

For further clarification let me explain how an Internist operates. First, we interview the patient and elicit signs and symptoms that will give us clues to what may be causing the problem. Next, a complete physical examination of the entire body is conducted to detect any abnormal findings. However, we cannot see the internal organs, nor can we tell if they are functioning normally on a physical examination. Consequently, blood tests, urinalysis, and roentgenograms (commonly called "X" Rays) to evaluate the internal organs for disease may be requested. For example, to determine if your lung is affected by pneumonia, a chest "X" Ray is ordered). To determine if you have Diabetes, a blood sugar test would be requested; a complete blood cell count would be requested to determine if you are anemic.

An Internist will combine the results obtained from following activities and formulate a "Diagnosis".

- patient interview for chief complaint and symptoms,
- physical examination,
- blood and urine tests, and
- "X" Rays

A list of alternate diagnoses (known as differential diagnoses) will also be developed. If the main diagnosis is not correct, alternate possibilities have been identified. A person may have more than one diagnosis or multiple medical illnesses at the same time, and an Internist is trained to diagnosis and treats all the possibilities. Long years of intensive training provide the knowledge and database needed to effectively and successfully treat a patient.

Educationally, an Internist completes college, four years of medical school, and, three years of residency training (training under the auspices of more experienced doctors). At the completion of this training (7 years plus college), the stamp of approval is earned from the specialty board by passing a difficult comprehensive examination called the **American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM)**. Consequently, if your physician is a Board Certified Internal Medicine doctor, you are in good hands - just like the insurance company, " All State."

Professionally, a career in internal medicine offers a lifetime of opportunities for both professional choices and personal growth.

Subspecialties represented in Department of Internal Medicine include but are not limited to:

- Cardiology
- Critical Care
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Geriatrics
- Hematology
- Infectious Diseases
- Medical Oncology
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Nutrition
- Pulmonary/Critical Care Medicine