



Seeing a Nurse Practitioner



Lutheran Health Network

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Have you ever tried to see your doctor but had to wait longer than you wanted for the next available appointment? Or, have you ever had to wait a long time in the physician's office once you arrived? Seeing a Family Nurse Practitioner for your primary healthcare needs may be a convenient alternative.

Through their participation in clinical, educational

HOW DOES A FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER COMPARE TO A DOCTOR?

and research activities, Family Nurse Practitioners are qualified to diagnose healthcare problems, obtain medical histories, perform physical examinations and order and interpret diagnostic studies such as x-rays and lab work. They are also qualified to treat illnesses and chronic health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. They consult with physicians as needed. Family Nurse Practitioners are specially trained to assess the seriousness of illnesses and injuries. If they determine a patient's condition is too complex, they have the ability to refer the patient to a specialist.

Patient education and counseling is a vital component to a Family Nurse Practitioner's practice. It is a Nurse Practitioner's goal to create personalized programs designed to promote healthier lifestyles as well as to meet the patient's needs.

Nurse Practitioners maintain the highest quality healthcare skills through continued education, certification, periodic peer review, clinical outcome evaluations and a code for ethical practice. Nurse Practitioners are also required to provide evidence of continued professional development of clinical skills beyond their formal training.

WHAT IS A FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER?

A Family Nurse Practitioner is a registered nurse with advanced and highly specialized training in family medicine. They practice in collaboration with physicians, diagnosing and treating patients' illnesses and injuries. They also prescribe appropriate medications and counsel patients regarding healthy lifestyles.

Nurse Practitioners are required to abide by state laws under the Nurse Practitioner Act. Almost all Nurse Practitioners are nationally certified in their respective areas and are recognized by the medical profession as being advanced practitioners of medicine.

IS A FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER FOR ME?

In addition to their clinical skills, the personal attention provided by a Nurse Practitioner creates a relaxed atmosphere where patients feel more comfortable to ask questions. This greatly increases overall patient satisfaction.

Many people prefer Nurse Practitioners because of the individualized care they provide. It is important to have your questions answered by a medical expert who is sensitive to your needs. In addition to Nurse Practitioners providing a unique blend of quality medical care and personalized attention, they are usually readily accessible. This means you can see a medical expert sooner for your health care needs.