

# Mature Health

A COMMUNITY WELLNESS PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

FALL 2006

## The Value of a Primary Care Physician

A generation or two ago, people relied on General Practitioners (GPs) for all their medical needs, from treating colds, hay fever and backaches to setting broken arms and delivering babies. The kind and knowledgeable GP knew the medical histories of every member of a patient's family because he treated them all. Today, the Primary Care Physician (PCP) is bringing this tradition back. Keep reading to see why you and your family should have a PCP and how to choose one.

**H**ealth care in the U.S. is largely defined by specialty care, with an endless number of high-tech procedures. This system is expensive and centers on curing disease rather than preventing it. Fortunately, more emphasis is now placed on preventive medicine and Americans are taking an increased responsibility for their health by improving their diets and exercising. That's where a primary care physician comes in.

### Major Role of the Primary-Care Physician

Russell Robertson, MD, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Family Medicine at Evanston Northwestern Healthcare says, "Primary care physicians are trained to care for patients in three areas: prevention of diseases, the treatment of the vast majority of acute medical problems, and managing chronic medical conditions in conjunction with our specialist colleagues."

Since PCPs see individuals and perhaps their entire families over an extended period of time, they become familiar with the physical, psychological and lifestyle factors that might impact their patients' health. So in addition to finding out about your medical history, primary care physicians need to know a great deal about your life.

When doctors have information about issues or concerns in your life, not just your health, they can suggest ways to improve your health. They know what is normal for you and can better understand medical problems that arise in relation to your general health. "Additionally, says Dr. Robertson, as our population ages, particularly for those of us in the baby boom generation, we need to establish a good relationship with a primary care physician who will help manage our day-to-day care and when needed, initiate contact with a specialist and facilitate that connection." If you do need to see a specialist, your PCP can keep track of your care to spare you from getting duplicate diagnostic procedures or medications that are dangerously incompatible with one another.



# Three Kinds of Primary Care

If you're thinking about finding a primary care physician, don't wait until you get sick. The relationship you develop with this health professional can be the key to keeping illness at bay, and it is your best entry point into the rest of the medical system.

When looking for a primary care physician, keep in mind the following three specialties are considered primary care:

- 1. Family Practice.** A Family Practitioner is a physician who specializes in general family care. Doctors in this specialty are trained in several basic medical disciplines including internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, general surgery and psychiatry. They can also be board certified. General Practitioners, while more common in the past, can still be found and provide care for everyone in the family. Adds Dr. Robertson, "A number of family physicians have obtained additional training in geriatrics, further enabling us to care for older patients."
- 2. Internal medicine.** An internist is a physician who diagnoses and "medically" treats (without surgery) disease in adults. Internists may have a subspecialty that focuses on: a specific part of the body, such as the heart or lungs; a specific disease, like diabetes or arthritis; or a particular age group, such as adolescents or the elderly.
- 3. Obstetrics and Gynecology.** The combined practice or field of obstetrics and gynecology specializes in women's health, emphasizing reproductive health, fertility, pregnancy and childbirth and for the older patient, hormone replacement therapy for post-menopausal women.



## How to Find a Primary Care Doctor in your Area

Your first step is to gather names. Here are a variety of sources to try:

- **Physicians.** If you have recently moved to a new location, ask your former physician for a referral. You can also ask other doctors you respect and see regularly, such as a pediatrician.
- **Friends, relatives or business associates.** Referrals from people you know are usually based on trust and confidence, which is certainly in your favor. Remember, though, that your contacts' opinions may be largely based on how they click with the physician's personality and style. Only a visit with the doctor will reveal if these qualities suit you.
- **Managed care plan.** If you belong to a managed care plan, find out what doctors are affiliated with it. Ask what information is available on the doctor's background and services.
- **Hospitals.** Reputable hospitals usually offer a referral service that can provide you with the names of staff doctors who meet certain criteria you may be seeking, such as specialty, gender, experience and location.

For help finding an Evanston Northwestern Healthcare Primary Care Physician near you, please call (847) 492-5700 Ext. 1139 or visit [www.enh.org/doctors](http://www.enh.org/doctors).

