

2017 How to Guide



How to Choose Alzheimer's Care

America's population is getting older. And as the number of older Americans increases, so, too, does the need for better heart health care.

We hear a lot these days about cardiac care after a heart attack, or after other kinds of heart disease. Similarly, there's lots of talk about preventive heart health care.

Physicians who specialize in treating the heart and its related blood vessel are called cardiologists. They specialize in the treating of heart attacks, arrhythmias (problems with the rhythm of the heart), heart failure and other problems. In the medical community, cardiologists play the central role in helping you enjoy better cardiovascular health.

They're also the physicians to consult in order to learn whether you're at risk for heart disease. And they provide guidance in helping you take steps to lower your risk, by offering patient-focused sugges-

tions like adjusting your dietary habits and developing an appropriate exercise plan.

When it's time to select a cardiologist, consider the following tips.

Get A Referral

If you need the care of a cardiologist, it's likely that your primary care doctor will refer you to one, possibly giving you the names of several who specialize in your area of care.

If you and your primary care doctor share a rapport, then your doctor likely will have all the information necessary to recommend the right cardiac specialist for your needs. Your doctor also can see to it that important health-related information, such as your medical history, will be

passed along to the cardiologist.

Ask Around

Talk to people you know. Friends, neighbors and family members who've consulted a cardiologist in the past can help you learn the inside scoop on what to expect during your visits and any resulting treatment.

People who know what it's like to visit a cardiologist will be able to tell you both the good and the bad things they've experienced, and can share the kind of unique insights that come from their first-person perspective. This is a great way to learn about a physician's personality, bedside manner, and overall approach to treatment.

Area Of Expertise

Being sure that your cardiologist has the appropriate training, qualifications and experience is even more important than the opinions of family, friends and acquaintances. It's vital that the doctor who treats you is qualified to do so. Check to see whether the cardiologist is board certified.

After completing medical school and finishing a residency, cardiologists 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 toward the best cardiologists for your specific situation.

Resources

Finally, investigate the resources that the cardiologist provides for continuing care, treatment and check-ups. This will be important beyond your in-office visits and on-site treatment procedures, because it sets the tone for the quality of follow-up care you will receive.

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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How to Check Your Skin

Of the 11 organ systems in the human body, your skin is the largest. Skin plays a vital role in regulating heat, protecting you from a harsh environment, and eliminating waste.

The skin also can reveal many health secrets, for those who know how to listen.

Skin serves as a barometer to detect the symptoms of many underlying health issues. In many cases, these symptoms can appear directly on your skin.

In order to know what your skin is trying to tell you, a regular self-examination is vital. You can often detect health problems early if you're in the regular habit of examining your skin.

Avoiding skin cancer is a major concern, especially for people who have an excessive degree of sun exposure. Skin cancer is among the most common, and dangerous, types of cancer. If you soaked up a lot of sun when you were young, or spend a lot of time outside working in the yard, it's important for you to check your skin regularly. The same applies if you have family members and ancestors with a history of skin cancer.

Seek out a dermatologist for evaluation if you detect anything unusual when examining your skin.

What To Do

The best way to catch any evidence of potential skin cancer is to conduct regular skin self-examinations.

The best time to perform a self-examination is when you've just gotten out of a shower or bath. Make sure there's plenty of good lighting. And you'll need to have a full-length mirror, as well as 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 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, soles, and between your toes.

A regular skin self-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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DR. LASHGARI, M.D.

Dr. Lashgari is a board-certified dermatologist and a member of the American Academy of Dermatology. Dr. Lashgari has had his own private practice since 1999 and is excited to join Ridgecrest Regional Hospital and bring his expertise in dermatology, dermatologic surgery, and cosmetic surgery services to the Ridgecrest community.

FOR AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE CALL (760) 499-7260



How to Choose a Cancer Treatment Center

Cancer doesn't discriminate. A deadly disease that afflicts tens of millions from every walk of life, it's not picky: it strikes with equal opportunity.

It's also pervasive. Chance are, even if you're fortunate never to have had cancer, you probably know someone who has.

One of the most frustrating challenges in defeating cancer is its complexity. An unforgiving disease that's difficult to manage and nearly impossible to cure, cancer is constantly in motion. It can often seem to be one step ahead of even the most aggressive efforts to defeat it.

For those who face a cancer diagnosis, it may be difficult to sift through the many different kinds of available treatment, especially without the proper guidance. Cancer patients need skilled, expert care and committed, unwavering support. A patient's treatment needs can be as complex as the disease itself, so it stands to reason that selecting the right place to seek treatment is crucial. But it can be a daunting task.

