



NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT, HEALTH CARE IS COMPLICATED. BUT WHY SHOULD STAYING HEALTHY OR GETTING THE RIGHT CARE WHEN YOU'RE SICK FEEL LIKE YOU'RE SOLVING A RIDDLE? FROM FINDING A PRIMARY CARE CLINICIAN TO SELECTING THE RIGHT ACUTE CARE FOR YOUR NEEDS, OUR EXPERTS SHARE THEIR BEST ADVICE - CULLED FROM YEARS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE EXAM TABLE - TO HELP YOU GET THE MOST FROM YOUR HEALTH CARE.

PRIMARY CARE: YOUR HEALTH CARE HOME BASE

P rimary care is usually your first contact for health care. Primary care clinicians diagnose and treat a broad range of conditions, and can be a medical doctor (MD), doctor of osteopathy (DO), nurse practitioner (NP) or physician assistant (PA) who has received training in family medicine, internal medicine or pediatrics.

“People often think of coming to their primary care doctor when they are sick, but primary care also plays a major role in helping people with chronic conditions manage them well to stay healthy,” says **Kristen Kopski, MD**, a Park Nicollet Internal Medicine doctor. “Importantly, primary care clinicians also make sure you are receiving the preventive services that are appropriate for you.”

Your primary care clinician provides preventive care services; cares for a broad range of physical and mental health issues; evaluates and treats new health concerns; helps you and family manage chronic or long term conditions such as high blood pressure, depression and diabetes; and coordinates care by collaborating with other members of your care team.

“We encourage everyone to have a primary care clinician who can work with you to maintain your best health and reach your personal health goals,” Kopski says. “This clinician is your main contact within the health care system, and studies have shown that people who have a primary care clinician are more likely to get the right care, receive recommended preventive services and have better overall health.”

Primary care

FAQ



What are some things I should
LOOK FOR
when selecting
**A PRIMARY CARE
CLINICIAN?**

I found a clinician I connect with –
WHAT'S NEXT?

Once you have selected a primary care clinician, that clinician will be visible in your Park Nicollet chart. This helps to facilitate simple things like getting your calls, messages and prescription refill requests to your care team efficiently, and making sure your doctor's office can notify you when you are due for upcoming tests or services. More importantly, information gets to your primary care provider if you are sick, to ensure streamlined care during your recovery. You can change your primary care clinician at any time.

Many times people start by choosing a convenient location. Would you like to have your primary care close to home? Perhaps close to work, school or your child care. Do you have a gender preference? Does your site or clinician offer hours that are convenient for you and your family?

At Park Nicollet, our clinicians have posted biographies on the Internet so our patients and community can get to know them a little bit before coming in for an appointment. Once you've narrowed it down, give that clinician a try.

If you need a primary care clinician and are looking for additional guidance, call our primary care clinician finder group at **952-993-2460**. Whether you're new to Park Nicollet or an established patient, we can guide you through the process.

Can my
OB//GYN
be my primary
care clinician?

Many women go to the doctor only once per year for an annual wellness exam with an Ob/Gyn. Your Ob/Gyn can be a good choice if you're healthy and looking for a basic preventive visit. However, if you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or even periodic concerns like a sinus infection or rash, you owe it to yourself to also establish a relationship with a family medicine or internal medicine clinician, who is better able to address those types of health concerns.

WHAT TYPE OF PRIMARY CARE CLINICIAN IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Preventive care appointments are important for everyone, but the type of clinician you see depends on your life stage and individual needs and preferences.

FAMILY MEDICINE

Provides primary care for adults and children – your entire family can see the same clinician.

INTERNAL MEDICINE

Provides annual physicals, acute care and ongoing health maintenance for adults ages 18 and older.

PEDIATRICS

Specializes in caring for children from birth to age 21. Park Nicollet has the largest pediatrics practice in the state.

**INTERNAL MEDICINE-
PEDIATRICS**

Clinicians are board-certified in both specialties and offer care for all ages.

OB/GYN

Specializes in obstetrics and gynecology, but also provides annual wellness exams and preventive care for women.

ALL-in-1

Park Nicollet offers convenient all-in-one appointments that include a women's wellness exam, mammogram, eye exam and lab visit in a single Saturday morning visit at our St. Louis Park clinic. Call **952-993-3282** to schedule.

CARE. ANYWHERE.

Your health is important to you around the clock – not just during office hours. Check out these two great options for managing your health care anytime, from anywhere.



