

2016 How to Guide



How to Choose a Cardiologist

The need for better heart health care is rising as the nation's population ages. There's a lot of talk about care after a heart attack or other types of heart disease and just as much talk about preventative care.

Cardiologists, doctors who specialize in treating the heart and its related blood vessels, can treat heart attacks, problems with your heart's rhythm, heart failure and other disturbances, are key to helping you get better cardiovascular health.

Cardiologists can help you understand whether you're at risk for heart disease and offer guidance as you take steps to minimize that risk by offering suggestions such as changing your diet and exercise habits.

Here are some things to consider when picking for a cardiologist.

GET A REFERRAL

Most people who need care from a cardiologist will start with a referral from their regular doctor.

If you've got a good relationship with your doctor, they should have all the information they need to recommend the right heart specialist for your situation. They can also make sure your medical history and any important details will be passed along to the cardiologist.

ASK AROUND

If you know friends, neighbors and family members who have seen a cardiologist in the past, you can get the inside scoop on what it's like to be treated by them.

They'll be able to tell you the good and bad things they experienced from their cardiologist and can help give you insights that can only come from a first-person testimonial, like telling you about the doctor's personality and bedside manner.

AREA OF EXPERTISE

More importantly, though, you need

to make sure the cardiologist has the right training, qualifications and experience to do the best job for you.

Check to see whether the cardiologist is board certified. After completing medical school and their residency, a cardiologist must first be certified in internal medicine and then earn an additional certification in cardiology.

The American Board of Medical Specialties has set up a website, Certification-Matters.org, where you can search to see which board certifications a doctor holds.

Also note that a cardiologist will have different board certifications than a cardiac surgeon.

If it seems confusing, your regular doctor can help you sort it out and pick the best cardiologist for you.

Another thing to consider is the cardiologist's specialty. Some cardiologists become experts at one particular procedure by performing and perfecting it over many years, and they'll earn a reputation for being experts in that narrow field. Other cardiologists will diagnose and treat a wide range of heart problems and diseases.

Your personal heart-health needs will determine the kind of cardiologist you should see. And again, a medical doctor is the best person to steer you to-



ward the best cardiologists for your specific situation.

RESOURCES

Finally, look at the resources the cardiologist offers for continuing treatment and check-ups.

Because many cardiac procedures require regular visits to check on the condition of your heart over time — visits that may be recurring for the rest of your life — the help and support you get after the procedure can be important.

For example, you may need to eat a healthier diet, get regular exercise, quit smoking or lose weight to improve the

health of your heart. All these things can be helped through a support group or specialized health program to keep your cardiac rehabilitation on track, so a cardiologist who can help facilitate these services after your initial treatment can be a plus.

In the end, choosing a cardiologist is all about finding the right match for your heart's needs. A highly experienced, qualified cardiologist can go a long way toward giving you the longest, healthiest life possible.

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Ghassan Mohsen, M.D.

Board Certified in
Cardiovascular Disease and
Internal Medicine

How to Recognize the Signs of Heart Attack

Do you know the signs of a heart attack? Do you know what you're really dealing with when you have indigestion or even back pain?

The signs of a heart attack can be deceiving. But knowing and understanding the signs can save your life.

The signs of a heart attack vary according to gender. If you think you might be having a heart attack, stop whatever you are doing and have someone call 9-1-1. Every second is critical when treating a heart attack.

MEN Severe Chest Pain

For men, the first sign of a heart attack is tightness in the chest that lasts several minutes. While everyone experiences minor chest pain every now and then, a person having a heart attack will feel severe chest pressure.

The pressure will sometimes shoot up from the chest to the shoulder area, arms and back.

Most ordinary chest pains pass

when you relax. But during a heart attack, the pain doesn't go away. Instead, it intensifies.

Shortness of Breath

Shortness of breath is another common symptom and warning sign of a heart attack. While just sitting and being sedentary, a male may feel like he has just run up a flight of stairs.

This shortness may become so severe that you may feel like you might vomit. Some heart attack victims describe feeling like they instantly developed the worst flu of their life.

Dizzy

Dizziness is caused by a lack of oxygen to the body, particularly the brain. A man having a heart attack may faint due to lack of oxygen.

Teeth and Jaw Pain

Experts have discovered that most men experiencing a heart attack will feel pain in their teeth and jaw. This pain typically rates a seven or above on a scale of 1 to 10.

Cold Sweats

Men having heart attacks may develop cold sweats which leave them feeling chilled and clammy.

