

Choosing a Pediatrician (Questions to ask)

Many expectant parents have discovered, it's a good idea to interview a physician for your child or a pediatrician before the baby is born. Though today's health plans seems to have limited your choice of physicians, most plans still do have some choice. Physicians usually welcome these appointments and do not charge for prenatal visits.

Ask if there will be a fee when you call to make an appointment. Ask how much time you will have with the physician, so that you can pace your questions. Have your questions written down and take someone with you –your partner or a friend (Dr Saifullah, however prefers the partner)

Here's a list of common questions in no particular order. Ask what is important to you first.

1: What is your philosophy about child rearing? Open-ended questions about your birth plan, support of breast-feeding, the use of antibiotics, and attitude toward immunizations can be helpful both in terms of actual answers as well as the doctor's patience and empathy toward your concerns.

In other words, it is not just what the doctor answers; it is how it is answered that is crucial. Does the pediatrician give you adequate time; does he/she listen in a way that suggests empathy, that you will be helped to become a competent decision-maker? Most important, does the doctor enjoys listening to your "story"?

2:- How much are your hospital charges and fees for office visits? In many places, pediatricians charge similar fees, however hospital based practices usually/could have higher charges (more gets applied towards the deductible).

3:- Do you return every call? Some doctors make every call back. Others have office personnel return calls. Occasionally, the nurse who handles your phone call may not have the same attitude about the issue in question (breastfeeding or sleeping habits, for example) that you or your doctor have. If you find that the person who's handling your phone call is not on your frequency, request that the doctor to call you back instead.

4:- Sick child and Well child waiting area? Does the doctor's office have a separate sick and well child area as you don't want to have your well child sitting right next to a sick child?

5:- Will I always see you? Not likely. If you are scheduling an exam well in advance, it's easy to ask for a day that your doctor will be in the office. However, if you have a sick child, you'll get whoever is in the office or on call. If it's important to you, arrange to meet all the doctors who might cover for your baby's doctor in an emergency or when you're in the hospital.

6:- Do you have evening or Saturday hours? Although day time hours work for most families, some physicians do offer evening hours to accommodate working parents.

7:- Will you be the pediatrician to come visit the child/baby at the hospital: Most, but not all, pediatricians will come to the hospital to do a complete physical and examine your newborn. They usually come the day of the birth, and every day while you are in the hospital. They will check the baby's health, listen to his/her heart, and look for signs of any problems, such as jaundice. Some pediatricians will not come to the hospital, and you will be required to use the on-call pediatrician instead. It is a good idea to ask your obstetrician to recommend a pediatrician or to make an arrangement with a local pediatrician who could come and see the baby while the baby's in hospital.