

FAQ: Your care team

You deserve the highest quality care. Care teams collaborate on your care to deliver it with improved experiences and outcomes in a way that also reduces costs. Your primary care provider will guide your care team.

Why do I need a primary care provider?

Having a primary care provider allows you to establish trusting relationships with a care team who gets to know you and your medical history, and provides continuity of care for you and your family.

A primary care provider:

- Can be a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant
- Is available to evaluate and treat day-to-day health problems
- Advises you on preventive screenings at different stages throughout your life
- Follows up with you to explain test results and judge how well your treatment is working
- Refers you to qualified specialists when needed
- Maintains the big picture of your overall health and treatment needs

The patient assistance team makes establishing care at Mayo Clinic Health System easy. [Find your local clinic's contact information](#) or call our Primary Care Provider Referral Line at 1-866-711-2702 (toll-free) for help selecting a primary care provider and transferring medical records.

What is team-based care?

Your care needs are important. The team-based approach to care will support you with a variety of caregivers who can focus on your individual needs in the most convenient and supportive ways possible. The members of your primary care team each have a specific role in supporting your care and health goals.

What are the care team members' roles in my care?

Though collaborative teamwork your care is delegated to the most appropriate team member. Your extended care team includes:

- **You**
You are at the center of the care team and everything they do. Care teams are responsible for understanding your needs and supporting your health.
- **Registered nurses**
They provide education and assessment of your needs, care coordination should you need customized plans of care; and deliver nurse-only visits such as hypertension checks, six and 12 month well-child assessments, and adult annual wellness visits.
- **Licensed practical nurses, medical assistants and clinical assistants**
They prepare you for the visit, coordinate preventive services and care with other providers if you have chronic conditions, and provide vaccination visits.
- **Allied health staff**
They are the doorway to your care team, and guide you to the right level of care at the right time.
- **Additional primary care members**
Behavioral health specialists, dietitians, pharmacists, therapists, social services support and other health care specialists are added to your care team if necessary.
- **Specialists**

Your care team will coordinate with specialists to ensure your care plan fits your needs, your lifestyle and your family circumstances.

What are the benefits of having a care team instead of seeing my own provider every time?

A care team improves your care in several ways. Instead of depending on just one provider, you now have an entire team supporting you. When you need to see a specialist, your care team will connect you to the right person. Your team will remind you when it's time for a preventive exam or wellness screening. Often, you'll be able to receive care more quickly than in the past because now you have more people prepared to meet your needs. We hope this will help make your visit as efficient and productive as possible.

I prefer to see my physician but I was offered a visit with a nurse instead. Why?

Your appointments and the care team professional that you see is tailored to your specific needs and complexity. This allows you and all patients access to the right provider at the right time. For example, selected registered nurses are specifically trained to provide care related to recurring hypertension visits and Medicare Annual Wellness Visits. When a registered nurse determines that your condition has become more complicated, you will be referred to a nurse practitioner, physician assistant or physician.

Why does my doctor suggest I see a nurse practitioner or physician assistant for my next clinic visit?

Nurse practitioners and physician assistants work in partnership with physicians to ensure you get the care you need when you need it. Together they coordinate treatment for patients seen in primary care.

How do I access the care I need?

This team-based approach often can deliver your care via telephone or through [Patient Online Services](#) — the patient portal. When you need a face-to-face visit, the care team will connect you with the right team member for your concerns and the best route of care for your individual needs. This may be:

- A visit with a member of your care team or a specialist in the clinic
- In [Urgent Care](#) or [Express Care](#)
- Online through [Express Care Online](#) or [eConsult](#)

If you require immediate medical attention for a severe or life-threatening situation, you will be seen in the [Emergency Department](#) nearest you.

How do I get started?

Register for [Patient Online Services](#) or download the Mayo Clinic Patient App to get started. Call 1-877-858-0398 (toll-free) for assistance with Patient Online Services. Read [blogs about the patient portal](#) to learn more.