



So Many Choices

Finding a Health Care Provider for Your Baby

For more information, see: *Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn* page 25. Find out what options are available to you by asking for referrals from: your insurance company, physician, friends, or family.

Timing: Make this choice during the last trimester of pregnancy.

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 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 checkups and vaccinations. May not provide care for illnesses.)

Interview

Once you have narrowed down your choices to your best option, call the clinic and ask the receptionist about: health insurance coverage, your care provider’s availability for answering questions during office hours and after hours, and backup care providers. Ask to meet with the care provider. During the interview, ask his or her opinion on these topics:

- Do you support breastfeeding? Formula feeding? Do you have expertise in breastfeeding? _____
- Do you work with lactation consultants or other breastfeeding resources? _____ Do you refer to them? _____
- What are your thoughts on circumcision? _____
- What are your thoughts on vaccinations? _____ Do you support delayed schedules? _____
How about the refusal of vaccinations? _____
- How comfortable are you with the use of home remedies or alternative therapies for minor ailments and common illnesses? _____ When would you prescribe 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 his or her care? _____
- Will you be available to examine my baby soon after the birth (at the hospital or in my home)? _____

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

