PRIMARY CARE FACT SHEET

What is Primary Care?

Primary care is basic health care for your child. This includes yearly check-ups and also sick visits when your child does not feel well. You should have a doctor or other health care provider who knows your child's health history. When possible, it is good to go to the same doctor for checkups, so that they get to know you and your child over time. Having a regular doctor makes it easier to schedule yearly check-ups or sick visits when your child does not feel well.

When should my child visit the doctor?

Your child should visit a doctor for a regular check-up at least once a year. Yearly check-ups make sure your child is healthy. Not all health problems make a child feel bad. For example, a child can have problems with vision, growth, or diabetes without knowing. Yearly check-ups give the doctor a chance to catch problems early. Your doctor may also teach you how to take care of illnesses in order to improve your child's health.

It is always better to take your child to the doctor for checkups and sick visits. You should only go to the emergency room when your child is injured or very sick. Most doctors' offices have a phone number you can call if you need help deciding what to do if your child is sick or hurt. Make sure you keep that number somewhere easy to find.

How can I find a doctor for my child?

If your child does not have a doctor, it is easy to find one. Here are a few tips:

- Call your insurance company or check the website to find a doctor that accepts your child's insurance plan. You can find the phone number and website on the insurance card.
- Choose a doctor in your neighborhood to make trips to the doctor quick and easy.
- Check your calendar to make sure you and your child can make the appointment time.

What if my child does not have insurance?

Health insurance makes health care for your child less expensive and easy to access. With health insurance, your child can visit the doctor once a year to check their health. It also lets you bring your child to the doctor if they are sick. You can visit https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov to sign your child up for health insurance.