

Albuquerque Homebirth

Some things to think about when choosing a healthcare provider...

Courtesy of Albuquerque Homebirth

www.albuquerquehomebirth.com

Before choosing a provider ask yourself the following...

What age doctor will you feel comfortable with?

Would you prefer a male or female physician?

Is it important for the doctor's office to be close to your home? Work?

Does your health insurance plan limit your choice of physicians?

Questions to ask when considering a pediatrician:

Credentials

Medical school training; postgraduate work;

Specialties (should include pediatrics);

Board certification? (Board of Pediatrics or other)

How many other states has the physician worked in and in what time frame?

Practice policies

After hours method of contact

How many doctors are associated with the practice?

Tip: More Doctors = less time spent seeing **your** doctor or the greater probability for a 'clinic' type environment.

Do they have an advice/help line?

Vacation/availability coverage

How are office visits scheduled? (Well-baby vs. sick-baby)

What are the fee payment expectations?

What medical insurances do they accept?

How can you contact the doctor during the day?

Do you actually get to talk to the doctor directly or do you speak to their nurse?

When hospitalization is necessary, how does the doctor decide what hospital to use? Does the doctor have admission privileges at one or more local hospitals?

How are emergency procedures handled?

What other members of the staff assist the doctor in caring for patients? What are their roles and qualifications?

Will the doctor be present at the birth? How long before the doctor sees the baby?

How long do they plan to continue at the current location?

What is their view on treatment of sick babies? Do they take a proactive approach or do they "let nature take its course" before actively treating the child?

Do they run a series of tests on the child's developmental status or rely on what the parents say?

How much time do they schedule for a well-baby checkup? (It should be at least half an hour to allow time to answer parents' questions)

Child rearing philosophy

- What would you suggest to get a baby to wean the child from a pacifier?
- What are your views on breastfeeding vs. bottle-feeding?
- Do they offer lactation support/counseling?
- Will the doctor see your child for preventative checkups?
- What are their views on circumcision?
- What are their views on vaccination? Is it all or nothing? Delayed schedule?
- What are their views on child development?
- What are the doctor's views about allowing babies to cry, disciplining children and dealing with sleeping problems?
- Is the doctor willing to help you with specific child-rearing problems?

After the interview:

Think about:

- Did the doctor match your personality and needs.
- Did she/he volunteer information or wait for questions?
- Did the doctor expect parents to be knowledgeable consumers or just accept anything she/he says?
- Were you feeling comfortable asking questions of them during the interview?
- Did the doctor respond favorably to all your questions?
- Did the answers make sense to you?
- Do you agree with the doctor's child-rearing philosophies?
- Is 24-hour access-to-care available?
- Is the physician directly available by phone?
- Was the doctor late or did he/she miss your interview appointment?

Ask the office staff:

- How many patients are seen per hour?
- How long do patients wait to see the doctor?
- What are the office hours? Are there Saturday hours?
- Designated phone hours to speak to the doctor? How does one get to speak to the doctor by phone?
- Can you speak to a nurse for routine information?
- Will your child have a primary care physician or do several doctors share patient care responsibilities?
- Is someone available to handle emergencies during evening and weekend hours?
- Do they have separate waiting areas or office hours for sick and well children?

Things to think about after talking to and observing the office staff:

- Listen to the office staff as they interact with both parents and children. Are they friendly and helpful? Did the doctor and the office staff answer questions similarly?