

## Regular Care

“Regular care” or *primary care* means exams, regular check-ups, shots or other treatments to keep you well, advice when you need it, and referral to the hospital or specialists when needed. It means you and your **PCP** (primary care provider) working together to keep you well or to see that you get the care you need. Day or night, your PCP is only a phone call away. Be sure to call him/her whenever you have a medical question or concern. If you call after hours or weekends, leave a message and where or how you can be reached. Your PCP will call you back as quickly as possible. Remember, your PCP knows you and knows how to make the system work for you.

## Appointment Guide

When seeking medical care you should expect an appointment within the following time frames based on medical need.

- Adult baseline and routine physicals: within 12 weeks
- Urgent care: within 24 hours
- Non-urgent sick visit: within 3 days
- Routine, preventive care: within 4 weeks
- First pre-natal visit: within 3 weeks

during 1<sup>st</sup> trimester (2 weeks during 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1 week during 3<sup>rd</sup>)

- First newborn visit: within 2 weeks of hospital discharge
- First family planning visit: within 2 weeks
- Follow-up visit after mental health/substance abuse ER or inpatient visit: 5 days
- Non-urgent mental health or substance abuse visit: 2 weeks.

## Emergencies

In New York State, an emergency means a medical or behavioral condition:

- That comes on all of a sudden, and
- Has pain or other symptoms.

This would make a person with an average knowledge of health fear that someone will suffer serious harm to body parts or functions or serious disfigurement without care right away. Examples of an emergency are:

- A heart attack or severe chest pain
- Bleeding that won't stop or a bad burn
- Broken bones
- Trouble breathing/convulsions/loss of consciousness
- When you feel you might hurt yourself or others
- If you are pregnant and have signs

like pain, bleeding, fever, or vomiting.

Examples of **non-emergencies** are: colds, sore throat, upset stomach, minor cuts and bruises, or sprained muscles.

### **If you have an emergency, here's what to do:**

*If you believe you have an **emergency***, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. **BUT** call your primary care provider as soon as you can.

*If you're not sure, **call your PCP***. Tell the person you speak with what is happening. Your PCP will:

- Tell you what to do at home, or
- Tell you to come to the office, or
- Tell you to go to the nearest emergency room.

*If you are **out of the area*** when you have an emergency.

- Go to the nearest emergency room.
- Call your health insurance carrier as soon as you can (within 48 hours if possible).

## Urgent Care

You may have an injury or an illness that is not an emergency but still needs prompt care.

- This could be a child with an ear ache who wakes up in the middle of the night and won't stop crying.

- It could be a sprained ankle, or a bad splinter you can't seem to remove.
- It could be a high fever.
- It could be vomiting.
- It could be a urinary tract infection.
- This could be a person with a reaction to a drug.

You can get an appointment for an urgent care visit for the same or next day. You should call your PCP any time, day or night to determine whether you need urgent care. If you cannot reach your PCP you may need to call your health insurance carrier. Tell the person who answers what is happening. They will tell you what to do.

A regular visit to your PCP is a good idea. The following check-ups may identify health problems early and help

## Preventive Care

keep you healthy.

- Immunizations & regular flu shots
- Diabetes Screening
- Heart Disease Screening
- High Blood Pressure Screening
- Lead Screening for Children
- Mammogram (Breast Exam)
- OB/GYN Exam/Pap Smears
- Prostate Exams
- Colorectal Screening
- Cholesterol Screening

## How To Get Specialty Care Referrals

- If you need care that your PCP cannot give, he/she will REFER you to a specialist who can. Talk with your PCP to be sure you know how referrals work. If you think the specialist does not meet your needs, talk to your PCP. Your PCP can help you if you need to see a different specialist. Depending on insurance coverage, there are some treatments and services that your PCP must ask your insurer to okay before you can get them. Your PCP will be able to tell you what they are.
- If you need to see a specialist for ongoing care, your PCP may be able to refer you for a specified number of visits or length of time (a “standing referral”). If you have a standing referral, you will not need a new referral for each time you need care.
- If you have a long-term disease or a disabling illness that gets worse over time, your PCP may be able to arrange for:
  - Your specialist to act as your PCP; or
  - A referral to a specialty care

center that deals with the treatment of your problem.

### Advance Directives

There may come a time when you can't decide about your own health care. By planning in advance, you can arrange now for your wishes to be carried out. First, let family, friends and your doctor know what kinds of treatment you do or don't want. Second, you can appoint an adult you trust to make decisions for you. Third, it is best if you put your thoughts in writing. The documents listed below can help. You do not have to use a lawyer, but you may wish to speak with one about this. You can change your mind and these documents at any time. They do not change your right to quality health care. The only purpose is to let others know what you want if you can't speak for yourself.

### Health Care Proxy

With this document, you name another adult that you trust (usually a friend or family member) to decide about medical care for you if you are not able to do so. If you do this, you should talk with the person so they know what you want.

### CPR and DNR

You have the right to decide if you want any special or emergency treatment to restart your heart or lungs if your breathing or circulation stops. If you do not want special treatment, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), you should make your wishes known in writing. A DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) communicates your wishes. Your PCP should have a copy for your medical record and you can carry a copy with you.

### Organ Donor Card

This wallet sized card says that you are willing to donate parts of your body to help others when you die. Also, check the back of your driver's license to let others know if and how you want to donate your organs.



*To improve the health and well being of Herkimer County Residents.*

## **Receiving Medical Care Facts You Should Know**

***Primary Care  
Emergency Care  
Urgent Care  
Specialty Care***

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