Frequent Burps

Heart attacks often cause acid reflux. A man having a heart attack may respond by burping frequently.

Yawning

A man experiencing a heart attack may yawn frequently because the heart is not moving enough blood through the body.

WOMEN

Heart attacks in women can be

more difficult to diagnose. In fact, physicians may even miss initial signs of a heart attack. Therefore, it is important for you to know the differences between how a man and woman feels when experiencing a heart attack.

Chest Pressure

A woman having a heart attack will often feel chest pain, just like a man. However, the pain is often lower. It might make some women think they are having stomach pain rather than chest pain.

Shortness of Breath

Nearly six out of 10 women who are having a heart attack feel they are short of breath. Resting may lessen the symptoms in some cases, but not always.

Extreme Fatigue

She will often feel unusually tired, as though she cannot get enough sleep or rest. In fact, extreme fatigue can be an early warning sign for a heart attack. It may start several weeks in advance.

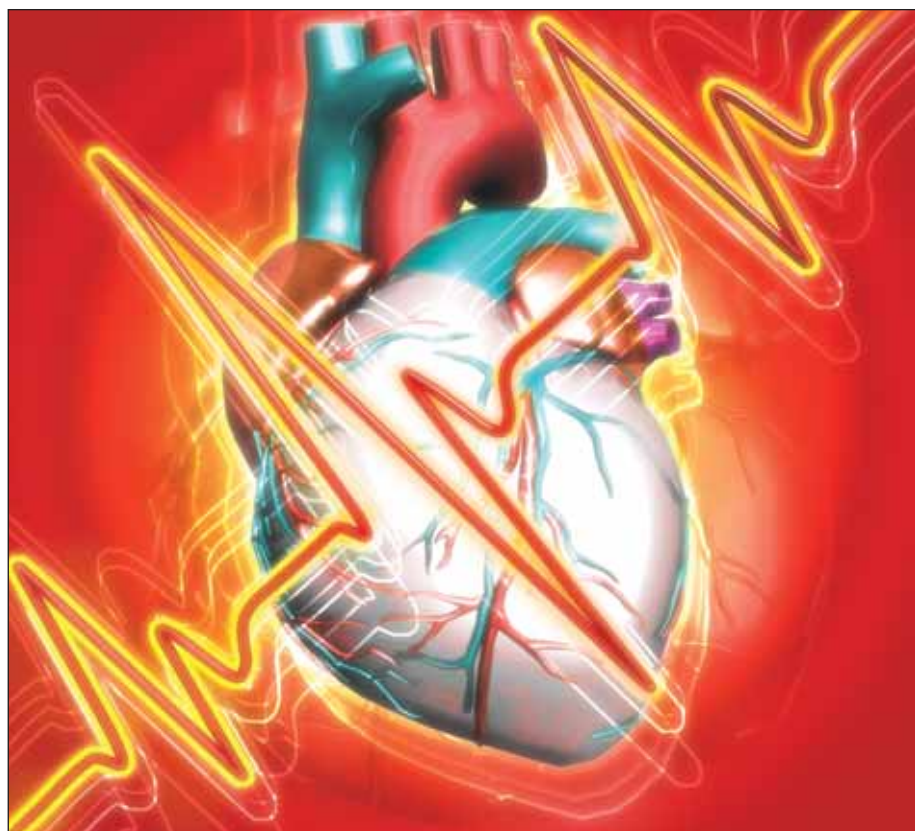
Back Pain

Women often experience severe back pain during a heart attack. Men seldom complain about back pain when having a heart attack.

Nausea

Many women having a heart attack will experience nausea and will often vomit. Doctors do not fully understand why this symptom occurs.

Knowing the signs of a heart attack can save a life. Seconds really do count, so seek emergency care immediately. Call 9-1-1 if in doubt. If treatment is not sought quickly, a heart attack may be fatal.



It's important to learn the warning signs of a heart attack because only some feel like the "movie heart attacks"

♥ Chest Pain ♥ Extreme fatigue ♥ Nausea ♥ Lightheadedness
♥ Shortness of breath ♥ Cold Sweat ♥ Indigestion
♥ Discomfort in other areas of upper body

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Ridgecrest
REGIONAL HOSPITAL

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How to Choose a Dermatologist

Picking the right dermatologist isn't as simple as going to the yellow pages or Googling the ones near you. Dermatology is a complex specialty. Dermatologists specialize in a variety of complex skills and procedures.

Bottom line: dermatologists are not all alike.

Here are some things to consider when picking a dermatologist.

