



## Choosing a Doctor for your Baby

**Choosing the right doctor for your baby is an important decision: You'll be visiting the doctor's office six times in the first year for routine well-baby visits alone!**

Your search for a health care provider should begin at least 3 months before your baby's due date. Babies often come early and you'll want to be sure you've found someone whose style and personality work with your own.

At Day Kimball Hospital, the pediatricians from the Pediatrics Center are on-call 24/7, so if you do not have a pediatrician established when you deliver, or if your provider doesn't see patients in the hospital, a doctor from the Pediatrics Center will take care of your newborn while you are staying in DKH.

Many parents take their baby to a *pediatrician*, a doctor who specializes in the care of children. Other parents prefer a *family practitioner*, a doctor specializing in family medicine who can treat the whole family, from birth to old age. A *pediatric nurse practitioner* (PNP) has earned a master's degree in nursing and is another good choice for some parents. (Some parents might hesitate to choose a PNP, possibly worrying that the PNP is less extensively trained in children's health care. These feelings are largely unwarranted. The presence of PNPs in the practice can have many advantages. Parents often find that PNPs spend more time with them than doctors discussing health and child care issues. Plus, if a PNP encounters a more complex medical problem, he or she is trained to consult the doctor.)

Any type of provider is fine, as long as you feel comfortable and confident about your child's care. You'll want to be sure that you're comfortable with the doctor's personality, office staff, location, and environment. You should also be sure that your parenting style matches your doctor's in the important issues. Philosophical issues might not seem important before the birth but if you consider that this doctor may see your child for years to come, agreement on larger issues becomes significant.

If you're in a managed health care plan, your choice of participating doctors who provide primary care for children may be limited, so be sure to check the plan's list.

Once you know the limits of your health plan, get recommendations from people you trust. Your doctor or nurse-midwife can also be a good source for recommendations. You also can request a list of board-certified pediatricians from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and board-certified family physicians from the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).