

What is a Family Health Team (FHT)?

Just like it sounds, the FHT is a team approach to primary care.

What is Primary Care?

Primary care is the personal health needs of individual and families. It is one element of Primary Health Care, which deals with the health of the community and the factors that influence it: income, housing, education, and environment.

Primary Care includes:

- health promotion
- illness and injury prevention,
- diagnosis and treatment of illness and injury
- disease management.

As providers of primary care, our team works for you in three ways by:

1. providing first-contact services (family doctors, nurse practitioners);
2. working collaboratively within a team of clinicians (family doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, nurses) to include preventative care, health education and chronic disease management;
3. coordinating your care across the larger system, with specialists or in hospitals and maintaining a Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to record all your health information.

A crucial element of primary care is accessibility. Our team provides timely access:

- same/next day appointments for urgent assessment;
- during extended hours, evening and Saturday clinics;
- even when your family doctor is on holiday.

Who is my primary provider?

Your primary provider is your family doctor or nurse practitioner.

Why do I need to be rostered?

By rostering or enrolling with our FHT, our team becomes your team. This gives you access to all our services and programs. Your enrollment in a Family Health Team is voluntary and there is no charge.

As well, Ministry of Health funding for specialized programs, like diabetes, smoking cessation or preventive care, is based on our number of rostered patients, and may be limited to only our rostered patients.

When you join our family health network you must

- agree that, unless in an emergency or when traveling, you will use your FHT first for your primary care
- consent to release your personal health information to allow your family doctor to share that information with the health care providers involved in your care.

Why am I only allowed to have only one family doctor?

Part of responsible health management is looking at the whole picture, all the factors that influence your health; current and past illnesses, treatments and prescriptions. If your healthcare is being handled by more than one family doctor without consultation, there is the potential for conflicting treatments or prescriptions.

You are always welcome to a second opinion. Your primary care provider can arrange that for you.

What if my family doctor goes on holiday?

You're covered! Either you will be scheduled with one of our other FHT physicians or with a Nurse Practitioner or a locum doctor hired to cover the vacation period. A locum doctor is a fully qualified family physician.

You will be advised of these options at the time of booking the appointment or if it changes after your appointment was booked, you will be called and advised.

Can I change doctors within the Family Health Team?

If you wish to switch to another physician, we request that you discuss this with your current physician first. Then, *only if another physician is willing to take you on*, you may switch.

Are you taking on any new patients?

Health Care Connect is a program launched by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to help people without a family health care provider to find one.

To register with the program, simply call 1-800-445-1822. You will need a pen, some paper and your OHIP card when you call Health Care Connect. You can also register for Health Care Connect online by entering your information at www.ontario.ca/healthcareconnect.

What if I move and need to change doctors?

Once another physician has agreed to take you as a patient, you need to advise us and we will de-roster you. We can arrange the transfer of your medical records. Please note there is a charge for this service.