



## Health-Care Professionals

### PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

Primary care physicians provide first contact and continuing medical care, including the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses, health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, counseling and patient education. Primary care activities are performed and managed in collaboration with other health-care professionals.

### RHEUMATOLOGIST

Rheumatologists are physicians in the subspecialty of internal medicine and pediatrics that diagnose and treat arthritis and other diseases of the joints, muscles and bones. The diseases they treat include rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, lupus, fibromyalgia, regional musculoskeletal problems, osteoporosis and gout.

### DOCTOR OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Although osteopaths have traditionally been family physicians, today they practice in every specialty field in medicine. Doctors of osteopathic medicine are licensed to practice the full scope of medicine and surgery with the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as traditional MDs or allopathic physicians.

### ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

Orthopaedic surgeons are physicians who specialize in managing conditions involving the musculoskeletal system. Orthopaedic surgeons use both surgical and nonsurgical means to treat bone and joint trauma, sports injuries, arthritis, infections, tumors and congenital disorders. Some orthopaedic surgeons specialize in specific joint areas (shoulder, hip, knee) and in certain types of surgery (joint replacement or arthroscopy).

### PAIN SPECIALIST

Pain specialists use an interdisciplinary approach for diagnosing and managing acute and chronic pain. The typical pain management team includes medical practitioners (anesthesiologists, neurologists and neurosurgeons) clinical psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists and nurse practitioners.

### PHYSIATRIST

Physiatrists (rehabilitation medicine specialists) are physicians who focus on functional abilities and quality of life in those with physical impairments or disabilities. Physiatrists specialize in restoring optimal function to people with injuries to the muscles, bones, tissues and nervous system.

### NEUROLOGISTS

Neurologists are specialist physicians who are trained to diagnose and treat neurological disorders of the brain, spinal cord, nerves or muscles.

### PSYCHIATRIST

Psychiatrists are physicians who specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illnesses, including mood and anxiety disorders such as obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. Their training enables them to understand the body's complex relationship between physical and psychological causes of both mental and physical distress.

### PSYCHOLOGIST

Psychologists have a doctoral degree in psychology and perform psychological therapy, testing and research in clinical, private and school settings. Psychologists do not prescribe medications.

### CHIROPRACTOR

Chiropractors focus on the relationship between the skeleton, muscles, nerves and the patient's health. Chiropractors believe that health can be improved and preserved by making adjustments to these structures, particularly to the spinal column. They do not prescribe drugs or perform surgical procedures.

### PODIATRIST

Podiatrists diagnosis and treat disorders of the foot, ankle and lower leg. Podiatric physicians can specialize in different areas including surgery, sports medicine, biomechanics, geriatrics, pediatrics, internal medicine, diabetes, orthopedics or primary care.

**NURSE**

Registered nurses are health-care professionals who work independently or as part of a team to assess, plan, implement and evaluate care of individuals, families and communities so they may attain, maintain or recover optimal health and quality of life.

**NURSE PRACTITIONER**

Nurse practitioners are registered nurses with additional training to allow them to provide expanded practice in family, women's health, pediatrics, adult, acute care and other areas. They are licensed or certified through the state nursing boards. The core philosophy of the field is individualized care focusing on the effects of illness on the lives of patients and their families, disease prevention, wellness, patient education and advocacy activities.

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT**

Physician assistants are health-care professionals who provide services that were traditionally performed by physicians. They conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery and write prescriptions. Physician assistants have their own medical licenses and do not work under a physician's license but do work with collaborative physician supervision.

**PHYSICAL THERAPIST**

Physical therapists are health-care professionals who focus on the management of impairments and disabilities through the promotion of mobility, functional ability and quality of life. Their care activities include evaluation, diagnosis and physical interventions including therapeutic exercise and the application of modalities.

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST**

Occupational therapists are trained to promote health by enabling people to perform meaningful and purposeful activities. Occupational therapists work with individuals who have mental, physical, developmental and/or emotionally disabling conditions using treatments that develop, recover or maintain activities of daily living.

**PHARMACIST**

A pharmacist's emphasis is on providing safe and effective medication use. They dispense medications in pharmacies and other locations and assist in the overall pharmaceutical care needs of individuals including drug education, counseling, compliance and cost issues.

**REGISTERED DIETICIAN**

Registered dietitians promote the understanding of the effects of nutrition and the impact of food on health and well-being including diet, food preparation and nutritional counseling.

**SLEEP SPECIALIST**

Sleep specialists focus on the diagnosis and therapy of sleep disturbances, including primary sleep disorders such as sleep apnea as well as the role and quality of sleep in other conditions like arthritis and fibromyalgia.

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