

Finding the Right Doctor

Finding the right doctor is very important, and establishing a good relationship with your doctor is one of the most important relationships you can have. Some ideas on finding a physician with whom you will be happy are:

- Use our online PPO directory. Our PPO networks ensure quality and safety because you will know that the doctor is credentialed every two or three years so that they meet certain standards set by the state, industry organizations, or PPO networks; and that the doctor has not been subject to disciplinary actions. PPO doctors discount their rates, and the Health Plan pays a higher percentage of the cost. You can specify your preferences, such as gender or languages spoken other than English. You can also see doctors who live close to you, and find a map to get to their office.
- Ask other doctors, friends, and coworkers for recommendations. If they suggest a particular physician, ask why they recommend them. Get several names.
- You may wish to find a doctor who is board certified. A doctor with board certification has met standards within his or her field in an area of specialty, such as Internal Medicine, and is issued the award by a professional association. You can find out if a doctor is board certified by calling The American Board of Medical Specialties, the umbrella organization for board certification, at 1-866/275-2267.
- Call the doctor's office and ask questions. How long will it take to get an appointment, what is the average time you will have to wait, does the doctor work with a group of other doctors? Who are they and what are their specialties? Who will cover for the doctor if he or she is not available?
- Check out how well the doctor communicates with you when you make a visit. This is the time to see if the doctor listens to you, welcomes your questions, shows respect for you, and gives answers you understand.

Once you have made a choice, you will want to establish good communications and a good partnership with your doctor. This is one of the most important relationships you can have and establishing a relationship of good communications will benefit you over many years.

Sources: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), National Institutes of Health