



TIPS

from the Consumer Health Action Network

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Dealing with Doctors

How to Find a Doctor

Decide what you want and need. Think about what you liked or disliked about past doctors or nurses – personality, gender or age. Do you want a doctor who makes decisions for you or who gives you your options?

If you have a family, **you might consider a family doctor** as a one-stop shop for everyone.

Check if the doctor is “board certified” You can check if your doctor passed these exams at www.abms.org. Steer clear of those that are “board eligible” because this means they have not passed the exam.

Look for malpractice lawsuits. You can check any CT doctor’s history on a state website, at www.physicians.dph.state.ct.us/web_public/web_public_search.show

Interview your finalists. Go with a few questions, and pay attention to how the doctor answers them. Follow your instincts by considering your comfort level and if you feel a connection with the doctor. Do you think you could share sensitive information with him/her?

Also...

- ✓ If you work all week, try finding a doctor that works some weekends or one located half-way between home and work.
- ✓ Make sure that wait times are consistently under 30 minutes long.
- ✓ Check that appointments are consistently available within one week of when you need them

Questions to Ask Your New Doctor

In addition to other information you may want, you should ask these questions to see how courteously and promptly you will be treated.

Does the office take your insurance?

Can I get a copy of your office policy? This should cover hours they are open to prescription refills.

Can I send you questions via e-mail? Easy way to address simple concerns.

What's your cancellation policy? A strict policy is a good sign. They stick to the schedule.

Do you have drop-in hours? Some offices, especially pediatricians, have two-hour windows in which you can visit without an appointment.

Tip: Before signing on with a new doctor, check his credentials through an accredited site, like the American Medical Association's DoctorFinder (www.ama-assn.org).

If you aren't getting the care you need...

If you feel that your doctor has behaved inappropriately or unprofessionally, you should speak up.

Discuss the issue with another doctor in the same practice and ask for her opinion. Some hospitals and private practices have specific procedures for dealing with patient grievances.

If that does not help, **contact the Connecticut Medical Examining Board** (860-509-7648) for information on how to file a complaint.

Find a new doctor. Your new doctor can get your records from the old doctor's office.