



CHOOSING A PEDIATRICIAN

5 QUESTIONS - A PARENTS GUIDE



5 QUESTIONS WHEN CHOOSING YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Choosing a pediatrician is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a parent. Your child's doctor will be a major source of information, support and care - sometimes at 2:00 AM! So you need a pediatrician you trust and, most importantly, someone you like. Healthcare is a partnership between parents and pediatricians. You owe it to your child to find a great partner. Don't be afraid to interview a few doctors. Here are five important questions to ask - followed by a questionnaire!

1. What is the pediatrician's philosophy on child health?

It's very important to select a pediatrician who fits your parenting style and philosophy. There are various approaches to breastfeeding, immunization, co-sleeping and toilet learning. You'll see a lot of your pediatrician. There are at least eight routine office visits in the first two years. Add in stressful midnight illnesses, weekend fevers and occasional sports injuries and it might feel like you spend more time with your child's doctor than your partner. Make sure you are on the same philosophical page for development and treatment.

2. Does the pediatrician come highly recommended?

Your pediatrician should come highly recommended. Most people choose doctors based on word of mouth, but please consult a range of people so you can compare notes. When your child is accepted into a practice, make sure that the doctor is already well established and known in the community. Very often, when searching for a new physician, you can get assigned to the newest pediatrician and staff. Do some research to make sure your doctor has a history of quality care and that your chosen pediatrician will specifically treat your child. Check credentials too. It's important.

3. Is the pediatrician open and responsive?

Start by looking for a pediatrician who cares about people. A warm attentive manner can make a big difference. It's important to find a doctor who takes the time to answer your questions. You want someone who can advise you on everything from general health and development to tricky behavioral issues, who's as good at listening as she is at dispensing instructions. At first, empathy may seem less important than medical credentials, but a pediatrician who genuinely cares about your child's health is more likely to pay attention to symptoms and keep investigating if a treatment isn't working.

4. Is the pediatrician knowledgeable and have the desire to share it?

A good pediatrician doesn't just respond to immediate health issues, but considers the bigger picture of your child's health. So your provider has to be informed about the latest research. But knowledge isn't enough. Good pediatricians are willing to communicate that knowledge in language you can understand. She should offer a lot of information, including preventive measures and updates on recent medical advances. Educating parents is an important part of a pediatrician's job. You may not know what to ask, so it's important to have guidance.

5. Will I be able to get a same-day appointment with the pediatrician?

If you've ever had a child with a middle-of-the-night earache, you will understand this one. Some offices can't provide same day visits, so it's important to ask. When your child is sick you need to know that your pediatric team is standing by to help.

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WORKSHEET

GETTING STARTED

DOCTOR'S NAME	DIRECT PHONE	EMAIL
NAME OF PRACTICE	PHONE	WEBSITE
ADDRESS		EMAIL
QUALIFICATIONS/ SUB SPECIALTIES/BOARD CERTIFIED?		YEARS PRACTICING
HOW DID WE HEAR ABOUT THIS DOCTOR?		
NOTES		

ABOUT THE PRACTICE

Accept our insurance? _____ Yes No

Solo or group practice? _____

Is there a mid-level provider? _____

How often will we see other doctors in the practice? _____

Office hours _____ Days open _____

Evening or weekend hours _____

Are calls for routine/non-emergency questions encouraged? _____

How will we reach our doctor after hours? _____

When the doctor's not on call, who covers _____

How do they handle payments, billing, laboratory charges, and insurance claims? _____

Is policy to see newborns in hospital or first office visit? _____

ASK THE DOCTOR

What do you like best about your job? _____

Do you have children? _____

What's your feeling about discussing behavioral developments? _____

What are your thoughts on parents as healthcare partners? _____

Talk a little bit about your pediatric background, education and training please. _____

Are you a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics? _____

What is your policy regarding second opinions? _____

If our child needs a specialist, how do you handle referrals? _____

Can we call with routine questions? Email you? _____

Please talk a bit about your philosophies on: _____

Breastfeeding/bottle-feeding _____

Circumcision _____

Antibiotics _____

Immunizations _____

Parenting methods _____

Childhood obesity _____

Getting babies to sleep _____

Alternative medicine _____

Suggested parenting books or other resources _____

REVIEW

- Was the practice clean/organized? Yes No
- Is the waiting room pleasant and kid-friendly? Yes No
- Were there toys and books? Yes No
- Were the staff and nurses helpful and patient? Yes No
- Was everyone friendly? Yes No
- Was parking readily available? Yes No
- Did the wait seem long? Yes No
- Did your child respond well to the doctor? Yes No
- Did your child respond well to the nurses? Yes No
- Did the doctor welcome your questions? Yes No
- Did the doctor know the latest medical advances? Yes No
- Did you like the doctor's communication style? Yes No
- Do you think this doctor would be a good partner? Yes No
- Did you feel comfortable with the doctor? Yes No



Children need specialized care. So make sure your pediatrician is a Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatrics. Dr. Monica Dhar, MD has over 15 years trusted pediatric experience. She served her General Pediatrics Residency at The University of Mississippi, is a diplomate of the American Academy of Pediatrics and has NRP and ECFMG Certification. Her clinical and teaching experience includes The University of Alabama Outreach Clinic.

Contact Dr. Dhar at 989-374-0136 or visit fma555.net/dhar for answers to your pediatric questions.

Family Medicine Associates of Midland is known for 35 years of compassionate care. The physicians include Board-Certified Family Practitioners and Pediatricians. At FMA the caring staff rallies around each patient while working as a team to help maintain optimal health.

