

Fact Sheet: **Medical Home**

What is a Medical Home? A Medical home is a new way of thinking about health care. It is not a house, office, or hospital, but rather an approach to providing comprehensive primary care. This approach allows your child to have access to medical services that are timely, appropriate, and effective. It can be considered as having a “home base” for your child’s health care needs. The place where you usually take your child for health care can be your child’s medical home. But again, a medical home is not the place where your child receives care, but it is how your child receives care.

The Facts you should know:

As a parent, you have a main role in your child’s medical home.

- ✓ In a medical home,
 - Your family is at the center of care.
 - You and your child are equal partners in decisions concerning the well-being of your child.
 - You are valued and treated as the expert on your child.
 - You are treated as a central member of your child’s health care team.
 - You and your child’s doctor share respect and trust.
 - Your culture and religious beliefs are valued.
 - Your preferences for treatment and care are met when possible.
 - Your doctor partners with you and your child, office staff, and others to learn about and meet your child’s medical and non-medical needs.
 - If your child gets sick or has a special medical need, you feel supported.
 - Your child receives his or her immunizations, well-child visits, and urgent care.
 - You get help finding specialty care or community services when needed.
 - Your child’s doctor provides helpful information to other members of the care team and helps manage your child’s care.
 - You are given information to help you learn about your child’s ongoing health concerns, including parent to parent support.
 - Your doctor makes sure you understand the treatment choices.

There are common elements in a Medical Home that ensure medical care is effective in meeting the needs of your family and child. Care should be:

- ✓ **Accessible** - Your family is able to easily reach the doctor’s office, your insurance/Medicaid is accepted, and your doctor is available when you need him/her.
- ✓ **Family-centered** - Your family’s needs are recognized and are at the focus of the care plan.
- ✓ **Continuous** - Care is ongoing and without unnecessary interruptions.
- ✓ **Comprehensive** - Your child’s medical, educational, developmental, and psychosocial needs are met.
- ✓ **Coordinated** - Care is coordinated by your child’s doctor with other specialists, providers, and school personnel as needed.
- ✓ **Compassionate** - Your doctor’s office is concerned about the well-being of your family and child.
- ✓ **Culturally Competent** - Your cultural background is recognized and respected. Information is provided in your primary language as needed. Interpreters or translators are made available upon your request.

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Tips for Families:

- ✓ Plan before the office visit:
 - Create a list of the questions or concerns you want to discuss at each visit.
 - If you know you will need extra time for your visit, tell the doctor's office when you call to make the appointment.
 - Make a notebook or folder that holds your child's health information. Include names of doctors, other caregivers, medicines, etc.
 - Set up a plan for continuous communication with the doctor's office, such as email.
 - It always feels good to get a thank you, so if your medical home partners do something you appreciate, let them know.
 - Talk to your child. Ask for his/her input into their health care planning. Find out what they like and dislike. Ask what they want and need to feel supported.
 - Consider when it's right to have your child take the lead in his/her his medical care.
- ✓ Stay involved during the visit:
 - Ask questions if you need to! If you don't understand what is being said, ask for clarification!
 - Share with the doctor how your child is changing. Celebrate new skills and talk about concerns.
 - It's okay to ask for something to be explained if you don't understand it. You should feel comfortable asking questions about anything that has to do with your child's health and development. It is also okay to respectfully disagree.
 - Ask to have instructions written down for you.
 - Ask to meet the office staff who will be working with you and your child (nurses, person who makes referrals, billing person, etc.).
 - Ask about how to get care after hours if needed.
- ✓ Remember, you can choose your child's doctor. If you don't like how you or your child are being treated, seek a new doctor.

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia
770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038
www.p2pga.org

Georgia Department of Public Health
Children's Medical Services
404-657-4855 or 1-888-651-8224
<http://www.health.state.ga.us/programs/cms>

For tips on making medical homes work for children with special needs,
see Tools and Resources for Families at:

National Center of Medical Home Initiatives for Children with Special Needs
<http://www.Medicalhomeinfo.org>

Additional resources: Contact your child's **Primary Physician/Doctor** to establish a Medical Home for your child.