

Finding a Health Care Provider for Your Baby

For more information on choosing a health care provider, see: [Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn](#) page 21-2. Newborn care and health care is covered in detail in chapter 18.

Find out what options are available to you by asking for referrals from: your insurance company, physician, friends, or family.

Find a pediatrician: <https://www.healthychildren.org/english/tips-tools/find-pediatrician/Pages/Pediatrician-Referral-Service.aspx>

Find a family practice doctor: <https://portfolio.theabfm.org/diplomate/find.aspx>

Find a nurse practitioner: <https://npfinder.aanp.org/>

Find a naturopathic physician: <https://naturopathic.org/search/custom.asp?id=5613>

Timing: Make this choice one to three months before your baby's expected arrival.

Think about which kind of care provider you would prefer:

- Pediatrician (a physician who specializes in infants and children)
- Family practice doctor (who could see the whole family)
- Nurse practitioner (who focuses on well-child care and would refer you to a physician for any serious illnesses)
- Naturopathic doctor or other alternative practitioner

Think about what kind of health care setting you would prefer:

- Private practice clinic
- Children's health clinic (May cost less, staffed by physicians and nurses who are completing medical training and are supervised by experienced providers. May see a different caregiver at each visit.)
- Well-child clinic (May be free or low-cost, run by health department. Can provide well-child checkups and vaccinations. May not provide care for illnesses.)

Screening

Once you have narrowed down your choices to your best option, check the website or call the clinic and ask the receptionist about: health insurance coverage, how long it takes to schedule a well-child visit or a sick child visit, and backup care providers. Ask if there are ways to get questions answered during office hours and after office hours – do they accept and answer questions by email, text or portal? Do they offer telehealth services?

Ask if it is possible to meet with the care provider before baby's arrival. Write your notes here:

Questions to Ask the Care Provider

During the interview, ask their opinion on these topics:

Do you support breastfeeding/chestfeeding? Formula feeding? Do you have expertise in lactation or do you work with lactation consultants or other breastfeeding resources?

What are your thoughts on _____? (Ask about issues that you have strong feelings about or have lots of questions about. For example: circumcision, vaccinations, home remedies and alternative therapies, antibiotics.)

How available are you (or your office) for phone consultation? Who takes calls when you're unavailable?

Do you have hospital privileges? Where? If my child must be hospitalized, how involved will you be in their care?

Will you be available to examine my baby soon after the birth (at the hospital or in my home)?

What do you love about your job?

Additional Questions. For example, if there are inherited illnesses among your family members, you might ask the caregiver about any concerns about those.

Pay attention to [I]how[I] your questions are answered as well as [I]what[I] is said. Try to find someone whose style and philosophy is compatible with your own, and who you feel you could trust.