



SELECTING A BABY DOCTOR

BE CHOOSY

Selecting a pediatrician or a family practice physician is a big step. Where do you begin to look? What should you expect in a baby doctor? Consider these guidelines to help you choose Doctor Right:

Pediatricians are graduates of a 4-year medical school with 3 additional years of residency training solely on pediatrics. The initials FAAP after a pediatrician's name mean the doctor is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and certified by the American Board of Pediatrics. To earn the FAAP designation, pediatricians must pass a qualifying exam in advanced principles and practices of pediatric care for newborn infants, babies, toddlers, children and adolescents.

Family Practice Physicians are also graduates of a 4-year medical school and have completed 3 additional years of residency training. The training prepares these physicians to provide care for the majority of medical problems that children encounter. Since family physicians care for both children and adults, the entire family can see a single physician. To become certified by the American Board of Family Practice, family physicians must also pass a qualifying exam that includes the proper assessment and care of children.

Consider these additional tips when choosing your baby's doctor:

- Ask your obstetrician or friends who are parents - or call the referral service at the hospital nearest you.
- Set up an interview with each doctor during the final months of your pregnancy. You and the dad-to-be should try to attend so you both fully understand the doctor's policies and philosophy of care.



Here are some questions to ask during the interview:

- How soon after birth will the doctor see the baby?
- What are the office hours? Are they compatible with your schedule?
- How often will the doctor see your baby for checkups and immunizations
- How are routine telephone calls handled in the office?
- Which hospitals is the doctor affiliated with?
- How are emergency calls handled during and after office hours?
- Who “covers” the practice when a doctor is unavailable? Other doctors within the practice or within the community?
- Does the practice include services provided by a nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant? If so, what type of care/service will the practitioner provide? Will you likely receive visit (s) from a home health care nurse when you come home from the hospital?
- How much does routine care cost? Does the charge for routine visits include the cost of immunizations? What methods of payment are accepted? Is payment expected on the day of the visit? Does the doctor bill the insurance company directly?