

**Creative Care Partners**

**Interviewing your pediatrition**

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

[mommedicine.blogspot.com](http://getpocket.com/redirect?url=http%3A%2F%2Fmommedicine.blogspot.com%2F2012%2F03%2Fpreparing-for-perfect-pediatrician.html" \t "_blank)

**1) What insurance do you take?  
Of course, this is only important if you're using insurance. I know several families now that have health insurance for emergencies, but pay for general health maintenance out of their own pockets. This reduces their overall medical expenses (because they have a cheap insurance plan, only for emergencies), and allows them to see whatever doctor they like. These families usually use free clinics for vaccinations, or pay out of pocket. This only works if your family is healthy. If you choose the latter option, ask about visit prices instead.**

**2) What hours is the office open for well visits? For sick visits? When is your chosen primary pediatrician actually in the office during the week?  
Keep in mind that the smaller the office, the less hours they are usually open. So if you want to do well visits at night or on weekends, you will probably have to go with a very large practice, and may be seeing a different doctor (or nurse practitioner) each time.**

**3) Who covers for your physician when they are not in the office, not on call at night, or they are on vacation?  
For night call, is the person on the phone a physician from your practice, a physician from another practice, or a physician extender (NP or PA) or nurse?**

**4) Do you use electronic medical records?  
These can reduce errors, and allow the physician on call (if they are a doctor from the same practice) to access your chart at night and on weekends, if needed.**

**5) Can I always get a same day sick visit appointment?**

**6) Who answers regular questions by phone during the day? What I mean by this one is, does your pediatrician call you back if it is not urgent? Does a nurse handle most questions about illnesses on the phone? Does another physician answer the phone when your physician is not available?**

**7) Are there any physician extenders (nurse practitioners or physician assistants)? Are they the ones to see you for same-day sick visits or phone calls, or will your physician or their partner see you?**

**8) Are there separate sick and well waiting rooms? Are there separate sick and well exam rooms?  
This reduces the chance of your baby being exposed to a virus**

**9) What is your vaccine policy?  
If the physician allows un-vaccinated children in their practice, consider that your baby (who is too young to be vaccinated for certain diseases) may be exposed to somebody in the waiting room with measles, chicken pox, etc...**

**10) How often do you see the baby for child for regular check-ups?  
This can actually vary quite a bit between pediatricians for the first 3 years of a child's life. After that, your child is seen for an annual well check every year.**

**11) Do you have a website? Do you use email to communicate with patients?**

**12) What hospitals do you cover? Will your chosen primary physician be the one to see your baby everyday in the hospital (when they are born and if they are admitted later) or will one of the covering physicians see them?**

**13) What kind of parenting resources can you offer?**

**14) Where is the best place to park or closest public transportation stop?  
I have found (at least in big cities, such as LA and NY), that the best place to park for my doctor appointments is often somewhere other than the valet parking in the medical building. The website or administrative assistants at your pediatrician office should be able to tell you the best (free) place to work, as well as help you get there by public transportation, if that's your preferred mode of transport.**

# Preparing for a Perfect Pediatrician Experience

# 1) Prepare your children in advance by reading books about going to the doctor, so they know what to expect. This is especially important for toddlers, who are old enough to remember prior visits involving shots, but is also good for babies and older children. Try to do this far in advance of any appointment, such as having a regular bedtime story about visiting the doctor, so your child considers it a regular thing. If your child loves a certain character, e.g. Elmo or Dora, read them a book involving that character’s visit to the doctor. Otherwise, I recommend books like the Usborne First Experiences series. I pinned links to these books (and others) on my pinterest boards (<http://pinterest.com/motek42/>).

**2) Get a doctor play set and have your child practice using the stethoscope, otoscope (ear light), and other tools on their family members and stuffed animals.**

**3) If your child has a “luvvy” (special blanket or toy to make them feel comfortable), be sure to bring it with you to the visit, even if they only use it in bed at home. This will help comfort them.**

**4) For young children, bring a doll, so the physician can check the doll first, lessening the fear the child may have about the medical tools. You can also have the doctor check mommy or daddy first, but in my experience children are comforted more by having their doll checked then their parents.**

**5) Bring snacks and drinks. You never know if you will have to wait a while for the doctor to see you, or just sit and wait for a test result. Sugar has been found to be a natural pain reliever in babies, and I find that breast milk or formula for babies, juice or a lollipop for toddlers, calms them down faster than anything else after shots. One caveat- do not let them eat/drink during the visit, especially if they will have their throat checked, as the food pieces can get in the way of the doctor having a good look, and can interfere with tests, like the one for strep throat.**

**6) Bring diapers, wipes and baggies for soiled items (these are good things to have in your bag at all times, prior to potty training). You can not rely on your pediatrician having the size or brand of diapers your child uses on hand. Wipes come in handy for many things, not just cleaning little butts, and the pediatrician visit often brings out the snot, spit-up, and other fun stuff. Help the next patient have a more pleasant experience by placing any soiled items in a sealed bag, so the room does not smell bad. An extra baggy also comes in handy for soiled clothes and toys.**

**7) Dress your child appropriately, and bring a blanket. Clothes that are easiest to remove or lift-up are best. No need to go with anything fancy. You should also bring a small blanket to cover your baby, since they will likely have their clothes removed for vitals signs (measuring) by the nurse, and you don’t put them back on until after the physician has checked your child. If you have an older child, at least have them remove any jackets and tight or complicated clothing.**

**8) Bring ANY MEDICATION you have given your child, even if your doctor prescribed it, it is herbal, or over-the-counter. This is the best way to avoid diagnosis and medication errors.**

**9) Entertainment. Quiet books, reusable stickers, or even movies on your phone are a good way to keep children quiet while waiting for the physician or nurse. These can also be good tools for calming children down if they get upset.**

**10) Don’t forget a list of questions to ask the doctor, so you make sure to get the most out of your visit. You may also want a paper and pen to write down any diagnoses or instructions, so you don’t forget how much ibuprofen you’re supposed to give when your toddler wakes up screaming at 3am. If your doctor has not brought it up, you may want to ask them what do if your child worsens, and when to return.**

**12) When possible, try to schedule your visits for the first time slot of any shift, so that you can avoid a possible wait if the office gets backed up. You should also try to schedule visits for the middle of the week, or early afternoon, as Mondays, Fridays, weekends, and evenings tend to be the busiest times in the office. Alternatively, you may want to try the last appointment of the day. This will have the greatest chance of having to wait, but then neither you nor the physician feels rushed.**

**13) Give yourself an extra 15 to 30 minutes to get to the appointment, find parking (or deal with public transportation delays), and complete any forms.**

**14) Finally, try to relax! When you have a positive attitude, your child will feel better too J**