

CHOOSING A care provider

The care provider you have during your pregnancy and birth will affect the quality of the care you receive, the information you get, and your options to experience the birth that fits you and your family. You do not have to stay with any provider who doesn't listen to, respect, or support your questions and wishes. Here's an intro to the types of care providers you can choose from:

OBGYN

Obstetrician/Gynecologists, or OBGYNs, are doctors who studied to care for people before, during, and after birth. The medical model of care tends to approach birth on guard for complications, involve more restrictive monitoring, and lean on medical interventions when labor doesn't follow an expected timeline or process. With this training though, OBGYN care is best for a high-risk pregnancy and birth.

Family Physician

Family physicians are doctors trained to take care of the medical needs of whole families; some have more training to care for people before, during, and after birth. Because they care for families, they have often known their patients a long time and have positive, trusting relationships with them. They are equipped to handle low-risk pregnancy and birth.

Nurse Midwife

Nurse Midwives, or Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM), are registered nurses with more training in midwifery. They often work with low-risk pregnancies and births, and have an OBGYN to help them if needed. Though medically trained, they tend to see birth as a natural process that will take its course.

Professional Midwife

Certified Midwives (CM), and Certified Professional Midwives (CPM) are trained and educated health care professionals certified by national agencies. Direct-Entry Midwives (DEM), like Registered Midwives and Licensed Midwives, are professionals with different qualifications state-by-state. Midwives often work with low-risk pregnancies and births.

The midwifery model of care approaches birth as a natural process that will take its course with little to no intervention, and engages parents with individualized, empowering care.

Traditional Midwife

Some midwives choose not to become licensed or certified for personal reasons. They are often educated and trained through apprenticeship and self-study and believe they answer to the communities they serve rather than certification boards and laws.



Interview your care provider!

Ask them about their **education, credentials, training, and experience**. Ask them how they can support the things that are most important to you about your birth. Ask yourself, "Do I trust them?" "Am I comfortable with them?" "Do they listen to me and take my questions seriously?" And ask other parents about the experiences they've had with their birth team. You deserve care from someone who will get to know you and respect your birth preferences.

Information in this infographic comes from:
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn: The Complete Guide by Penny Simkin, PT, Janet Whalley, R.N., B.S.N., and Ann Keppler, R.N., M.N.; What is my doctor's C-section rate? Improving Birth (improvingbirth.org/resources); Having Your Baby: A Guide for African-American Women, by Hilda Hutcherson, M.D.; What is a Midwife? MANA (www.mana.org)