

How to Choose a Family Physician

Provided by:

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Search When You Are Well

- The time to look for a family physician is before you need one. This gives you the opportunity to take your time, ask the right questions and do research without the added urgency of an illness. Once you find a family physician, you will have the chance to meet in advance of an illness to discuss your family's medical history.

Make a List of Candidates

Use the following sources:

- Ask family, friends, neighbors and co-workers about their family physicians. Their personal experiences will show their physician's quality of care.
- If you are in a managed care program, look at the plan's list of family physician providers.
- Contact your hospital's physician referral service and request a family physician.


Check Credentials

- Is the physician board certified in family medicine? Check on the American Board of Family Medicine's Web site.
- Is he/she a member of OAFP? Call 800.742.7327 to find out.
- Does the physician regularly participate in continuing medical education?

Make A List of Questions

What qualities does your family need most in a family physician? Setup a "get-acquainted" appointment. Here are a few good questions to ask:

- What conditions does the family physician have experience with?
- How long does it take to schedule a routine or wellness appointment?
- Does the office send courtesy reminders for annual appointments (i.e. annual physicals, pap smears)?
- What are the office's after-hours procedures?



While visiting the doctor's office, determine if you feel comfortable with the doctor. Did he/she listen to you? Did he/she give you a chance to ask questions? Were your questions answered in terms you understood? Did the physician spend enough time with you, or did you feel rushed? Were you treated with respect? These are important factors in determining your compatibility with the doctor. Trust your instincts, but give the physician a chance, knowing it takes time to establish rapport.

Contact the Family Physician's Office

Find out more about your new family physician by contacting the office.

Some questions to ask office staff:

- What are the office hours?
- Is my doctor a recommended member of my health plan?
- Which hospitals does the doctor use?
- What are the office's billing and insurance procedures?