

Your Provider Interview Checklist

Picking a provider is a big choice. Asking questions can help you find someone who is a good fit for you and your baby.

There are no silly questions. A good provider will be glad you asked.

1 Before your visit

Read through this list and mark the questions that matter most to you. You don't need to ask all of them. Pick the ones that fit your needs, your health, and the kind of birth you want. Add any questions of your own that come to mind.

2 During your visit

Bring your list with you. It's okay to read from it and take notes. Check off each question as you talk about it. If you run out of time, ask when you can finish talking, or save your questions for your next visit.

3 After your visit

Think about how the provider answered, not just what they said. Did they listen? Did they explain things in a way you understood? Did you feel rushed, or did you feel heard? How you felt during the visit is just as important as the answers you got.

1 Cost and insurance

- ☐ Do you take my insurance?
- ☐ What will my care cost, and what might I have to pay myself?
- ☐ Does my insurance cover the hospital or birth center you use?

2 Where you'll give birth

- ☐ Where do you attend births: hospitals, birth centers, homes, or more than one?
- ☐ Which hospitals or birth centers do you work with?
- ☐ If I plan to give birth at home or at a birth center, what happens if I need to go to the hospital?
- ☐ What happens if my baby needs extra care after birth? Does your hospital have a NICU (a special unit for newborns)?

3 Your experience

- ☐ How long have you been helping people give birth?
- ☐ How many births do you help with each month?
- ☐ Have you cared for people with health needs like mine?

4 How you give care

- ☐ How would you describe the way you think about birth?
- ☐ How do you include me in choices about my care?
- ☐ What happens if I want something different from what you usually suggest?
- ☐ Will you help me make a birth plan, and will you read it?
- ☐ What tests do you suggest during pregnancy, and can I say no to any of them?

5 Visits and staying in touch

- ☐ How long are regular visits?
- ☐ Will I see the same provider at every visit?
- ☐ Who can I call with questions between visits, including nights and weekends?

6 Your birth team

- ☐ Who can be in the room when I give birth?
- ☐ Who will attend my birth if you can't be there?
- ☐ Will I meet the other providers in your practice before my baby is born?
- ☐ When do you usually come in during labor?
- ☐ Are students or trainees part of my care, and can I say no?

7 Labor

- ☐ Can I move around during labor and pick the position I want when I push?
- ☐ Can I eat and drink during labor?
- ☐ Will I need an IV (a small tube in my arm for fluids or medicine)?
- ☐ How will you check (or monitor) my baby's heartbeat during labor?
- ☐ How do you do cervical exams and can I say no to them?
- ☐ Are there limits on how long I can be in labor?

8 Due dates and starting labor

- ☐ What happens if I go past my due date?
- ☐ How far past my due date can I go?
- ☐ When do you suggest using medicine or other methods to start labor (called induction)?
- ☐ What happens if my baby is breech (bottom or feet first)?

9 Pain relief

- ☐ Do you support birth without pain medicine?
- ☐ What kinds of pain relief can I get, like an epidural?
- ☐ Can I use a tub or shower during labor? Are water births an option?

10 Procedures and C-sections

- ☐ How often do your patients have C-sections? How does that compare to your hospital?
- ☐ What is your hospital's NTSV C-section rate?
- ☐ How often do you make a cut to widen the opening for the baby (called an episiotomy)?
- ☐ When do you use tools like a vacuum or forceps to help the baby come out?
- ☐ If I need a C-section, can my support person be with me, and can I hold my baby right away?

11 Right after birth

- ☐ Can I hold my baby skin-to-skin right after birth?
- ☐ Do you wait before cutting the cord?
- ☐ What care will my baby get right after birth, like shots or eye medicine? Can I make choices about it?
- ☐ Can my baby stay in my room with me?

12 After birth

- ☐ How long will you stay after a home or birth center birth? How long is the usual hospital stay?
- ☐ When will my check-ups after birth be?
- ☐ What help can I get with breastfeeding or other ways of feeding my baby?
- ☐ Who do I call if something feels wrong after birth?
- ☐ How do you screen for and address postpartum depression and anxiety?
- ☐ Can you help me with birth control after my baby is born?

13 Respect and fair treatment

- ☐ Have you cared for families from my culture or race?
- ☐ Have you cared for LGBTQ+ parents and families?
- ☐ What does your practice do to spot and stop bias and unfair treatment?
- ☐ Can I bring a support person or advocate to visits and procedures?
- ☐ Do you have free interpreters who speak my language?
- ☐ How can your office meet my needs if I have a disability?
- ☐ What can I do if I feel I'm not being heard or treated fairly?

14 VBAC (vaginal birth after a C-section)

- ☐ Do you and your hospital support TOLAC (trying for a vaginal birth after a C-section)? Are there any rules about who can try?
- ☐ Does everyone in your practice, including whoever is on call, support TOLAC?
- ☐ How many TOLAC births have you helped with, and how many ended in a vaginal birth?
- ☐ Could any of these rules change later in my pregnancy?
- ☐ What choices will I have for moving, pain relief, and labor positions?
- ☐ How will you check on my baby during labor, and why?
- ☐ If I plan another C-section, how can I make the birth feel more like my own?

My own questions

This checklist is for education only and is not a substitute for medical advice.

Read more: birthx.org/blog/choosing-your-maternal-hcp