

Outreach and Working With Your PEDIATRICIAN



“Studies show you get only about 15 minutes of face time with your pediatrician during an average well visit...”



Finding A Pediatrician

When trying to find local pediatricians, start by contacting:

- Parents you know and trust
- Your obstetrician
- Local hospitals
- Medical schools
- County medical society

If you are pregnant, you will want to start your search for a pediatrician during the final months of your pregnancy because your child's first visit to their pediatrician outside of the hospital typically occurs a few days after being discharged.



How To Choose a Pediatrician

- Pediatricians have special training in the health and illnesses of children from birth through age 21.
- Many are certified by the American Board of Pediatrics after passing a comprehensive examination covering all areas of health related to:
 - Infants
 - Children
 - Young Adults



Interviewing Pediatricians

- Once you have the names of several pediatricians you are considering, start by conducting interviews with them. This can be done by telephone or in person.
- Explain that you are looking for a pediatrician for your child.
- Ask about the pediatrician's background and training, as well as general office procedures.



Interviewing Pediatricians

Questions to keep in mind:

- What medical school did the pediatrician attend, and where did he or she undergo postgraduate and residency training?
 - Medical directories in many public libraries, such as the Directory of Medical Specialists and the American Medical Directory, can also help answer these questions.
- What are the pediatrician's present hospital affiliations? If it becomes necessary for your child to be hospitalized, where would he or she be admitted?
- Is the pediatrician's office conveniently located? Is it easily accessible by car or public transportation?
- Are the office hours convenient for your own schedule? If you are a working parent, you may desire evening or weekend hours.



How To Choose a Pediatrician

- When choosing a pediatrician it is important that the initials "FAAP" are after his or her name (eg. Sarah H. Jones, MD, FAAP) so that your child gets the best and most up-to-date care possible.
- FAAPs are:
 - Members (fellows) of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).
 - Board certified in Pediatrics.
 - Committed to lifelong learning.
 - Advocates for children and families.
 - Up to date on the latest in child health.



Interviewing Pediatricians



- What is the pediatrician's policy on taking and returning phone calls? Is there a nurse in the office who can answer routine questions?
- Is the pediatrician in a group practice with other physicians? Does another physician cover for the pediatrician at times? Who handles phone calls when the office is closed or during vacations?
- Do you sense a genuine interest by the pediatrician in the problems of your child, including particular health disorders he or she may have?



Interviewing Pediatricians

- Do both the pediatrician and the office staff appear amicable and courteous? Do they demonstrate compassion and patience? Or do you feel rushed in the office, as though the pediatrician is eager to move on to the next patient?
- How are visits for acute illnesses handled? Can you make an appointment on short notice if your child needs to see the pediatrician because of a sore throat, cold, or a potential ear infection, for example?
- Does the pediatrician communicate clearly to explain illnesses and treatments, and do they make an effort to ensure that all of your questions are answered?



Interviewing Pediatricians

- In what managed-care programs does the pediatrician participate? What is the office policy regarding the processing of insurance forms?
- What will be the fees you will be responsible for when seeing the pediatrician for sick visits, routine examinations, etc.?
- If your child ever develops a complex illness that requires the care of one or more specialists, will your pediatrician coordinate care among all the doctors providing treatment?



Contacting A Pediatrician

There are multiple ways to contact a pediatrician, including:

- Walk-ins
- Appointments
- Phone/ Fax
- E-Mail
- Submitting a question or form through the office's website



Appointments

You can discuss any questions or concerns you may have with your pediatrician during scheduled appointments.

To schedule an appointment:

- Go to the office and set up an appointment in person
- Call the office and ask to set up an urgent or routine care visit
- Some offices may allow you to set up or request an appointment online through their website



Phone/ Fax

- Most pediatricians can be reached by phone. Call the pediatrician's office and leave a message for your provider if they are unable to take your call at that time.
- If you wish to speak to the pediatrician directly, your best chance of reaching them will be to call during office hours.
- If you need to speak to an on-call pediatrician after office hours, most offices will provide a number for you on their answering service.
- Most offices will provide you with a fax number allowing you to fax documents when necessary.



E-Mail

- If you have non-urgent questions, meaning you DO NOT need a response within 24 hours, you can often times e-mail your pediatrician.
- They will most likely respond via e-mail or by phone.



Website: Questions, Forms and Care Summaries

● Questions and Forms

- Some offices will allow you to submit questions or forms for your pediatrician through their website. Your pediatrician will get back to you with an answer, most likely through your e-mail.