KNOW THEIR SPECIALTY

A dermatologist is a doctor who specializes in treating skin conditions, but their work can fall into many sub-specialties that may or may not match your health needs.

All certified dermatologists earn their medical degrees and undergo three more years of post-residency specialty training on helping patients with skin, hair and nails. Many dermatologists have general practices and are open to seeing patients with a wide variety of skin concerns, from acne and skin diseases to facial wrinkles.

Many other dermatologists, though, focus their attention and training on narrower aspects of dermatology such as cosmetics, surgery or conditions that affect children.

CONSULTATIONS

Most dermatologists will be willing to consult with you on your first visit for a flat fee, and they may be willing to apply this fee toward a procedure if you decide to move forward with it. It doesn't hurt to ask.

At your consultation, you'll want to learn more about the dermatologist, including personality, experience level and aggressiveness about procedures and treatments. Some doctors will have

different plans of action, particularly for cosmetic issues, so it's a good idea to let them know your concerns and see what path they recommend for you going forward.

Listening is the most important thing you can do during a consultation. You may have interest in a particular procedure that you had read about in magazines or on the Internet, but let the doctor make a recommendation first. This will give you some insight into their style of practice.

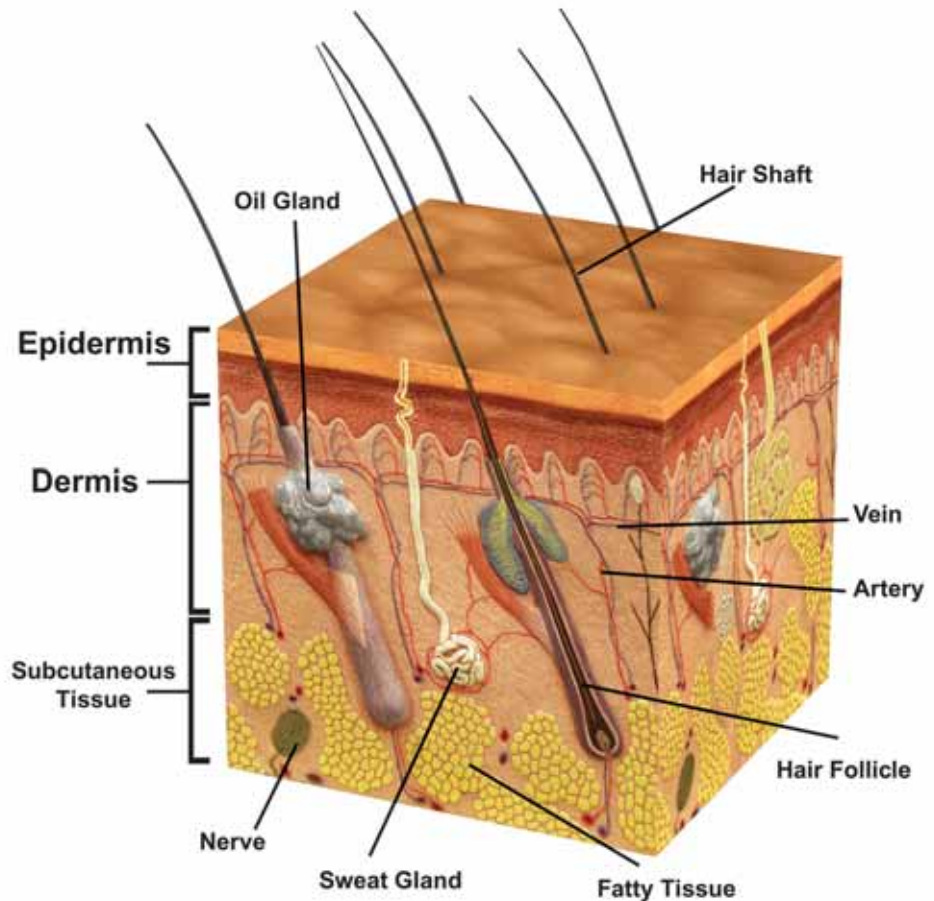
CERTIFICATIONS

Find out what certifications the dermatologist holds. You can often find that information on the doctor's web site, and you can also double-check it with the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) online at aad.org.

The AAD keeps a database of dermatologists who are certified to practice in the United States. You can check that your doctor is board certified and see a listing of their specialties by searching online.

PROCEDURES

If you're going to the dermatologist for a specific procedure, you should look for a doctor who has plenty of experience in it. Some of the best dermatologists will do the same procedure several times per day, keeping their skills sharp and making them ex-



perts at performing it.

