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Visiting With The Pediatrician - What To Expect

By Sarah Veda

In the first year of your baby's life, you will be visiting your pediatrician about every other month, for well check ups and immunizations. Here's a rundown of how those visits go, and approximately how often you'll need to visit.

Two week visit Some doctors schedule a visit earlier than two weeks, but most pediatricians begin at the two week mark. Your baby's weight, length and head circumference will be measured, and you can expect this at every well baby checkup during this first year. They will also do a general exam and check the baby's fontanel. One thing the doctor particularly interested in at this checkup is baby's weight gain. Your baby will typically lose some weight right after birth, so at this checkup the doctor will want to ensure that baby is gaining back the lost weight. They will also ask about eating habits, how often the baby is producing wet and dirty diapers, and about how the baby is sleeping.

One month visit This visit will be largely the same as the previous visit, focusing on baby's development, and on yours and baby's adjustment at home.

Two month visit Baby will be checked again, and immunizations will usually start at the two month mark. The first dose of the DPT - (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) vaccine is usually administered at this visit. For more information about when immunizations are administered, see the chapter on this subject.

>From this point on, you can expect well baby visits every other month, until your baby is a year old. There will routine physical exams, and questions about your baby's development. For the first year of life, the baby will receive immunizations at nearly every visit. These visits are not only important opportunities for the doctor to check on your baby's progress, but are also opportunities for you to ask questions and gain reassurance about how things are going, so take advantage. For instance, if you are concerned that your child has not reached a development milestone, these visits are a good time to discuss this with your doctor. Your doctor will also be looking for these development milestones, and will alert you if there is an issue. It's helpful to write your questions down as you think of them, so you don't forget.

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In addition, be sure to discuss your doctor's preferences on calling when your child is sick. For example, is there a 24 hour on-call nursing service for questions? Or, is the on call only for emergencies. Your relationship with your pediatrician is critical to maintaining your child's health and your peace of mind. Don't hesitate to ask questions, and call on your doctor as often as needed to ensure your comfort.

Sarah is a 41 year old wife and mother of two boys and one girl. She spent many years as a manager in the corporate world, and gave it up to be a stay at home mom. Go to

<http://www.infantresources.com>

now and get her incredible baby minicourse - absolutely free.

Finding A Pediatrician For Your Newborn

By Jacqueline Courtiol, M.A. Ed.

Congratulations, you're pregnant. As the count-down to the birth of your new child approaches, you should consider finding a pediatrician who will work the best with your soon to be expanding family. Having a pediatrician on-hand though the formative weeks and years of your child's life is in the best interests of both you and your child. Waiting until your child gets sick or needs a check-up is absolutely not the time to be going through the selection process, which can be stressful even when everything is going according to plan.

Beginning Your Search

There are several sources you can tap into to locate qualified pediatricians in your community.

* A good place to start is the "American Board of Pediatrics (ABP)". A pediatrician who is certified by them will have graduated from four years of medical school, received three years of resident training, and passed their written examination. They provide pediatrician search service on-line.

* Another source is the "American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)". They also provide a referral database of participating members.

* Certain health plans require you to choose a pediatrician from their approved network.

* You can also ask is your obstetrician. Obstetricians and pediatricians often interact to oversee the care of both mother and baby.

* Ask other moms in your neighborhood including friends, family or co-workers. They may be able to relate their personal experiences about specific individuals.

Vetting the Field

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You'll want to find a doctor who fits with your goals and expectations. It's usually best to first meet the candidates to assess their qualifications, personality, approach and experience before arriving at a decision. The kinds of questions you might consider asking your prospective pediatrician and other considerations include:

- * What type of pediatric qualifications do they have? Are they certified by the ABP and/or a member of the AAP?
- * If you are aware of certain health concerns in your family or with your pregnancy, you may want to ask about qualifications in pediatric subspecialty areas?
- * How can they be contacted after hours or during an emergency? Are they available by phone? Who covers for them when they are not available?
- * If you have minor questions what is the best time and method to reach them?
- * Does the pediatrician talk with and care about the children, and not just the parents?
- * Does the pediatrician seem to know about current issues and advances in pediatric medicine?
- * Does the pediatrician have "chemistry" with the children as well as the parents?
- * Does the pediatrician appear knowledgeable about current issues and advances in pediatric medicine?

In addition, you'll probably want to know about availability and cost of services. Areas of investigation include:

- * Office and Location - What are the office hours? What hospital is he/she affiliated with? Is the location conveniently close to your residence or work place?
- * Costs and insurance coverage - What are the costs of services? Do they work with your insurance plan? What services are covered and which ones are not? What are the co-pays and other billing practices?
- * What are the routine child-care check-ups? The AAP recommends checkups at one, two, four, six, nine, twelve, fifteen, and twenty-four months.

Finding the right pediatrician for your family can be a daunting challenge. However, there are several good sources that can help you in your quest. In most cases you'll have a choice about your child's doctor so try to find a doctor who is just right for you. Evaluate you'll health care provider based on the criteria that are most important to you and your family.

Jacqueline Courtiol, M.A. Ed. is a veteran teacher, mother and business owner. She is the founder of

<http://www.coliccalm.com>

a provider of natural homeopathic remedies for relief of infant colic and gas

and are recommended by pediatricians. More information can be found at

<http://coliccalm.com/gripe-water.htm>



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