

# Your Primary Care Provider Is Your Partner in Health

General or family practitioner  
(All ages)

Pediatrician  
(Infants, children, adolescents)

Internist  
(Adults)

\*Nurse Practitioner (NP) or \*\*Physician's Assistant



## What does a primary care provider do?

- Cares for you as a whole person throughout your life.
- Sees you often and develops a complete picture of your needs and concerns, monitors your health challenges over time and learns how best to help you.
- Diagnoses and treats illnesses, including chronic conditions such as asthma, depression, diabetes and heart disease.
- Provides screenings, vaccinations, helpful advice and resources on lifestyle changes and wellness.
- Works with you to prevent illness and conditions before they develop.
- Helps coordinate your care if you have surgery, are hospitalized or receive care from specialists.

## Why have a primary care doctor?

- **Relationship:** Your primary care doctor is someone you trust who knows your health history, your life circumstances and how best to share information with you.
- **Coordination:** Your primary care doctor can see the whole picture your treatments, medications and health history. He or she can help you coordinate treatment if you find yourself dealing with several doctors or other health care professionals for special issues or surgery.
- **Prevention:** Your primary care doctor helps you with lifestyle changes that may reduce your health risks. He or she focuses on prevention through screenings, vaccinations and early detection of potential problems.

## Better health, lower cost

- **Better overall health:** People who have an ongoing relationship with a primary care doctor have better overall health.
- **Saves money:** Primary care doctors tend to focus more on prevention, saving people money by preventing diseases that require expensive and invasive

Learn how to find a caring, skilled primary care doctor at [www.ownyourhealthwa.org](http://www.ownyourhealthwa.org).

\*In Washington state you can be seen by an NP, a registered nurse who has received additional training to provide primary care directly to patients. May practice independently or in a doctor's office.

\*\* A physician's assistant may work with you as well, as part of your primary care doctor's team of health care professionals.