

Picking a new primary care doctor

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(HealthDay)—There are times in life when you need to pick a new doctor, or primary care provider.

A primary care provider is your health gatekeeper, offering wellness visits, evaluating problems and suggesting specialists when necessary.

There are different types of providers to choose from, such as internists; family practitioners who care for adults as well as children; and, for women, ob-gyns or obstetrician-gynecologists. Board-certification in one of these areas indicates a high level of training.

These tips from the U.S. National Library of Medicine will help you find the right professional for you.

First, put together a list of prospects from many sources. Start with your health insurance provider to know who's in your network. Ask relatives and others you trust—for example, your dentist or eye doctor—then do a web search through your state medical association and national nonprofit [health organizations](#).

You want to select someone you'll feel comfortable with because, ideally, he or she will be involved in your care for a long time. You might request an office or phone interview to get to know a potential provider. Considerations can range from bedside manner, treatment style and a focus on prevention, to location and convenient office hours.

Create a list of what's most important to you:

- Do you want a bedside manner that's friendly or formal?
- Should the doctor's focus be on prevention or helping you manage a chronic condition?
- Do you prefer an approach to treatment that's conservative or aggressive?
- Do you want to be an active partner in the patient-doctor relationship?
- Would you like the doctor to be easy to reach and communicate

with via email?

Your answers to these questions will help you find the right health care match.

Bonus tip: Should you have a non-life-threatening [health](#) problem before you find a new [health care provider](#), locate the nearest urgent care center. This type of facility can save time and money compared to a traditional emergency room.

More information: Consumer Reports, the watchdog group, has more suggestions to help you find the [right doctors](#) for you and your family.

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