

April 4, 2014



# Share the Wellness Tip

## What's Up Doc?

Did you know that primary care doctors could have different specialties and roles? Many people's main doctor is an internist or family practitioner. These doctors have distinct training backgrounds and care for different groups of patients. Having a primary care provider can give you a trusting, ongoing relationship with one medical professional over time.

### Understanding an Internist

Internists are specialists in adult medicine. These doctors focus on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases of the heart, blood, kidneys, skin, joints, and other areas. They can diagnose and treat a range of conditions, including cancer, infections, mental health, and substance abuse issues in adults of all ages.

### Focusing on Family Practice

Family practitioners provide care to children, teens, and adults. The doctors – sometimes called family physicians – receive training in internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, and other areas. They can help prevent a range of conditions. They also may provide maternity services.

### Caring for Children

Pediatricians are doctors who have completed a pediatric residency and are board certified, or board eligible, in this specialty. The scope of their practice includes the care of newborns, infants, children, and adolescents and sometimes even young adults. As part of their extensive training, pediatricians are experienced in the physical, emotional, and social development of children.

Despite the differences in specialties, all of these doctors can coordinate your health care needs. They can help you manage acute and chronic illnesses and provide health education. If you're not sure what your doctor's specialty is, just ask.

Take advantage of your preventive care visits to ask your doctor any questions you might have. Regular health exams and tests can help find problems before they start. They also can help find problems early, when your chances for treatment and cure are better. By getting the right health services, screenings, and treatments, you are taking steps that help your chances for living a longer, healthier life.

Take the time to review the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Adult Wellness Guidelines and see if you are due for any screenings or immunizations. As your doctor's office if you can schedule the screenings as you schedule your other appointments.

*Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Library of Medicine.*