MYCHART

With this secure online connection to your doctor's office, you can schedule appointments, view test results, request prescription refills, review your health history and even schedule virtual visits with your own care team. To sign up for MyChart, you'll need a personal access code – visit mychart.parknicollet.com to request a code, or **ask your doctor at your next visit.**



Online care from virtuwell offers treatment and diagnosis for more than 40 common conditions like swimmer's ear, bladder infections and more. In just 30 minutes, a nurse practitioner will review your symptoms and provide a diagnosis and recommended treatment. Virtuwell is only \$40 and if you can't be treated online, you're not charged. Visit virtuwell.com to learn more.



parknicollet.com/bewell

YOUR GUIDE TO PREVENTIVE CARE

FOR WOMEN

Preventive care helps to keep you healthy and identify problems early, while they are easier to treat. A typical preventive care exam – often referred to as a physical or well visit – includes:

- A PHYSICAL EXAM
- BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK
- HEIGHT, WEIGHT AND BMI
- SCREENING FOR COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS
- IMMUNIZATIONS
- HEALTHY LIFESTYLE COACHING

Depending on your age, health history and individual risk factors, you may need these or other additional screenings:

20s

CHLAMYDIA
for sexually active women ages 19-25

PAP TEST
every three years starting at age 21

30s

After age 30, you may only need a pap test every five years if combined with a high-risk HPV test.

50+

COLON CANCER SCREENING
starting at age 50

MAMMOGRAM
every one to two years, starting between ages 40 and 50

40s

CHOLESTEROL & TRIGLYCERIDE
every five years, starting at age 44

ALL AGES

INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION
every year

EYE EXAM
every one to two years

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— HILARY HAMMELL, MD

OFFICE VISITS: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR APPOINTMENTS

If you ever leave the doctor's office only to realize you forgot to ask an important question or feeling like you didn't absorb a thing you were told, you're not alone. A typical physical exam is only about 20 to 30 minutes long, and there's a lot to cover in that time. But by being well-prepared before your exam, you can make sure you leave with your concerns addressed and next steps identified.

“To get the most out of your visit, think about what is most important to discuss and bring a list of your top two or three questions or concerns,” says **Hilary Hammell, MD**, a Park Nicollet Family Medicine doctor. “Bringing up these concerns at the beginning of a visit allows you and your clinician to determine the best way to approach them.” If you have a long list of questions or your concern is significant, a separate visit or additional evaluation may be needed.

Some insurance plans require you to see a primary care clinician before being referred to specialty care. This can be a good opportunity to understand your different treatment options before seeing a specialist, and your primary care provider may be able to address your problem or concern.

Checking on what services or tests are covered by your insurance plan can be a big help. Bring that information in case you have questions about the cost and coverage for a given test or service. This allows you to better plan your health care, and partner in decision-making about whether or not to seek a certain treatment or try a different medication.

“When you leave your appointment, make sure you understand what was discussed during the visit, and know who to contact if you have any follow-up questions. Don't be afraid to take notes or ask for clarification” Hammell says. At Park Nicollet, you can ask your doctor for an after-visit summary (AVS) printout, which recaps what was covered at your visit. Be certain you're clear on next treatment steps and when you should be seen again. ■



THE RIGHT CARE, RIGHT NOW

URGENT MEDICAL CONCERNS WARRANT FAST TREATMENT, BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S THE RIGHT LEVEL OF CARE FOR WHAT AILS YOU? **SHANNON MINDT, RN**, DIRECTOR OF URGENT CARE FOR PARK NICOLLET, SORTS OUT THE OPTIONS.



Emergency care

Emergency centers treat people of all ages for all types of medical emergencies, and have the capabilities to treat life-threatening conditions and traumatic injuries, such as severely broken bones. Anytime you are experiencing heart-related problems, chest pain, stroke symptoms or severe shortness of breath, go to the nearest emergency center or call 911.

While emergency centers will treat any medical problem, consider using an urgent care center for non-emergencies as they can treat many of the same issues, and typically have shorter wait times and lower costs.

Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital Emergency Center is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Visit parknicollet.com/methodist to learn more.

Urgent care

Urgent care is a good walk-in option for non-life threatening issues - everything from earaches to broken bones. All seven Park Nicollet urgent care centers provide a higher level of service compared to others in the Twin Cities by offering extended lab capabilities, IV treatment and short-term cardiac monitoring prior to emergency center transport.

Quick Check, located in all Park Nicollet urgent care locations and at our Minneapolis clinic, is a faster-care alternative for minor ailments and illnesses, such as sore throats, ear pain, sinus pressure, pink eye, and bladder or urinary infections.

Urgent care is open seven days a week. For hours and locations, and to see our wait time indicator, visit parknicollet.com/urgentcare.

Online care

Now you don't have to leave your couch to get better. Online care from [virtuwell](http://virtuwell.com) offers treatment and diagnosis for more than 40 common conditions. It's a great option for minor ailments like swimmer's ear, bladder infections and some skin issues. Just log on and complete an easy interview about yourself and your symptoms. A nurse practitioner will review your answers and get back to you in about 30 minutes with a diagnosis and recommended treatment. If a medication is prescribed, they can even send it directly to a pharmacy near you. If your concern is beyond the scope of online treatment, [virtuwell](http://virtuwell.com) will refer you to a nearby clinic.

Online care not only saves time, it saves money. [Virtuwell](http://virtuwell.com) is only \$45 (or your co-pay, depending on your insurance) and if you can't be treated online, you're not charged. Visit virtuwell.com to learn more.

Virtual visits are also available with your own care team through MyChart. To learn more, visit mychart.parknicollet.com. ■