



the first month

A Premier Pediatrics
Program for New Parents

Picking Your Pediatrician

No matter how much you educate yourself on baby and childcare before your little one makes his or her debut, there are some things that just have to be left to the experts. Especially when it comes to [health care](#). Luckily, says Dr. Deena Blanchard MD, a pediatrician at [Premier Pediatrics](#), many doctors offer expectant parents an opportunity to meet with a prospective pediatrician and find out about the structure and the style of their practice. “Finding a pediatrician can feel like a big decision,” she says. “This is the person who will hopefully help to guide you through your child’s growth and development, and many of your parenting ups and downs.” Blanchard gives Well Rounded NY some tips on how to find the perfect fit for your growing family.

When should you start looking?

The best time to start looking is at about 28-30 weeks gestation. You may want to visit more than one office, and this allows you the time to do so. It is never too late to meet with someone. If the doctor has availability, meetings are still helpful.

What will you talk about at this visit?

First and foremost, you will see if you like the pediatrician and he/she is a good fit for your personality. Look to see how the office staff interacts. Are they friendly? Are the doctors nice to the staff? Is the office clean? The doctor should review the structure of the practice, what hours it is open, how many doctors there are etc. You will want to know what the policy for emergency visits are. Are they walk in or made by same day appointment? How are after hours phone calls handled? Who answers routine phone calls? Can you see the same doctor for all your well visits? Some of these things will matter more to you more than others, you will want to pick a practice that meets your needs as well.

Vaccine policies are often a topic of discussion at these visits. Most pediatric offices have a policy on whether or not they are willing to delay vaccinations. You will want to ensure that the practice policies are in line with your decisions and beliefs.

If you don’t have a baby yet, and you don’t know your parenting style, how can you get a sense if a practice is the right fit for you?

Like most things in life, relationships and parenting styles develop over time. As with your previous physician choices (your internist and OBGYN) you will have a “gut” feeling about whether you mesh well with the pediatrician. Many practices have more than one physician and you may find along the way that you mesh better with someone else in the practice and that is okay as well. It is ideal and wonderful to stick with one pediatric practice throughout your child’s life. That being said with moves and other life changes or choices you may need to or elect to change your physician and that is okay as well.

I loved the pediatrician I met with but he/she doesn’t see babies at the hospital I am going to deliver at.

That is no big deal. Most pediatric offices maintain hospital privileges at 1-2 hospitals and see newborns in the well-baby nursery there. If the pediatrician you have chosen does not see babies at the hospital you deliver at a pediatrician will be assigned to see the baby in the hospital. After discharge you will see your pediatrician within 2-3 days of leaving the hospital. As many people deliver at hospitals that are not that close to where they live this happens all the time.

Oops! I didn't get around to interviewing! Can I still get a pediatrician for my baby?

Of course! Most people don't meet their pediatrician until after their baby is born. Ask your friends for recommendations or look at parenting forums. These are often helpful in choosing which pediatrician to start with. The baby should be seen within 2-3 days of hospital discharge to make sure that they are gaining weight well and to go over your questions. You can have a great relationship with your pediatrician regardless of whether you had a prenatal visit.