

FAQs

- What is the difference between family medicine and primary care?
- If my children see a pediatrician, can I still see one of your family physicians?
- If I already have a primary care doctor and don't want to switch, can I still see your doctors for my pregnancy?
- I'm surprised to see that your doctors do obstetrics. I thought family doctors had stopped delivering babies and I would have to go to an ob-gyn doctor.
- Should I go to the emergency room if I think I have a medical emergency at night?
- How long will I have to wait for an appointment?
- Will I see the same doctor each time I come in?
- If I need to be hospitalized, will my family doctor be in charge of my care?
- I work full time but don't have health insurance and find it difficult to pay my medical bills. Can you help me?

Q: What is the difference between family medicine and primary care?

A: Family medicine is just one of the primary care specialties, the others being general internal medicine, general pediatrics and, in some cases, ob-gyn (obstetrics/gynecology). Family medicine training, however, is the only primary care specialty to offer care for the whole family, irrespective of age or gender. Family medicine also includes broader training in areas such as obstetrics, gynecology, orthopedics, surgery and psychiatry, which is not included in most of the other primary care specialties.

Q: If my children see a pediatrician, can I still see one of your family physicians?

A: Yes. We are happy to care for your whole family or any of its members.

Q: If I already have a primary care doctor and don't want to switch, can I still see your doctors for my pregnancy?

A: Yes. We have delivered many babies for women who get their primary care from other doctors.

Q: I'm surprised to see that your doctors do obstetrics. I thought family doctors had stopped delivering babies and I would have to go to an ob-gyn doctor.

A: It's true that in some parts of the country family doctors have stopped doing obstetrics, due mainly to soaring malpractice insurance costs. In Kansas, however, we enjoy a stable malpractice insurance market because of tort reform. In Lawrence, anywhere from a third to half of all babies have been delivered by family doctors during the past 20 years. Our doctors enjoy obstetrics and have broad experience and a very good track record. We are pleased to be able to continue serving those patients who want to be delivered by their own family doctor and have him or her take care of the baby as well as the rest of the family after that.

Q: Should I go to the emergency room if I think I have a medical emergency at night?

A: Certainly you should call an ambulance and proceed directly to the ER for dire emergencies such as heavy bleeding; sudden loss of speech, feeling or muscle strength; sudden onset of chest pain in a mature adult; or sudden loss of consciousness. For most other problems, however, you will be better served to

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talk first to our on-call doctor. In many instances, that doctor will be able to reassure you or otherwise provide interim treatments so that you can be cared for in our office the next day, saving you a great deal of worry, time and expense.

Q: How long will I have to wait for an appointment?

A: We understand that illness is unpredictable and often urgent. Because of that, our office is open every day and we reserve at least half of the appointments each day for acute illnesses and injuries. In almost all cases, your urgent problems can be cared for the day you call in, or—at the latest—the next day. Of course that means routine follow-up appointments and preventive care visits will take longer to schedule so that we can reserve the time necessary to handle all of our patients' urgent problems. If you think your problem is urgent, but you are not being offered a same-day appointment, ask to talk with one of our nurses. If your usual doctor is not available (yes, they do get time off), you will be offered an appointment with one of our other doctors.

Q: Will I see the same doctor each time I come in?

A: One of the principles of family medicine is continuity of care. There is value in getting to know one doctor and have that doctor take care of your long-term medical needs while getting to know you and your family well. Because of this, whenever possible we will attempt to schedule you with the doctor you have selected as your family's primary care physician. However, there may be times when the urgency of the problem or your personal time constraints require that you be seen when your doctor is out or does not have available appointment slots. In that case you will be offered an appointment with one of our other doctors.

Q: If I need to be hospitalized, will my family doctor be in charge of my care?

A: Hospital medicine requires a different knowledge base and skill set than office medicine. There are times when hospitalized patients will need someone to make immediate decisions to deal with sudden changes in their conditions. Having an in-hospital doctor present to care for them provides better, more efficient care than care provided by a physician who visits the patient once or twice a day. That is why the doctors of Lawrence Family Medicine and Obstetrics decided to coordinate care with Lawrence Hospitalist Associates, a group of in-hospital doctors who provide hospital care only. We have been very pleased with this relationship and have developed a very good system of sharing information and decision-making between LFMO doctors and hospitalist doctors. Since “too many cooks spoil the broth,” we let them control your hospital care, but we often drop in to check on you and answer questions that you might have. We believe the efficiency of on-site care combined with cross-communication between the hospitalist and the primary care physician provides our patients with the best care possible.

Q: I work full time but don't have health insurance and find it difficult to pay my medical bills. Can you help me?

A: The doctors of Lawrence Family Medicine and Obstetrics understand and share the concern of many about declining health insurance coverage for many Americans. Our professional organization, the American Academy of Family Physicians, has worked hard to promote the passage of universal health insurance coverage in our nation for many years. Legislation has now mandated insurance coverage for

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all Americans through the Affordable Care Act. We will gladly file all insurance claims. We also offer to set up payment plans for large medical deductibles. If you let your doctor know about your financial constraints, he or she often can reduce your testing and drug costs, such as by prescribing less expensive generic drugs or, if possible, by supplying you with free samples of drugs. In cases of extraordinary or ongoing medical needs, we can refer you to Health Care Access, a clinic manned by volunteer doctors (including our own), which is able to provide markedly reduced-cost medical care.

The LFMO commitment

Our commitment to you is accessibility to medical information and assistance 24 hours a day. We do this by providing a broad range of medical services, seven days a week, delivered with a personal touch while using the latest of medical technologies. Our on-call doctor is available by phone to talk to you at any time, day or night. And, since the best medical care is delivered in person, we maintain extended office hours on weekdays as well as provide office hours for urgent care on Saturdays and Sundays.

At LFMO, we provide a medical home for you and your family to restore health and, more important, to preserve your health through preventive medical services.

Open 7 days a week, by appointment

Ready for a visit to our office? [Contact us now!](#)