

Choosing a Doctor for Your Baby

Before you deliver your baby, you will need to choose a doctor for your baby. This doctor could be a family doctor or a pediatrician. A pediatrician is a doctor who is trained to care for children from birth to age 18. Ask your doctor, family and friends for advice on choosing a doctor for your baby. To find a list of doctors in your area, call a hospital referral line, use a phone book or talk to your insurance provider.

Make appointments to meet some doctors before choosing one for your baby. This will help you see each office where your baby may get care. Ask questions such as:

- What are the office hours? Can I call and speak to a doctor after office hours?
- If my child is sick, can he or she be seen that day?
- Do you accept my health insurance plan?
- How are payments made for care?
- Are you willing to accept my ideas of childcare?
- If there are other doctors in the practice, how does care work?

After you meet with each doctor, choose one that you feel will best care for your baby. Contact the doctor's office and tell them you have chosen their practice.

Your Baby's Care after Delivery

Your baby's doctor will visit your baby in the hospital. Your baby cannot go home until checked by your baby's doctor or a doctor in the hospital. You will be sent home with instructions to take to your baby's first well child check-up. Your baby will need to be checked by his or her doctor within a week of going home from the hospital.

At well child check-ups, your baby's doctor will check your child's growth and development and look for signs of illness. Your baby will be given vaccines. These not only keep your child healthy, they help protect all children from serious diseases. Well child check-ups will include:

- Checks of your baby's weight, height and head size.
- Asking questions about your baby's behavior.
- An exam of your baby.
- Teaching you about your baby's care, feeding, what to expect and when to make the next appointment.