Dear Alice,

Shouldn't the health services give an annual comprehensive checkup for all the students? We have such checkups back in our home country. I think that it's necessary for uncovering hidden problems that the student is not aware of normally.

?International

Answer

Dear International,

It's been said that annual check-ups are a good idea for all! Interestingly, after childhood it's not unusual for individuals in the United States to not seek annual check-ups until later in life. A visit to a primary care provider is often based on times of illness or other potential concerns (reproductive health, travel health, etc). As such it may be a cultural experience, or simply that many people are relatively healthy during her/his college years.

You are certainly welcome to make an appointment for a basic check-up, but keep in mind that "comprehensive" is based on who you are, what risks you might have for different health conditions, etc. Each person is likely to have a somewhat different experience. If you have risks for certain conditions, are on regular medications, or are under treatment for ongoing concerns then an annual check in with your provider may help you to maintain a positive state of health and well-being.

It is also a good idea to develop a strong relationship with your primary care provider when you are feeling well. Openly communicating, being honest (don't worry, s/he's heard it all before), and asking questions when you are feeling well makes it that much easier to approach care when you aren't feeling so hot. This way you will get the assistance you need for any health concerns.

Thanks for a thought provoking question around the benefits of check-ups and developing a good relationship with your primary care provider. All the best in health and school!

Alice!

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