## FREE 2007 Primary Care Physician Guide!

To receive a free copy of the 2007 Evanston Northwestern Healthcare Primary Care Physician Guide, please call (847) 492-5700 Ext. 1169



# Sleep: Essential for Good Health at All Ages



Did you know that chronic sleep deprivation significantly affects your health? “Sleeping enough – and sleeping well – is essential to keeping yourself healthy,” says Thomas Freedom, MD, Director of the Evanston Northwestern Healthcare Sleep Disorders Program. Sleep deprivation is very often due to unrecognized sleep disorders. Sleep disorders are common, treatable conditions that affect about 15 percent of Americans. A sleep disorder can cause excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) or insomnia. EDS may be caused by sleep apnea (pauses in breathing during sleep), narcolepsy (characterized by sleep attacks) and restless legs syndrome. Insomnia may be related to jet lag, anxiety or depression.

Generally, if you get seven to eight hours of sleep each night, you should be alert and energetic all day. Sleep disorders are characterized by a variety of symptoms, many of which can affect your quality of life. Dr. Freedom advises the following symptoms may include:

- Having trouble falling asleep at bedtime
- Having trouble waking up in the morning
- Having difficulty staying asleep during the night
- Falling asleep while driving
- Experiencing persistent fatigue during the day
- Loud snoring
- Restlessness in the legs while at rest or while going to sleep
- Frequent leg movements during sleep

“There are several health problems that can result from a sleep disorder going unchecked,” says Dr. Freedom.

“Untreated sleep apnea increases the risk of stroke or heart attack and untreated sleep apnea, narcolepsy, insomnia and restless legs syndrome lead to decreased productivity during the day, irritability and an increased risk of accidents. People experiencing sleeping problems for a month or longer are strongly urged to consult a physician.”



Evanston Northwestern Healthcare’s Sleep Disorders Program provides help for patients who experience difficulty sleeping. As with any health problem, early diagnosis and treatment of a sleep disorder can drastically improve a patient’s quality of life and help prevent other problems associated with sleep disorders. Evanston Northwestern Healthcare’s Sleep Disorders Program is directed by specialists certified by the American Board of Sleep Medicine, which has accredited the Evanston Hospital Sleep Disorders Center since 1987. The Glenbrook Hospital Sleep Disorders Center opened in March 2001 and is in the process of seeking accreditation. Both are full-service centers, offering evaluation, diagnostic services and treatment.

**Evanston Hospital  
Sleep Disorders Center:**  
(847) 492-5700 Ext. 1161

**Glenbrook Hospital  
Sleep Disorders Center**  
(847) 492-5700 Ext. 1163

## Special Event - Winter 2007!

### The Beat Goes On...Women’s Heart Health through the Lifespan

**February 24, 2007 • 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

Chicago Botanic Garden

1000 Lake Cook Road • Glencoe, IL 60022

An event addressing heart care for women in every stage of life. Featuring NBC5’s Dr. MaryAnn Malloy, a cardiologist and nationally recognized medical expert. Guest speakers include Michael Sena, a Chicago-based fitness expert and personal trainer.

There will be heart-healthy cooking demonstrations, a panel of medical experts to address questions on heart issues, raffle prizes and more.

Register online at [www.enh.org](http://www.enh.org) Quick Search term women’s heart or call (847) 492-5700 Ext. 1137

To find an ENH physician near you:  
[www.enh.org/findadoctor](http://www.enh.org/findadoctor)  
(847) 492-5700 Ext. 1181

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## Holiday Eating – Don't Say No, Just Say Less!



It's not the holidays making you gain weight; it's all the days in between. "You're not going to gain five to 10 pounds on Thanksgiving," says Cindy Rushton, MS, RD, LDN, Outpatient Dietitian at Glenbrook Hospital. "However, if you go from Halloween to New Year's Day impulse eating and nibbling, the pounds will add up."

Rushton says there are some simple rules to follow that will keep you from starting the New Year a size larger.

- Don't eat unconsciously. Be aware of what you are eating.
- Fill your plate just once.
- Don't deprive yourself – have what you want just small portions.
- Eat slowly and wait 15 minutes before going back for second helpings.
- Don't keep fatty foods at home.
- Get out and get some fresh air – exercise.
- Sleep! Being overly tired makes you over-eat and head for the junk food.

"The holidays are filled with emotion and stress which can lead to overeating," says Rushton. "If food is your coping mechanism, then at least go for low-calorie stress eating."

Finally, if your family has a favorite recipe that's loaded with fat and calories and it just wouldn't be the same cooked any other way, enjoy a smaller portion. "People have a lot of guilt over holiday eating and that's no way to live your life," says Rushton. "Enjoy the holidays."

