

PRIMARY VS SPECIALTY CARE PHYSICIANS

Medical doctors fall into one of two categories- primary care providers or specialists.

Primary Care Physicians are doctors that are trained to be the first line of defense for your health care issues. These doctors have a general understanding of all fields of medicine. They are at the center of your healthcare team. Whatever health care issue you may be experiencing should be addressed by your primary care physician **first**. Primary care physicians may also be referred to as internal medicine doctors or family physicians.

A primary care physician is a physician who may handle the following:

- Treats minor illnesses
- Answers general health questions
- Administers vaccines and booster shots
- Preventative care and disease prevention
- Conduct health and wellness check ups
- Performs routine tests, including those that check blood sugar and cholesterol levels
- **Refers patient to specialty care physicians**

Specialty Care Physicians are doctors that have advanced training in a specific branch of medicine, such as heart health or bone health. Specialty care physicians are able to treat more complex health problems that primary care doctors may not be able to treat. Many specialty care physicians can also perform surgeries that may be needed. Specialty care physicians may handle health issues that are more severe and persistent. The primary care physician can refer you to specialty care physicians. **Specialty care doctors require a referral from the primary care doctor.**

Examples of specialty care physicians include:

- Cardiologist
- Dermatologist
- Endocrinologist
- Radiologist
- Neurologist
- Obstetrician/Gynecologist
- Oncologist
- Ophthalmologist

