Visiting Your Doctor: What You Need to Know

Your doctor’s office, or primary care provider’s office, is where you go when you are sick. It is also where you go for check-ups every year. In this handout, you will learn about the care you get at the doctor’s office. You will also learn who is on your care team and how to get ready for your next appointment.

ABOUT YOUR DOCTOR’S OFFICE

- Your doctor’s office is also called your primary care provider’s office. This is because your doctor is the first person you go to when you are sick, hurt or need a check-up.
- Your doctor’s office is the best place to get care for problems that are not emergencies. You can call to schedule an appointment.
- Ask your doctor if he has a phone number you can call when you have questions or need help.

WHO IS ON MY CARE TEAM?

Your doctor or primary care provider
- This is the doctor who takes care of you. He might refer you to see a specialist (doctor who treats specific concerns) if he thinks you need more care.

Nurse
- A nurse gives you vaccines.
- The nurse might call you with test results or talk with you on the phone when you call the doctor’s office.

Medical assistant
- A medical assistant checks your vital signs. This includes your height, weight, blood pressure and oxygen levels.

Social worker
- A social worker helps you when you feel stressed or worried. They are very good listeners.

Secretary or receptionist
- A secretary or receptionist checks you in for appointments.
- This person also helps schedule your future appointments.

Financial counselor
- A financial counselor helps answer questions about health insurance. They also help you find helpful ways to pay medical bills.

About urgent care

- Your town or towns around you might have an urgent care office. This is where you go when you cannot get to your doctor’s office.
- Urgent care offices are open at times when some doctor’s offices are closed.
- You do not need to make an appointment for an urgent care visit.

About emergency care

- For serious health emergencies, go to your closest emergency room.
- Emergency rooms are always open.
- If you cannot safely and quickly get to the emergency room, call 911 for an ambulance.
WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

- The Down Syndrome Program at MGHfC and MGH
  www.massgeneral.org/downsyndrome

- Healthy Transitions®
  www.healthytransitionsny.org

Preparing for your appointment

You can use a chart like this to get ready for your next doctor’s appointment.

My doctor’s name

___________________________________________

My doctor’s phone number

___________________________________________

Date and time of my appointment

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

How will I get to my appointment?

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

My questions and concerns for my doctor

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