If you need the services offered by a cancer treatment center, consider these tips.

Doctor

One of the most significant steps in facing cancer head on is to adhere to a doctor's plan for treatment and following their advice.

You will first need to select a doctor who will administer treatment. Typically, a patient diagnosed with a specific kind of cancer will choose a doctor based on whether that doctor specializes in that specific form of the disease. A reputable, qualified specialist is one who will walk you through the process, while patiently and accurately addressing your questions and concerns.

In general, it will be to your advantage to receive treatment at the center where your specialist practices. Why? Your doctor will already have working relationships with other skilled staff members; people who will be assisting you on your road to recovery.

Whether you have insurance, and knowing what your insurance covers, is another important consideration. Go over

your health care policy to verify that your selected doctor and treatment center are covered by your insurer. Understand the deductibles, co-pays and coverage limits that are already in place. This information will also assist you in the decision-making process.

Location

Convenience can be a big factor in easing your path through the recovery process. If you're able, try to find a qualified cancer treatment center near your location.

The overall program of care may require lengthy and repetitive chemotherapy or radiation treatments, so traveling for long periods of time can rapidly exhaust your bank account and your body.

While many people tend to believe that big cancer facilities located in large cities offer better treatment, that's not always the case. Depending on your diagnosis and recommended treatment, you may be able to find comparable treatment close to home.

Recommendations

Cancer touches the lives of so many people that it's relatively easy to get first-person recommendations for the best treatment centers.

Talk to people you know. Ask your network of friends and family: people who have faced a cancer diagnosis, or supported a loved one through the process. They may have wise advice and detailed impressions about the cancer treatment centers they used. You will be able to get an idea about what to expect and the quality of care you will receive.

Researching the Internet can also help you find local centers, as well as read reviews from patients and loved ones. Check your local newspaper for centers in your area. Sometimes you may be able to find a promotion or other discount.

Support Services

Many cancer treatment centers offer plenty of support services for their pa-



tients.

Connecting you with nonprofit groups and community health resources will inspire you on the road to recovery. Centers will also set up counseling sessions for caregivers and people going through similar situations. This help goes beyond medicine for the body. It will assist you emotionally and mentally. Most cancer patients and loved ones find these services invaluable.

Specialty Treatments

Some cancer treatment centers offer specialized care.

Many centers are on the leading edge

of medical research. Depending on your diagnosis and doctor's recommendation, you may be a candidate for clinical trials or experimental treatments.

Ask your doctor what trials or treatments might be effective for your particular type of cancer. If necessary, you can allow this information to guide your decision.

Find a cancer treatment center where you and your loved one will feel comfortable. Not all centers are hospital-themed. Many provide a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere to make the experience a little easier.

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and support you get after the procedure can be important.

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Ghassan Mohsen, M.D.
Board Certified in Cardiovascular
Disease & Internal Medicine



How to Choose an Occupational Medicine Specialist

The goal of an occupational medicine specialist is to help employers keep their workers well and safe.

Why Should You And Your Employees Obtain Care From An Occupational Medicine Specialist?

Getting injured at work is a serious issue and employers need to ensure that their employees get proper care and treatment. An occupational medicine specialist understands that care and treatment for work related illnesses and injuries not only need to meet an organization's policies, but everything from an employee's injury or illness to treatment plan and follow-up details have to be documented and recorded accurately.

Do They Offer A Wide Range Of Services?

Occupational medicine involves a wide range of services, and usually begins with a pre-employment physical examination. These services may be offered for employees in various industries such as healthcare, explosive handlers, forklift and crane operators, just to name a few.

- Drug and alcohol screening for new or continued employment
- Blood borne pathogen screening
- Post-accident screening and testing
- Return to work and fitness for duty exams
- EKGs
- X-Rays
- Hearing tests
- Flu shots
- Immunizations
- Lab work, including blood testing
- Worker's compensation
- Respiratory surveillance and evaluations
- Department of Transportation physical exams / DMV licensing
- HazMat physical exams
- Flight physicals
- Sports physicals
- Case Management

Case Management consists of clinical and non-clinical staff working closely to understand and respond to compliance & regulatory issues facing the employers and employees. They may assist in identifying and suggesting modified duties while in recovery. They may also communicate with employers and employees regarding their work status, leave of absence and return to work plan. Case management assists with referrals to specialists and coordinates care between different providers and specialists.



Larry Cosner, MD

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Facing the prospect of hospice care for a loved one can be difficult. End-of-life care isn't a happy topic. But selecting the right hospice service can actually ease the difficulty for everyone involved. In fact, opting for hospice care is one of the most compassionate decisions you will ever make.

