



Choosing a Medical Professional

Deciding who will care for you during your pregnancy and delivery is an important decision. You and your medical professional will act as a team whose goal is to deliver a healthy baby. This list can help you choose the best medical professional for you and help you with the kinds of questions to ask.

General Practitioner/GP

- Medical doctors, or MDs, complete medical school plus three to seven years of graduate medical education.
- They're licensed by the state in which they practice.
- They treat diseases and injuries.
- They provide preventative care and routine checkups, prescribe medications and do some surgery.
- A GP treats patients of all ages and both sexes.
- A GP is also commonly referred to as a family doctor.
- Not all GPs deliver babies.

Obstetrician/Gynecologist OB/Gyn

- This doctor specializes in women's reproductive health issues, medically and surgically.

Family Nurse Practitioner/FNP

- A family nurse practitioner is a registered nurse with an advanced education.
- An FNP can give physical exams, diagnose and treat common illnesses and injuries, order tests, manage stable chronic illnesses, provide health education and, in some states, prescribe medication.
- FNPs do not deliver babies.

Certified Nurse-Midwife/ CNM

- This medical professional has completed an educational program accredited by the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) and has passed a national certification examination.
- Midwives provide care to women during the prenatal period, labor, birth and postpartum, in addition to preventative gynecological care and family planning services under the supervision of an MD.
- Ninety-nine percent of nurse-midwives are women.

Your To-Do List

1. Ask your friends for recommendations.
2. Check with your county medical society. It can give you the names of local obstetricians and provide information about their individual practices.
3. Decide where you want to deliver. If you'll be giving birth in a hospital, the healthcare provider you choose must have privileges there. You may want to deliver at a free-standing birth center. Each facility will have a list of providers from which to choose.
4. Check to see what your insurance covers. Most insurance companies have a list of doctors or other providers.

Once you've made your choice, make an appointment for a consultation to decide whether you would be comfortable with that healthcare provider caring for you and your baby.

Questions to Ask

1. Do you have a solo or group practice?
2. In a group practice, will I always see you, or will I also see other healthcare providers in the practice?
3. If you're not available when I go into labor, who is your backup?
4. How long have you been in practice?
5. Do you have a preferred birthing method?
6. Do you have a lactation consultant on staff? Does the hospital?
7. What are your office hours?
8. Are you on-call after hours?
9. How often will I need to schedule my appointments?
How far in advance do I need to schedule them?
10. Can my partner or other family members join me during my office visits?
11. Can my family be present during labor and delivery?
12. What are your feelings on episiotomies?
13. What arrangements do you have if complications arise during the pregnancy, labor or delivery?
14. What are your feelings on Caesarean births?
15. What are your preferences about pain medications during labor?



Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Do you feel comfortable asking the questions you need to have answered?
2. Do you feel that your questions are answered completely in a way you understand?
3. Do you feel comfortable having this person examine you?