● Online Care Summary

- If your pediatrician's office offers it, you can log in to your account through their website and view:
 - Upcoming appointments
 - Summaries of your child's past visits
 - Your child's medical history, including vaccinations
 - Paid and outstanding bills



During an Appointment

With all of the information exchanged during an appointment, it may be difficult to remember everything the pediatrician discusses with you, as well as all of the questions you want to ask your pediatrician.

Tips:

- Don't choose a pediatrician solely based on good reviews. Choose a pediatrician you trust and can talk openly with.
- Arrive at each appointment prepared.
 - Be prepared to discuss any medications your child is currently taking (names and doses).
 - Write down any questions you want to ask your pediatrician before arriving at the appointment.
- Take notes during the visit (diagnosis, medications prescribed, immunizations received, etc.).



How To Bring Up Concerns To A Pediatrician

- Do not be intimidated by your pediatrician. You know your child better than anyone.
- If you have concerns regarding your child or feel that something isn't right, make sure you discuss it with your pediatrician.
- Even if you must voice your concerns a few times, don't let something go if you truly believe there is a problem. Physicians have many patients throughout the day. They may be listening to you, but may not completely hear you.
- Do not be afraid to schedule another appointment if you feel that you need more time to discuss concerns with your pediatrician.



How To Bring Up Concerns To A Pediatrician

DO:

- Do learn developmental milestones. If your child is not reaching these milestones in the appropriate amount of time, discuss it with your pediatrician. Often if your child is delayed in an area, there are services that your pediatrician can help you get in contact with (e.g. Infants and Toddlers and Child Find)
- Do be realistic. Your pediatrician is not a miracle worker. Sometimes a “wait and see” method is really the best option.
- Do be sure that you understand all instructions before leaving the doctor’s office, especially when medications are prescribed.



How To Bring Up Concerns To A Pediatrician

DO:

- Do get a second opinion if your pediatrician does not seem concerned, but you still are.
- Do be specific. By letting your pediatrician know specific symptoms and how long they lasted, the pediatrician will be more able to assess your child's condition.



How To Bring Up Concerns To A Pediatrician

DON'T:

- Don't come to appointments unprepared.
 - Know the names of the medications your child is currently taking, the child's specific symptoms, medications that your child is allergic to, etc. so your pediatrician can assist you to the best of their ability.
 - Come to appointments with a list of questions and concerns so you can use your time with the pediatrician effectively.
- Don't overwhelm your pediatrician. The internet is a valuable tool, but do not approach your pediatrician with several articles you found expecting them to read and comment on each one.



How To Bring Up Concerns To A Pediatrician

DON'T:

- Don't abuse communication with your pediatrician. If there is a medical emergency or real concern, by all means contact your pediatrician. However, if it is a question that can wait until your next visit, it is best to hold off or send a non-urgent e-mail.
- Don't forget that your pediatrician is human. It is rare, but they make mistakes too.



When to Call Your Pediatrician: Routine Care

You should always feel free to call your pediatrician's office, even if it is for routine things such as:

- Medications
- Minor illnesses
- Injuries
- Behavior
- Parenting advice

Keep in mind that your pediatrician may not be able to answer your questions or prescribe medications without first seeing your child.



When to Call Your Pediatrician: Urgent Care

If your child has any of the following, call your pediatrician to figure out your next steps:

- Vomiting and diarrhea that last for more than a few hours
- Rash, especially if it is paired with a fever
- Any cough or cold that does not get better in several days, or a cold that gets worse and is accompanied by a fever
- Cuts that might require stitches
- Limping or is not able to move an arm or leg
- Ear pain with fever, is unable to sleep or drink, is vomiting, has diarrhea, or is acting ill



When to Call Your Pediatrician: Urgent Care

- Drainage from an ear
- Severe sore throat or problems swallowing
- Sharp or persistent pains in the abdomen or stomach
- Pain that gets worse or does not go away after several hours
- A rectal temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher in a baby younger than 2 months
- Fever and repeated vomiting at the same time
- Blood in the urine
- Bloody diarrhea or diarrhea that will not go away
- Not drinking for more than 12 hours



Tips When Calling a Pediatrician

Be prepared to provide information about your child's health.

- **Fever**

- Take your child's temperature before you call, write it down and the time that it was taken.

- **Medical problems**

- Remind the pediatrician about past medical problems.

- **Medications**

- Be sure to mention if your child is taking any medications, as well as if your child is allergic to any medications.

- **Immunizations**

- Keep immunization records at hand.

- **Pharmacy**

- Have the phone number and location of your pharmacy ready.



