

See Your “Primary” Doctor Before You See A Specialist



Internists, family doctors, and pediatricians are examples of primary care doctors. They give general medical care. If you are a member of a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), your primary care doctor is the doctor you select from the HMO plan to be the “gatekeeper” of all your medical needs. This person could be a family doctor, internist, obstetrician/gynecologist, etc. Whether or not you belong to an HMO, call or see your primary care doctor before you see a specialist. If your primary care doctor cannot take care of your health problem, he or she will refer you to a specialist.

Doctors and Their Specialties

- **Allergist.** Diagnoses and treats allergies.
- **Anesthesiologist.** Administers anesthetics that are used during surgery.
- **Cardiologist.** Diagnoses and treats diseases of the heart and blood vessels.
- **Dermatologist.** Diagnoses and treats diseases and problems of the skin.
- **Emergency Medicine.** Specializes in rapid recognition and treatment of trauma or acute illness.
- **Endocrinologist.** Diagnoses disorders of the internal glands such as the thyroid and adrenal glands.
- **Family Practitioner.** Provides total health care of the individual and the family. Scope is not limited by age, sex, or organ system.
- **Gastroenterologist.** Diagnoses and treats disorders of the digestive tract: stomach, bowels, liver, gallbladder, and related organs.
- **Gynecologist.** Diagnoses and treats disorders of the female reproductive system.
- **Internist.** Diagnoses and treats diseases especially those of adults.
- **Nephrologist.** Diagnoses and treats diseases and problems of the kidneys.
- **Neurologist.** Diagnoses and treats disorders of the nervous system.
- **Obstetrician.** Provides care and treatment of females during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and six weeks after delivery.
- **Oncologist.** Diagnoses and treats all types of cancer and other types of benign and malignant tumors.
- **Ophthalmologist.** Diagnoses, monitors, and treats vision problems and other disorders of the eye and prescribes prescription lenses.
- **Orthopedist.** Diagnoses and treats skeletal injuries and diseases of the bones and muscles.
- **Otolaryngologist.** Diagnoses and treats disorders that affect the ears, respiratory, and upper alimentary systems (in general, the head and neck).
- **Pathologist.** Examines and diagnoses organs, tissues, and body fluids.
- **Pediatrician.** Diagnoses and treats the physical, emotional, and social problems of children.
- **Physiatrist.** Provides physical and rehabilitative treatment of muscle and bone disorders.
- **Psychiatrist.** Treats and prevents mental, emotional, and/or behavioral disorders.
- **Radiologist.** Uses x-rays and radiant energy for diagnosis and treatment of disease.
- **Urologist.** Diagnoses and treats diseases of the urinary or urogenital tract.