You should also ask who is going to perform the procedure. In some cases, a nurse or assistant will perform it under the doctor's supervision. In other cases, the

doctor will personally perform it with their own hands.

You should know up front who will be doing the procedure so that you're comfortable with your decision.



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Methods for Choosing the Right Dentist

Whether you need a routine cleaning or a complex dental procedure, finding the right dentist will save you time and money. Choosing the right dentist will go a long way toward helping you maintain your health and appearance.

No one wants to have a root canal redone because of shoddy work.

It is important that you find a dentist who makes you feel comfortable; someone who will help you improve your dental health in a hygienic environment.

Finding a dentist near your home or workplace will help you make your appointments on time. As well, their office hours should accommodate your schedule.

So how should you start your search? First off, ask your social network for recommendations. Friends, family and colleagues can be a great resource.

Searching on the Internet for dental offices in your area will also help. Professionals often have their own websites, which include the backgrounds of those working there. The website may also tell you about how they handle procedures and appointments, as well as specialized services they offer.

Your local newspaper will likely have advertisements from local dentists. Oftentimes you can find specials and discounts.

Once you have gathered a list, begin calling each prospective dentist. You can talk to a receptionist or other staff person if the dentist is unavailable.

Check that he or she has earned the necessary degree from a reputable school and are current on all licensing and continuing educational requirements. Ideally, he will be familiar with the latest dental technologies and trends.

Ask if the dental office provides



emergency services. If you break a tooth or need to have a root canal done right away, you will want to use your chosen dentist. You don't want to have to search for a dentist when you are in pain.

Lead time for appointments is another consideration. Some offices might be able to see you right away, while others may have a three-week wait time.

Your prospective dentist should accept your dental insurance. If don't have dental insurance, inquire about payment plans. The

office should give you an estimate before performing any work.

When someone meets all of your requirements, visit the office. The staff should be professional and friendly. Every dentist should be willing to answer all of your questions.

Some people are afraid of dentists or of pain. If you have any concerns, communicate with the staff and dentist. Many professionals are willing to go above and beyond to help you work through these issues.

A basic oral health history should be taken by the dentist or staff. They should tell you about future treatment and prevention options. A quality dentist will help you feel comfortable during your visit.

The best dentists offer friendly, happy dental experiences.

Teeth are extremely important to your overall health. They can also help or hinder your appearance. Finding a good dentist is like finding a friend who consistently brings out your best smile.

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How to Check Your Skin

Symptoms of underlying health problems can usually be spotted somewhere on your skin. It is the largest organ system in your body

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Your skin exposes your health secrets.

That's why a regular self-examination is essential. You can detect a problem early and have it treated before it becomes a major concern.

Skin cancer is among the most common and dangerous types of cancer. If you spent your youth sunning yourself on the beach or performing yard work under the sun, you should regularly check your skin. Also, people who have a family history of skin cancer should check themselves regularly.

If you spot anything unusual, or something that makes you curious, consult a dermatologist for further evaluation.

WHAT TO DO

Conducting regular skin self-examinations is the best way to check for development of skin cancer.

The best time for a self-exam is when you get out of a shower or bath. Make sure you have plenty of good lighting. You will a full-length mirror and a hand-held mirror.

Become acquainted with your birthmarks, moles, and other marks. Familiarize yourself with their look and feel.

Check for anything new:

- A new mole that is unlike your other moles
- A new red or darker color flaky patch that seems a little raised
- A new flesh-colored firm bump
- A change in the size, shape, color, or feel of a mole
- A sore that doesn't heal

Check yourself from head to toe:

— Look at your face, neck, ears, and scalp. A comb or a blow dryer can move your hair so you can better see the area. A relative or friend can help in hard to examine spots such as the scalp.

— Look at the front and back of your body in the mirror. Then, raise your arms and look at your left and right sides.

— Bend your elbows. Look carefully at your fingernails, palms,

forearms (including the undersides) and upper arms.

— Examine all sides of your legs. Also check your genital area and between your buttocks.

— Sit and closely examine your feet, including your toenails, your soles, and between your toes.

A regular examination will help you understand what is normal for you. It might be helpful to record the dates of your skin exams and note how your skin looks. If a physician has taken photos of your skin, compare your present condition to the photos to help check for changes. If you find anything unusual, contact your doctor.

Preventative measures are the best way to detect any possible signs of skin cancer or other conditions. The sooner skin cancer is detected, the better the chances are of doing something for it.



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The best physicians are good listeners. They are patient, caring and accessible.

