

“How important is it for me to visit my Primary Care Provider?”

Regularly scheduled visits with your Primary Care Physician (PCP) are extremely important to your overall physical and mental well-being.



With all of the continuous changes in health care, it's important for you to take charge of your health. Your PCP is the coordinator of all your health concerns, including scheduling routine screenings, interpreting test results, providing recommendations for specialists and prescribing medications. People who have a trusting, long-term relationship with their doctor tend to have fewer visits to the ER and better overall health.

Why visit your PCP regularly?

- It's important to establish a personal, comprehensive relationship with your PCP, who has knowledge of your entire health history.
- Your PCP is trained in a variety of health areas and can answer many different questions pertaining to your health in one visit.
- Frequent visits build trust between you and your health care provider. It is easier to be honest and discuss health issues with someone you feel comfortable with.
- Routine screenings and tests can help to detect symptoms before they worsen. Your PCP helps you manage your conditions, which will lower overall medical costs down the road.

How to prepare for your visit

- Gather your medical records from all of your doctors. Some electronic medical record programs don't work together, and you want to make sure your PCP has up-to-date information.
- Ask to have health history medical questionnaires sent to you prior to your visit. This way, you have time to find out information you may not know, such as family history.
- Know your results for cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure, triglycerides, BMI, mammograms, bone density tests, colonoscopies, etc.
- Make a list of all prescribed and over-the-counter medications you take regularly to discuss with your provider.
- Write a list of questions concerning any health problems you may have. Healthwise® Knowledgebase is a reliable website that can provide valuable information on a variety of health topics. Go to fallonhealth.org and click on the Healthwise® Knowledgebase quick link at the bottom of the page for more information.

Questions you may want to ask your PCP

- What tests are you ordering? What are they for? Are they preventative or diagnostic tests/screenings?
- What do you call my health condition(s)?
- Why do I need this treatment? What are the side effects or consequences if I don't follow these procedures/take this medication?
- Do I need to see a specialist?
- When should I return?
- How do I take this medication and at what time of the day?
- Does this medication interact with any medications I am currently taking?
- Write down everything the doctor tells you so you remember the details. Consider bringing someone with you who can help you with questions and remember information you may forget.

Scheduling regular appointments to meet and speak with your PCP leads to better results, quality health care and overall higher patient satisfaction. When you aren't feeling well, call your PCP first, as they will have your medical records and can advise you on what steps to take. If you think your health is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

Fallon Health members have other options, as well.

- **Teladoc™** gives you access 24 hours a day, seven days a week to a U.S. board-certified doctor through the convenience of phone, video or mobile app visits.
- **Nurse Connect** is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This resource gives members complimentary access by telephone to registered nurses and other health care professionals who are available to answer a variety of health questions.
- In the event a member needs immediate care for an unforeseen illness, injury or condition that is not an emergency situation, Fallon provides **urgent care** benefits.
- Open days, evenings and weekends, **limited-service clinics**, such as a CVS MinuteClinic®, are convenient. You don't need an appointment—you can walk right in. Staffed by a certified nurse practitioner, a limited-service clinic is a family health center that cares for adults and children over the age of two. This is a good option for after-hours routine care, such as for coughs, sore throats and fevers; pink eye; ear or sinus pain; rashes; or minor allergic reactions.
- Go to fallonhealth.org/members for access to information regarding urgent care centers in our network and limited service clinics. Call Nurse Connect at the number on the back of your Fallon Health member ID card.