Emergency Calls

Call 911 for any severely ill or injured child or if your infant or child has any of the following:

- Bleeding that does not stop with direct pressure over the wound
- Suspected poisoning (Call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.)
- Seizures (rhythmic jerking and loss of consciousness)
- Trouble breathing
- Skin or lips that look blue, purple, or gray



Emergency Calls

- Neck stiffness or rash with fever
- Head injury with loss of consciousness, confusion, vomiting, or poor skin color
- Sudden lack of energy or is not able to move
- Unconsciousness or lack of response
- Acting strangely or becoming more withdrawn and less alert
- A cut or burn that is large, deep, or involves the head, chest, abdomen, hands, groin, or face



Your Child's Medical Home: What You Need to Know

A medical home is the kind of care we all want and deserve – it is the way your child's pediatric healthcare team approaches providing care for your child.



A Medical Home Means:

- Your pediatric team
 - Knows your child's health history
 - Listens to your concerns and needs, as well as your child's
 - Works in partnership with you to make sure that the medical and non-medical needs of your child and family are met
 - Creates a trusting, collaborative relationship with you and your child
 - Treats your child with compassion and an understanding of his/her strengths
 - Develops a care plan with you and your child when needed
 - Respects and honors your culture and traditions



A Medical Home Means:

- You and your child
 - Are comfortable sharing concerns and questions with your pediatric team and other health care providers
 - Routinely communicate your child's needs and family priorities to your pediatric team who promote communication and coordination between your family and other health care providers, as well as educational and community services when necessary



Keeping Up With Visits

- From your child's birth to young adulthood, you'll be visiting the doctor regularly to make sure that your son or daughter is healthy and developing well.
- It can be tough to remember what each visit will entail or which topics you want to discuss with the doctor.
 - Newborn, 3-5 Days
 - 1 Month, 2 Months, 4 Months, 6 Months
 - 9 Months, 1 Year (12 Months)
 - 15 Months, 1.5 Years (18 Months)
 - 2 Years (24 Months), 2.5 Years (30 Months)
 - Yearly between 3-21 Years



Healthychildren.org – A Resource from the American Academy of Pediatrics

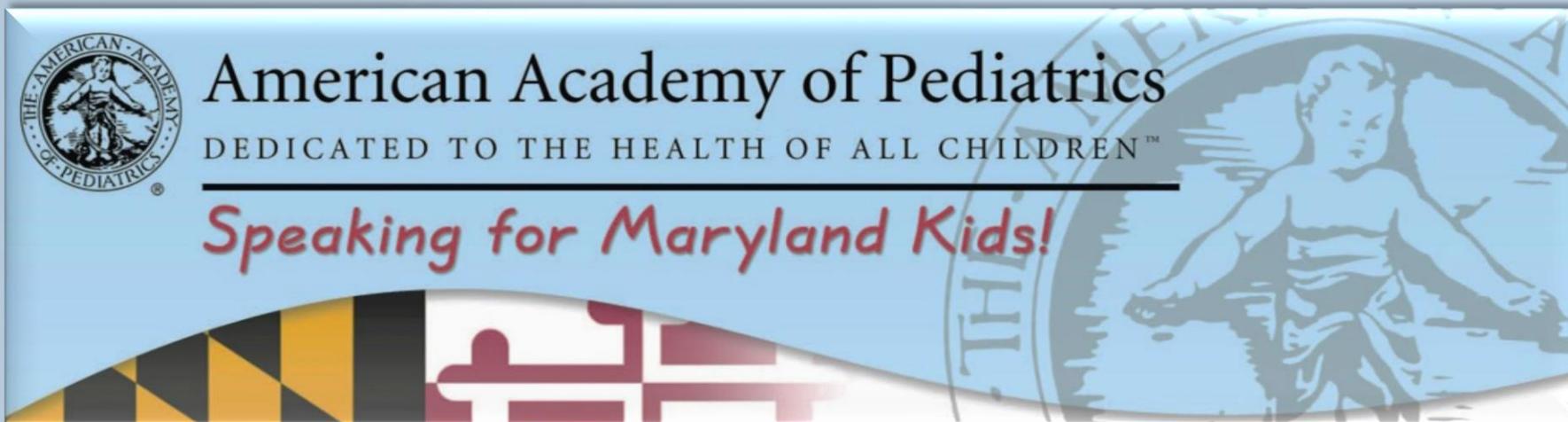
● How To Find A Pediatrician

- On healthychildren.org there is a section titled, “Find a Pediatrician”. You can enter your zip code in the box and click “Go”, which you will then be directed to pediatricians in your area.

● How To Contact A Pediatrician

- On healthychildren.org there is an “Ask the Pediatrician” quick link. Once clicked, you will be directed to an array of questions. You can simply click a question and get an immediate answer, along with additional information on the topic. If you cannot find your question, you can click “Ask Question” where once you are logged in, you can ask the pediatrician your specific question.





Thank You - Questions?

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