It is important to find a physician that understands you and will be there for you whenever you need them. It is also important to find a physician who will guide you toward a healthier lifestyle.

Good physicians enter into a cooperative relationship with you in an effort to monitor your health. They provide creative solutions to health issues, as well as informing you about basic information.

Here are some elements to consider when searching for a new doctor.

INSURANCE

Often, your choice of doctors will be limited by your health insurance carrier. Insurance companies have contracts with individuals or group practices. It is likely that you cannot go outside of your insurer's provider network without paying an additional fee.

Your primary care doctor should be able to understand your medical needs, as well as offer you appropriate referrals should you need a specialist.

It is possible that using a doctor outside your insurer's primary care network may subject you to out-of-pocket expenses.

Some insurance carriers do not impose restric-

tions on your choice of physicians. If you have this kind of policy, look to your local newspaper or online advertisements to find potential doctors in your area.

MEETING YOUR NEEDS

Experts recommend selecting a general practitioner to serve as your primary care physician. This professional might be an internal medicine doctor or a member of a family practice.

Under some circumstances, it is better to select a doctor practicing within a particular specialty.

Women might feel more comfortable with an obstetrician/gynecologist (OB/GYN) as a primary care physician. A pediatrician might be the primary care physician for children. Seniors could even have a geriatric specialist for their primary care physician.

ASK FOR REFERRALS

Friends, family and other trusted sources are the best way to find a new doctor. People will gladly give referrals when they have had positive experiences with their health care providers. They will also provide feedback when the experience was not to their liking.

The American Medical Association or other professional physicians' organizations in your area will be another useful resource.

Prior to making a final decision, always confirm that your physician has a current license to practice with the state medical board. This licensing body will also tell you if he has any pending disciplinary action or complaints.

Not every doctor accepts new patients. Once you have collected a list of possible physicians, contact them to make sure they will accept new patients, as well as the insurance you carry.

Ideally, your first visit will include a routine physical examination and documentation of your medical history. But sometimes insurance carriers will decline payment for routine exams.

CONVENIENCE

Convenience is another important factor when choosing a physician. His or her office should be easily accessible from your home or workplace.

Ensure the doctor has admitting privileges at your preferred hospital in the event you need treatment.

Ask where your physician can perform diagnostic tests and procedures. Some doctors might use a separate facility rather than their own offices.

Finally, inquire how long it usually takes to book an appointment. When an emergency arises, you will want to know that your new doctor can meet you quickly.

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Eric Frey M.D.
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FACP, FACG



If you're searching for a skilled nursing facility for a loved one you have hundreds of options to pick from. The problem is, it can be difficult to sort through all of your options.

How to Choose a Skilled Nursing Facility for Your Loved One

Your best choices are facilities that have high scores from state agencies such as the nursing-home regulatory agency or department of health. The nursing staff in these facilities are required to complete a formal certification process.

As a result, the staff at a nursing facility is usually much more skilled and regulated than staff at an assisted living facility. That's because the staff at skilled nursing facilities provide and administer prescription medications. Assisted living facility staff does not usually have the same authorization.

Skilled nursing facilities provide more personalized care to residents who are suffering from advanced age, severe illness or infirmity. Assisted living residents live in a somewhat private environment and perform most of their daily living activities with minimal staff assistance.

Your loved one will need reassurance that he or she will be safe and well taken care of by a highly skilled nursing staff.

Select a facility close to your loved one's family and friends. It should be easy to see your loved one. Frequent visits will help ease the transition from independent living to a skilled nursing environment.

You can form an accurate opinion by visiting several facilities.

Reputable centers will have no problems with scheduling interviews with staff or giving tours of the living areas and grounds. If a facility doesn't allow you to see these areas or have a meeting with the director, it should be dropped from your list.

Cleanliness, cheerful decor and happy residents neatly dressed are symbols of a quality facility.

Speak to current residents and their families to get a good assessment of the facility. Family members will likely provide the most unbiased and unvarnished opinion of the facility.

Most high-quality skilled nursing facilities are significant investments. They provide a much higher level of care and so they cost more. Talk with an attorney who specializes in nursing facility cases for advice on cost, as well as quality of care.

The decision to put your



loved one in a particular facility is not permanent. If your family member is not receiving good care or shows signs of abuse, you have the right to remove him or her. Frequent visits are important so you can monitor the health and well-being of your loved one. See him or her at different times of the day to verify

the level of care.

Take all the time you need when searching for a skilled nursing facility.

Putting a loved one in a facility can be difficult and emotionally challenging. Finding the best one you can afford will give you peace of mind.

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