

Choosing a Pediatrician: What Should I Ask?

From your local pediatricians at



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Congratulations! A new baby on the way is an exciting time, and there are so many decisions and choices to make, including selecting a pediatrician.

Parents-to-be should consider selecting a pediatrician toward the beginning of your third trimester. This is an important decision and you will want to allow yourself time to meet with the pediatricians in your area, see their offices, and have peace of mind with your choice well in advance of your baby's arrival.

Below are some sample questions you can ask at a prenatal visit and interview.

AFTER BABY ARRIVES

- What are your hospital affiliations?
- How soon after the baby is born will he or she be examined?
- When is my first visit in the office with my new baby?
- How often are visits needed?

ABOUT THE OFFICE

- How can the pediatrician be reached?
- What are the office hours?
- Are there early morning, evening, or weekend hours for working parents?
- How long does it take to get a routine appointment?
- How long is a typical visit?
- Is there always time for questions?
- Who covers for the pediatrician if he or she is not available?
- Are all visits with a pediatrician, or are some visits with a nurse practitioner?

ABOUT THE PEDIATRICIAN

- How long have you been in practice?
- Why did you decide to become a pediatrician?

URGENT NEEDS AND ILLNESS

- When my child is sick, can I get an appointment the same day?
- Is it policy to have "telephone" hours or can we call with questions anytime?
- How are after-hours calls handled?
- Is there a pediatrician on-call 24 hours a day?

CARING FOR YOUR BABY

Discuss your prospective pediatrician's views on these health topics, and any other specific health concerns you may have.

- Breastfeeding and infant nutrition
- Circumcision
- Immunizations
- Sleep
- Use of medications and antibiotics

There are other aspects to consider, which you can observe or ask about during your visit.

- ✓ Do they accept my insurance plan?
- ✓ Is the office staff warm and friendly?
- ✓ Are there separate well and sick waiting rooms?
- ✓ Is the equipment modern?
- ✓ Are hallways and rooms clean?
- ✓ Is the office child-friendly, with cheerful examination rooms?
- ✓ Do you feel safe going to the office?
- ✓ Is there adequate parking?