

## ► WHY HAVING A PERSONAL PHYSICIAN IS ONE OF THE BEST THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR HEALTH ◀

### What is a personal physician?

A personal physician is that doctor who:

- You can call on first for any issue, symptom or problem affecting your health, and who will help you find answers and solutions.
- Knows and cares about you and your family, and encourages developing a long-term, trusting, healthcare relationship with you.
- Will remain your doctor even if you become more seriously ill and need referrals to other specialists.

### What kinds of doctors have the skills to be personal physicians?

Personal physicians, sometimes more broadly categorized as primary care doctors, are keen diagnosticians. Usually, they are educated and experienced in family medicine for you and your entire family, internal medicine for adults, or general pediatrics for children from their birth through their teen years.

For many young women, a gynecologist serves successfully as a personal physician. However, as a woman ages and the possibility of illness increases, it is good to include in this health partnership a family or internal medicine physician.

### What should I expect of my personal physician?

You should expect your personal physician to:

- **Listen** – and absorb what you say
- **Explain** – well and thoroughly
- **Respond** to your concerns and questions
- **Be available** when you need him/her
- **Diagnose and treat** you with the method least disruptive to your activities

### Communication seems to be very important. Is good communication too much to expect?

No. Communication is a critical part of any doctor's role. You will know your doctor has good communication skills if you and your family members feel free to ask whatever questions are on your mind, and are satisfied you receive clear and complete answers from your doctor and his or her staff. Your doctor should be a good listener, conveying the feeling he or she cares about you and is giving you full attention. You should not feel that you are being rushed through the interview or appointment, or that your questions are foolish. You should feel free to call the office back if you forget exactly what was said, or if you have other questions. Over time, your doctor should know you well enough to tell if something is wrong from how and what you both communicate during your appointment.

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## How can I find and select a personal physician?

- Ask advice from friends or fellow employees who have a personal physician with whom they are pleased.
- Choose a personal physician who is board-certified or board-eligible as a family physician, general internist or general pediatrician. Your health plan may provide a list of physicians from which to choose.
- Call 1-800-JEFF-NOW for help in selecting a personal physician who accepts your insurance plan or to make an appointment.

## Why should I choose a Jefferson-affiliated personal physician?

Highly competent family medicine and internal medicine physicians who are affiliated with Jefferson have the qualities you are looking for in a personal physician. They are there when you need them, and have offices located throughout the area. Many see patients in the evening and on Saturday, in addition to regular weekday office hours. Call our representatives at Jefferson's free physician referral service, at 1-800-JEFF-NOW.

## Why do we hear so much about prevention now?

Both the public and virtually all providers agree that we must do more to prevent illness. Prevention both implies and requires a partnership between patient and physician.

## Is this what "relationship building" means?

In part, yes. One part of the new challenge – of what some call "relationship building" – means physician and patient sharing

responsibility for health. The healthcare relationship of the future must be of patients who inform themselves about their own health care, including prevention, and of personal physicians who help patients learn to adopt habits that contribute to good health.

Both doctor and patient must now understand that good health is no longer defined mainly by *reacting* to illness. Rather, good health now means that your doctor and you work actively together to *prevent* illness.

## Once I find a personal physician, can I change?

Of course. After finding a doctor, the next critical step is assessing whether or not this is the personal physician and office for you. Keep in mind that the quality of the doctor-patient relationship should be the most important part of your decision. Draw up a list of what else is important to you, and base your decision on how your new doctor scores. If, for any reason, you are dissatisfied with any important part of the relationship, we recommend sharing your dissatisfaction with the physician, office manager or office staff. However, if you are not comfortable doing this, or if you are unhappy with your choice, please don't hesitate to change.

*For an appointment with a Jefferson physician, more information or health information and education programs, please call **1-800-JEFF-NOW** (1-800-533-3669) or visit our Web site at [www.JeffersonHospital.org](http://www.JeffersonHospital.org)*

*Speech- or hearing-impaired callers can access **JEFF NOW**® by calling 1-800-654-5984.*