

# Choose Your Pediatrician Before Your Baby is Born

One of your first decisions as a parent—choosing your baby’s pediatrician—is also one of the most important. It’s key that you establish that relationship prior to being admitted to the hospital for your baby’s birth.

Pediatric providers across our network offer complimentary prenatal visits to help expecting parents make this important decision. Find a provider near you at [stfran.com](http://stfran.com) or call (318) 966-8370

## Reasons why it is so important to make that choice before delivery:

### Newborn Screens

- Newborn screen results are usually not reported until AFTER you are discharged from the hospital. If there is an abnormality, it is CRITICAL that a doctor be notified of the results as soon as possible so that further testing/care can be provided to your baby. Some diseases that the newborn screen tests for can be detrimental if not caught early enough. Having a pediatrician chosen before you go home and updated in your child’s chart ensures that the lab work is communicated to the correct provider.
- Newborn screens performed in hospital are sometimes “inconclusive,” at which point the test needs to be performed again as soon as possible. A physician will need to order the test and tell you where to bring your baby to have the test performed. You will also need to bring your baby to your provider for a check up to monitor for life threatening conditions while awaiting the results of the repeat newborn screen.

### Jaundice and Bilirubin Levels

- Follow up bilirubin labs are often performed for newborns within two days of discharge. The results of these are reported to your pediatrician, so that additional lab work or interventions, such as phototherapy, can be ordered if needed. It is critical to catch rising bilirubin levels as soon as possible and be admitted to the hospital for phototherapy if needed to prevent potential hearing loss, seizures, brain damage and death.

### First Week Follow-up

- All babies need to be seen by a pediatrician within the first week of life to evaluate for jaundice, feeding efficiency and weight loss.
- Your pediatrician is available to provide recommendations if there are any feeding issues, such as an order for an outpatient lactation consult or change of formula.
- Your pediatrician is your point of contact after discharge for any questions, and they are legally able to give you advice over the phone to care for your baby.

### Informed Decision

- Choosing a pediatrician prior to being admitted to the hospital to deliver your baby ensures you make an informed decision regarding the provider that you will have a relationship with for the next 18 years of your child’s life. It is important that you research and are comfortable with your chosen provider.
- Choosing your pediatrician prior to being admitted also gives you the opportunity to have them care for your baby in the hospital, giving you peace of mind when you go home that your provider is already familiar with your child.



### ParentingU Podcast

Watch or listen to our ParentingU podcast episode about the importance of picking your pediatrician before your baby is born.



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