



MedStar Health

The Importance of **Primary Care**

Information to help you live your best life, from the MedStar Health Mobile Health Center



The MedStar Health Mobile Health Center was created to help people in the community address medical issues and concerns. We provide quality, reliable, convenient, community-based care, while giving people useful information and tools to improve their overall health and wellness.

Here, we address the importance of primary care, with input from our medical director, Andrea Gaspar, MD.

The MedStar Health Mobile Health Center visits communities across Baltimore each week to make it easier to access the medical care you need, in a location that is convenient for you.

Learn more about our services online at [MedStarHealth.org/MobileHealthCenter](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/MobileHealthCenter).

Walk-ins are accepted but appointments are recommended and can be scheduled by calling 410-350-7511.

Who needs a primary care provider?

The truth is that everyone should have a primary care provider. This is a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner you can trust and turn to when unexpected illnesses or injuries happen, who can also address chronic health issues that need to be tended to over time.

Why is it important to establish a relationship with a primary care provider?

Your primary care provider can be your “go to person” for consistent, coordinated care. They will provide the guidance you need to get well and stay well, so that you can live your happiest and best life.

Why is it important to see a primary care provider for follow-up after an illness or injury?

Illness and injury can lead to changes in your body. Your primary care provider can manage your condition and its impact on your overall health, even after you feel better. He or she will make sure your recovery is progressing as it should be and can help prevent additional problems from surfacing.

Why might I be referred to a specialist?

You may be referred to a different provider or doctor if you present with a problem that should be evaluated by a specialist. For example, if you experience a complex bone break, your primary care provider may recommend that you see an orthopedic surgeon. If you are experiencing heart problems, he or she may suggest that you see a heart doctor—known as a cardiologist.

When is it better to visit an urgent care center or emergency department?

Sometimes waiting for your primary care provider's office to open is not possible. Urgent care centers are available to address non-life threatening medical issues (like sore throats, small cuts/wounds, or small bone breaks). The emergency department is the best choice if a problem presents that could be life threatening (like chest pain, difficulty breathing, severe stomach pain, heavy bleeding, head injuries, sudden difficulty with balance or walking, or major bone breaks).