

Choosing a pediatrician is an important decision. This brochure will help you prepare and choose wisely.



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The Bronx Health Link

Perinatal Information Network

How To Choose A Pediatrician



A guide to help you find a pediatrician who meets your family's needs

Pediatricians help you raise healthy and happy children. Choosing a pediatrician for your baby is an important decision. The brochure will help you prepare and choose wisely.

What is a pediatrician?

Pediatricians are child specialists. They are board-certified. This means they completed four years of medical school, trained for an extra three years as a pediatrician, and passed a test that proves their knowledge of pediatrics.



What is a pediatrician's role?

- Make sure your child is healthy
- Update immunizations
- Track your child's growth
- Find physical problems before they become serious
- Teach you how to keep your child safe and healthy
- Prescribe medication and treat your child when he/she is ill
- Answer all your questions

What should I look for when choosing a pediatrician?

- Warm, kind, open-minded to your thoughts and feelings
- Shares similar parenting views about feeding, sleeping, immunizations, and discipline



When should I start looking for a pediatrician?

Start looking for a pediatrician between 20 and 32 weeks of pregnancy. You want to make your choice before the baby arrives.

How do I find a pediatrician?

- Ask your family
- Ask your friends
- Ask your obstetrician, midwife, or caregiver
- Visit HealthyChildren.org, and use the "Find a Pediatrician" tool to get a list of doctors in your area.

TIPS ON CHOOSING A PEDIATRICIAN

I have a few recommendations for pediatricians —now what?

- Call or visit the office of each pediatrician.
- Explain that you are looking for a pediatrician.
- Ask general questions about the office.
- Set up an appointment to interview the doctor (The meeting will be short. Ask in advance how much time you will have.)
- Ask whether the doctor charges for the interview, and if so, what the fee is. (Insurance does not usually cover this meeting.)
- Prepare a brief list of questions for the pediatrician.



Questions to Ask the Staff:

- Do you accept my insurance?
- What foreign languages, if any, do the staff speak?
- What are your office hours?
- Do you offer early, late, and weekend appointments?
- Will I be able to get a same day appointment if my child is sick?
- How are emergency calls handled by your office?
- Is there a separate waiting area for “well” and “sick” children?

Things to Look for at the Office

- Is the waiting area clean and child-friendly?
- Is the waiting area crowded? If so, this could mean the staff is overbooking.
- Are there a lot of sick children in the waiting area, or are there separate rooms for the sick children and the well children?
- How long do people wait for their appointments?
- Is the staff helpful?

Questions to Ask the Nurse or Doctor:

- How long have you been a pediatrician?
- What hospitals are you affiliated with?
- How do I reach you after hours or during an emergency?
- Who covers you on your days off?
- How long does it take to get a return call? Will you answer questions by email?
- What foreign languages, if any, do you speak? Are there translation services available?



Additional Questions:

Write any additional questions you may have

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How Do I Make My Final Decision?

- Does the doctor show an interest in the welfare of your child?
- Are the doctor and the office staff friendly?
- Does the doctor take time examining your child?
- Is the location easy to get to?
- Do patients experience long waiting time?
- Does the doctor communicate clearly? (Does the doctor use everyday terms?)
- Did the doctor answer all your questions?
- Did I feel comfortable?

