

A Doctor's Visit

By Karen Zhang



在美国公立医院看病是件考验耐心的事，除非碰上需要紧急救治的急症，否则你需要预约排队，也许要等待几个月之久。下面我们就来看看Karen在美国看医生的经历吧。

I had been in a good health until a few weeks ago when I got rash^[皮疹] on my skin. Feeling itchy^[痒的] and in pain, I finally had to visit a doctor. In America, a doctor's visit is not as easy as you may have experienced in China. Unless you have an emergency like a heart attack, in which case you are treated immediately in the hospital. In the cases of normal checkups or treatments for small ailments^[小病] like my skin rash, you have to make an appointment with a doctor's office. Staff there will fix you a date that is usually more convenient for the doctor than for the patient. Be prepared for a month, or even a few months of waiting if your problem is only a pain in the neck. Many American doctors' appointment schedules are often booked up to three months in advance.

In China, a patient can visit any specialist^[专家] any time without recommendation^[推荐]. In America, a patient usually turns to a primary doctor for advice first. (A primary doctor is a physician who has general knowledge about every ache and pain.) Then he or she will recommend to the patient a

Karen in America

specialist who will focus on the precise health issue.

I was lucky that I saw my primary doctor without a long wait. But it took me eight weeks to see my next doctor—a dermatologist^[皮肤科医生]—for my rash. Now you could imagine how unbearable some days were during those eight weeks. However, the symptom came and went. By the time I visited the skin specialist, my problem had disappeared.

"I'll prescribe^[开药] you an ointment^[药膏, 软膏] and you apply it to your skin twice a day," the doctor said after a less-than-five-minute consultation^[会诊]. "If the problem comes back, you'll see me again. If not, you're fine."

It looked like my idea of seeing a doctor was unnecessary. After all, I had waited much longer than the doctor's appointment actually lasted.

A few days ago, a friend of mine refused to extend his vacation. He would rather see his doctor as scheduled. He had waited three months for that! He said he was afraid if he changed the date, who knew how much longer he had to wait. Well, my theory was perhaps his health problem would be gone by then, just like mine. How important good health is to all of us! 

