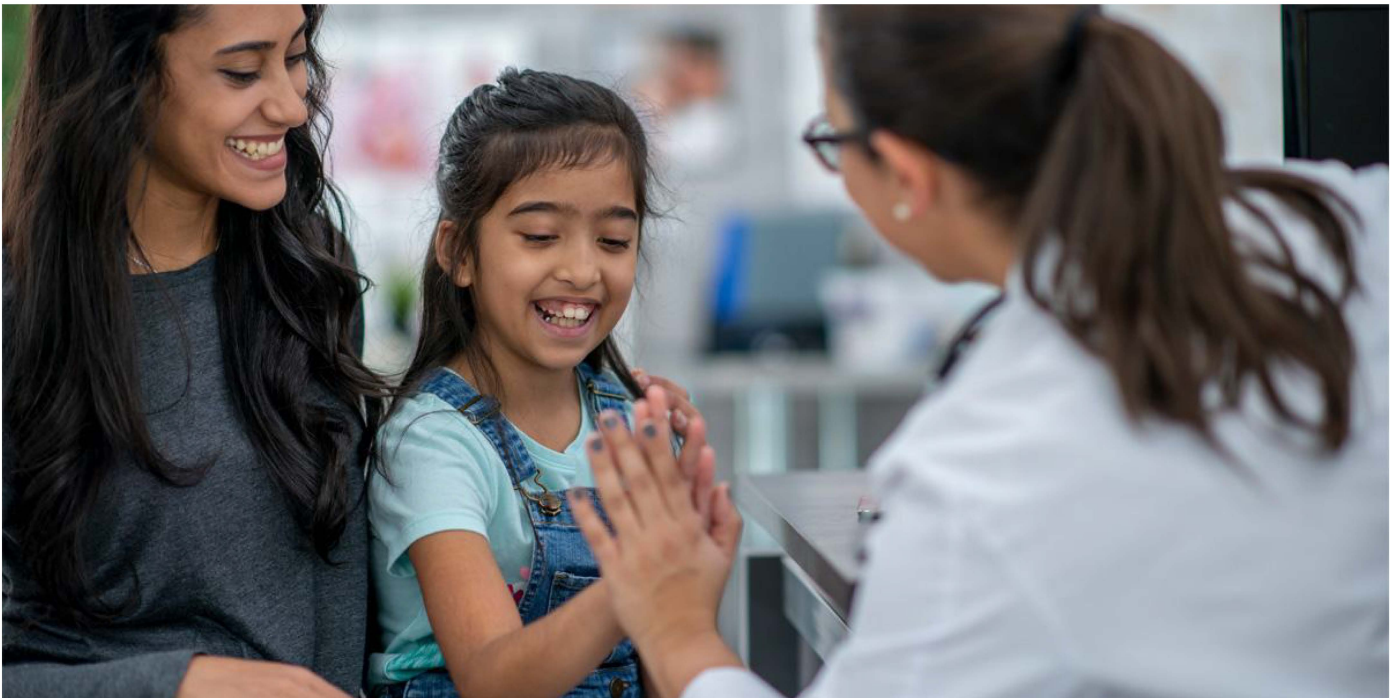


Health & Wellness

# Important Questions to Ask a New Family Doctor

*When first meeting a new family doctor, consider asking several questions to help establish a healthy relationship and strong foundation for your care.*



Establishing a new healthcare home and physician relationship is an important step to maintaining your good health and that of your loved ones. Building solid lines of communication can start this new partnership off on the right foot, and benefit your future health. To make the most of your appointments and ensure that you're receiving the best

care possible, we've gathered a few questions you may consider asking when you meet a new family doctor.

## Questions for your care provider:

**1. What's Your Background and Experience?** Understanding your doctor's background and experience can help you feel more comfortable and confident in their abilities. Ask about his or her medical education, training, and years in practice. Inquire if they have any specialized areas of expertise that might be relevant to your family's health needs.

**2. What Services Do You Offer?** Inquire about the range of services offered at the clinic. Does the doctor provide preventive care, chronic disease management, vaccinations, or urgent care services? This will help you gauge whether the doctor is well-equipped to address your unique needs.

**3. How Do You Handle After-Hours and Emergency Care?** Emergencies and health concerns can arise at any time. Ask your doctor about their policy for after-hours care, weekend availability, and how they handle emergencies. Knowing this information in advance can provide you with peace of mind when unexpected situations occur.

**4. What's Your Approach to Preventive Care?** Prevention is a key aspect of maintaining good health. Ask your doctor about their approach to preventive care, including screenings, vaccinations, and lifestyle recommendations. A doctor who values preventive measures can help you and your family stay healthy in the long run.

**5. How Do You Communicate with Patients?** Clear communication is essential for a successful doctor-patient relationship. Ask your doctor how they prefer to communicate with patients – whether through in-person or virtual appointments, phone calls, emails, or a patient portal. Understanding their communication style can help you stay informed about your health.

**6. What's Your Philosophy on Medications?** It's important to understand how your doctor approaches medications. Ask about their philosophy on prescribing medications, potential side effects, and any alternatives or complementary treatments they might recommend.

**7. How Do You Involve Patients in Decision-Making?** A collaborative approach to healthcare decision-making can make you feel more involved and empowered. Ask your doctor about how they involve patients in treatment decisions, share information, and discuss treatment options.

**8. Do You Coordinate Care with Specialists?** If you or your family members require specialized care, it's crucial for your family doctor to be able to coordinate with other specialists. Inquire about their experience in working with specialists and how they ensure that all aspects of your healthcare are well-integrated.

**9. What's Your Approach to Mental Health?** Mental health is just as important as physical health. Ask your doctor about their approach to addressing mental health concerns, whether they can provide support directly or through referrals to mental health professionals when needed.

**10. How Can I Prepare for Appointments?** To make the most of your appointments, ask your doctor how you can prepare. They might suggest bringing a list of questions, tracking

symptoms, or providing a medical history. Being proactive about your health can lead to more productive visits.

Remember, open communication and a strong doctor-patient relationship are essential for effective healthcare. Don't hesitate to ask these questions or any others that come to mind during your appointment. Your family's health and well-being are worth the effort of finding a doctor who meets your needs and preferences.