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If doctors in the United States were stretched thin before health-care reform, they'll need to be positively elastic to handle the newly insured hordes heading their way. Worse, the projected drop of med-school grads won't be enough to help shoulder the caseload. The solution? Physician assistants—medical professionals who after about 6 years of schooling can perform run-of-the-mill doctor duties that are beyond the scope of nurses. "We need to improve the division of labor," says Roderick Hooker, Ph.D., P.A., author of *Physician Assistants in American Medicine*. "Some of the less demanding things can be relegated to a PA and other more complex cases to the doctor." You'll benefit. A proliferation of PAs means shorter wait times, even if you only have a simple sinus infection. So find a practice that has PAs on staff, and then discipline yourself to turn to a PA—not a doctor—for basic care, such as blood work, prescriptions, and treatment of minor ailments.



HOT LOOKS style

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