

Choosing a Doctor

It is important to choose your doctor with care, because quality varies. For example, the Pacific Business Group on Health asked patients of California doctors' groups how they rated their care. The results? More than 80 percent of the patients said they were satisfied with their care. But fewer than two-thirds were happy with the ease of getting that care.

This checklist can help you choose a primary care doctor who will meet your needs and give you quality care. The information also may be useful in choosing any specialists you might need. Primary care doctors are specially trained to serve as your main doctor over the long term. They provide your medical and health care, help you stay healthy, and help to manage your care. Your primary care doctor can refer you to specialists (doctors who treat only certain parts of the body, conditions, or age groups) if you need them.

Here is a checklist of things to consider as you are choosing the best doctor for you and your family:

- Is this doctor rated highly by state and consumer groups?
- Does this doctor have the training and background to meet my needs?
- Does the doctor have privileges (permission to admit patients) at the hospital of my choice?
- Is this doctor part of my health plan? (Unless you can afford to pay extra)
- Does this doctor encourage you to ask questions?
- Does the doctor take the time to explain things clearly?
- Do you feel like this doctor listens to you?
- Are you treated with respect by the doctor and his/her staff?
- Does the doctor take steps to prevent illness? (e.g. talks to you about quitting smoking)

Names and phone/e-mail information for individuals/groups you might want to contact for recommendations or with questions:

Name:	Phone/e-mail:
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

NOTES:

1-866-VISTACARE (847-8222)
www.VistaCare.com

