

# HOW DO I find the right health care provider for me?

## What to ask and learn about your health care provider

Health care providers can include primary care doctors, nurses, social workers, and more.



## How do I find a quality health care provider?

### 1. Search for providers

- Get recommendations from friends and family

As patients, our relationship with our health care providers is important. Ask your family, friends, neighbors, or church community if they like their health care provider, then get their contact information.

- Search for providers online

Search sites like [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com) or [www.vitals.com](http://www.vitals.com) to read reviews for local providers, or visit [www.medifind.com](http://www.medifind.com) to find specialists.

To find a Black provider, try:

- [www.blackdoctor247.com](http://www.blackdoctor247.com) to connect to a network of Black doctors
- [blackdoctor.org/find-a-doctor](http://blackdoctor.org/find-a-doctor) to search for a doctor
- [www.yourblackdoctor.com/for-community](http://www.yourblackdoctor.com/for-community) for a provider directory

- Search for mental health providers online

Our mental health is as important as our physical health! To find a Black therapist, try:

- Black Virtual Wellness Directory at [wellness.beam.community](http://wellness.beam.community)
- Clinicians of Color at [www.cliniciansofcolor.org](http://www.cliniciansofcolor.org)
- InnoPsych at [www.innopsych.com](http://www.innopsych.com)
- Therapy for Black Girls at [providers.therapyforblackgirls.com](http://providers.therapyforblackgirls.com)

### 2. Coverage check

Make sure your chosen provider is covered under your health insurance. Most plans charge more a provider is outside their network. Call your plan or visit their website to check if a provider is in-network. Get a second opinion about a diagnosis or treatment from another provider.

### 3. Quality check

According to the Listening to Black Californians study, about 1 in 3 Black Californians say they've been treated poorly by a provider because of their race or ethnicity. Before seeing a new provider, check if other patients had complaints using the above websites, or at the Office of the Patient Advocate (OPA) site at [www.opa.ca.gov](http://www.opa.ca.gov) or [www.docinfo.org](http://www.docinfo.org).

### 4. Learn more about a provider

When you find a provider, call their office and ask your questions, such as:

- Are they taking new patients?
- Are they part of a group practice where I might see other providers?
- Is there someone who speaks my preferred language?
- How far in advance do I have to make an appointment?

- Do you offer same-day, evening, weekend, or virtual visits?
- Can I get lab work and x-rays done in the office?
- What is your visit cancellation policy? Is there a fee if I miss a visit?

## How is your provider?

As patients, we want a provider who listens to us and answers our questions. After your visit with a provider, ask yourself these questions:

- Was I treated with respect and dignity?
- Did they answer all my questions?
- Did they explain things in a way I understood?
- Did they take my symptoms and my pain seriously?
- Were they calm and understanding? Did they give me enough time?
- Did they consider my beliefs, identity, and culture while discussing my health?

## How do I get a second opinion?

A second opinion is when you choose to see another provider about a diagnosis or treatment. This is normal and sometimes necessary to get the best care. To get a second opinion, ask your provider for a referral, or ask your insurance plan, clinic, or hospital for a recommendation.

To learn more about getting a second opinion, visit:

- [www.healthpartners.com/blog/how-to-get-a-second-opinion/](http://www.healthpartners.com/blog/how-to-get-a-second-opinion/)
- [www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/features/how-to-ask-for-second-opinion](http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/features/how-to-ask-for-second-opinion)

## How do I switch providers if mine isn't a good fit?

It is your right to switch providers – especially if you are being treated unfairly or your symptoms are not taken seriously. Here's how:

1. First find a new provider before leaving your current provider.
2. Let your current provider's office know you're leaving so they remove you from their system. Consider telling them why so they can improve their services for others in the future.
3. Have your medical records sent to your new provider, including lab work, imaging, or other tests.
4. Give feedback if your provider didn't give you proper care. This can hold people responsible and help improve the health care system. You can give a review on sites like [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com) or [www.vitals.com](http://www.vitals.com). Or you can file a complaint in California at [mbc.ca.gov/Consumers/file-a-complaint](http://mbc.ca.gov/Consumers/file-a-complaint).

You can learn more about the *Listening to Black Californians* study at [www.chcf.org/program/listening-to-black-californians](http://www.chcf.org/program/listening-to-black-californians)

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