



## Q&A: IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

Joyce Leon, M.D., is a practicing general internist and also Associate Medical Director for Henry Ford's Population Health Management team. Recently, Dr. Leon shared her thoughts on the importance of patients having a Primary Care Physician (PCP):

### Q. What is the role of a PCP?

A. First, the word "doctor" in Greek means teacher or educator. So the doctor's role is to teach people about their health. Second, in today's world, a PCP can help people navigate the health system and coordinate their care.

### Q. What is the difference between a family practice doctor and a general internist?

A. The training for the two is similar. With family medicine there is a three-year residency in pediatrics, women's health and adult medicine. Internal medicine is trained purely in adult medicine for those three years.

### Q. Why is it important to have a PCP?

A. A good PCP always treats the patient in the context of their life. They get to know them over time and understand how any issues or diseases are affecting their life. They can help direct medical interventions and make recommendations consistent with the patient's values. Patients with a PCP tend to have more coordinated care; also it helps for a specialist to have the PCP to communicate with about the patient – someone who knows them. This all adds to the value of the care you receive.

### Q. One final question on something many people feel but may not think to talk to their PCP about. What is your tip for people to deal better with stress?

A. Since we can't necessarily reduce the stress in our life, it's important to change the way you interface with it. I recommend a book by Dr. Kelly McGonigal called *The Upside of Stress*. There is also a TED Talk on it. Second, make sure you do things for yourself – especially physical activity. It's usually the first thing we give up when we're under stress but it is the last thing we should give up. Even 20-30 minutes of walking without any electronics – you need to unplug!

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## DIY PROJECT REALITY CHECK

Do it yourself (DIY) projects are popular now, fueled by the number of television programs that "show" how to complete household projects. "I applaud anyone who wants to take care of their own home repairs and improvements," says Maurilio Hernandez, M.D., from the Henry Ford Macomb Walk-In Clinic at Richmond. "However, safety should be primary. I have seen many well-intentioned people come in with injuries that were avoidable. If only they had been realistic about their capabilities ... or followed the safety tips exactly as written." So before you start your project, ask yourself a few important questions:

- What type of protective gear will you need for this project?
- Do you know how to use the equipment needed?
- Do you have the strength to complete the project?
- What are the labor requirements?
- Does doing it yourself make financial sense?
- Do you have knowledgeable resources?

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## VIRTUAL TIP

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