

HOW'S YOUR HEALTH IQ?

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it's totally possible.

This October is all about helping you understand the health information that's out there so you can take care of yourself and your loved ones. However, getting that information can take a lot of digging and Googling. We're here to help! We've done the research for you, pulling together the top three things you need to know.

Here's to your higher health IQ...and a happier, healthier YOU!

HOW TO FIND A PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

Are you one of the millions of Americans without a primary care physician (PCP)? Or looking for a new one? We can't say enough about how important it is to establish a relationship with a doctor who gets to know you and your health history.

WHAT TYPE OF DOCTOR SHOULD I LOOK FOR?

Seek out family practitioners, internal medicine doctors, pediatricians for your kids, obstetricians/gynecologists for women or nurse practitioners.

NOTE: You'll want to make sure any doctors recommended by friends, etc. are listed in the directory to ensure their services are covered by your health plan.

HOW DO I FIND THEM?

The best way to find a good doctor is by asking around — find out who friends, relatives and coworkers see and why they like their doctor. You can also ask another healthcare provider (dentist, pharmacist, optometrist) to recommend someone or search your health plan's provider directory for doctors near you and ask for a consultation — many will meet with you free of charge to see if you're a good match.

WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A PCP?

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Is the office staff friendly and prompt in returning calls?
- Is the office conveniently located? Do their hours work for you?
- Is the doctor easy to reach outside office hours, if needed? Is email an option?
- Do you prefer a warm, friendly communication style or something more formal?
- What's the doctor's approach to treatment? Conservative, aggressive, Western, Eastern, holistic?

Once you've found a doctor or two that seems like a good fit, search his or her name online for patient reviews. Sites like Healthgrades - and even Yelp and Google - can help you make a decision.

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR

With so much health information out there for on-demand consumption, patients are taking a much more active role in their healthcare. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Make a list of the concerns and questions you want to address during your appointment
- Describe in detail any symptoms you're having
- Be honest about your symptoms, health history and lifestyle (smoking, drinking, medications you take) so the doctor can prescribe the right tests and treatment
- Don't be afraid to ask questions! And if you're confused, say so
- Take notes if you need to, especially for any instructions
- Bring a friend or family member along if you'd like help asking the right questions, understanding the doctor or remembering his/her instructions
- Be a consumer! Ask what things cost & if there are alternatives
- Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion

UNDERSTANDING SCREENINGS & VACCINATIONS

At some point, your primary care physician will likely recommend you get preventive screenings - like blood tests, a Pap smear or a colonoscopy. Here are a few guidelines for common screenings and vaccinations to review with your doctor. Ultimately, they'll know what's best for you.

Screening / Vaccination	Condition	How often?
 Routine blood work and blood pressure check	High cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure	Varies depending on your health and family history
 Pap smear and HPV (human papillomavirus) test	Cervical cancer	Every three years for women age 21+
 Mammogram	Breast cancer	Every year for women age 40+
 Colonoscopy	Colorectal cancer	Every 10 years for men and women age 50+
 Td vaccination	Tetanus and diphtheria	Every 10 years
 Flu shot	Influenza	Annually for everyone age 6+
 Varicella	Chicken pox	Varies depending on your health history and age