Hospice services provide comfort and support and for people who need end-of-life care. Hospice workers can be found in many medical settings: assisted living centers, nursing homes, hospitals and residential facilities. Many patients also receive in-home hospice care from companies that specialize in the service.

It's important to recognize that hospice not only benefits the patient — it benefits friends and family members as well. According to the Hospice Foundation of America, one-third of all Americans choose hospice care when they are dying. Yet hospice isn't only for the dying. Hospice workers help to support the patient's loved ones through one of life's most difficult times.

Hospice services vary, but all are regulated by the government. Yet there are significant differences between the various services and facilities.

Consider these points as you explore your options.

Location

Hospice specializes in palliative care — that is, in making the patient feel as comfortable as possible, rather than aggressive and potentially excruciating medical treatments. Care can take place anywhere. Patients can even receive treatment in their own homes, where they are most comfortable.

Some diseases may require more specialized care than others. The patient can also choose to stay in a facility that can give them easy, 24-hour access to nurses, medication, and medical equipment needed

for their comfort.

It is always best to consult with a doctor regarding this decision. The hospice staff will meet with the patient's physician to talk about the current symptoms, medical history and life expectancy. Then they will let you know which options are available to you.

Communication

Select a hospice service that helps you feel at ease. You are going to have to ask and answer some extremely difficult questions. Death is a tough subject to discuss. Clear, caring communication is absolutely essential.

A quality hospice program will give you all the time and personal attention you need to ease your mind.

Part of picking hospice involves having the right feeling. If the hospice staff is personable and makes you feel comfortable, that's a good sign.

Referrals

Every patient who receives hospice treatment must be qualified by a physician. Usually, this means there is a life expectancy of six

How to Choose Hospice Care



months or less.

Since some physicians may hesitate to broach the subject of hospice care, you may need to bring it up yourself. Ask whether hospice care would be appropriate and which services might be most helpful to ease the end-of-life process.

You can also approach a hospice facility directly to ask about their

services. They will help you determine which care is most appropriate.

Hospice care has been growing since the 1990s. Many people are realizing that it is possible to die with peace and dignity. Hospice can help the end-of-life experience a little easier for the patient and loved ones.



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How to Choose an Orthopedic Surgeon

If you need a major surgical procedure on your musculoskeletal system, it's essential to find the best medical professional for the job.

Orthopedic surgeons perform surgery to correct problems with the joints and bones. They can help heal shoulder, hand, joint or knee injuries caused by a variety of sports injuries or accidents.

The stakes of surgery can be high, and an orthopedic surgeon's job requires a lot of skill and specialized training. It's vital that you select a surgeon who's experienced in performing the type of surgery you need.

Recovering from any surgery takes time and patience. But before you start, do some research and learn all you can about the orthopedic surgeons who are available in your region.

Follow these tips to help you find the right surgeon.

Recommendations

Your doctor is the best resource for finding a medical professional who can handle your case effectively. Your primary care physician can refer you to orthopedic surgeons; ask your physician for the names of some that specialize in the type of surgery you will need. Other medical professionals in his practice might also be able to refer you. It is important that you find a surgeon who specializes in what you need. For example, a man with a sports injury and an elderly person who needs a knee replacement will require two very different doctors.

Request information about the surgeon's background, where he



attended medical school and where he did his residency.

Many orthopedic specialists become experts at performing one or two types of procedures. Keep in mind that the more experience they have with cases like yours, the more likely you will have a good outcome after the procedure.

Philosophy

Qualified doctors don't often share the same philosophy when it

comes to medical treatment.

Some surgeons prefer having patients try other options -- such as physical therapy, dietary or lifestyle changes -- before performing surgery. Others think it is wiser to do surgery before a problem gets worse.

At your initial consultation with an orthopedic surgeon, try to understand their medical philosophy. Think about whether it matches your expectations.

The surgeon should make you feel comfortable and confident. A good bedside manner, with excellent knowledge, experience and communication, will make you feel more relaxed about your health care decisions.

Full Spectrum

The best surgeons help you with preparation and recovery from your medical treatment. They do more than just perform an actual procedure.

They will take the time to answer all your questions patiently and offer practical suggestions to help you hasten your recovery. As well, the doctor will look at your lifestyle to help you become healthier. He will not simply fix your broken or painful body part. Changing your lifestyle and taking better care of yourself may lessen the need for surgery in the future.

Hospital Privileges

Surgeons must be allowed to operate in facilities. Different hospitals have different levels of technology and equipment. You will want to have the procedure done at a hospital that is equipped to fit your needs.

If you prefer to have the surgery performed at a particular hospital, check to make sure the surgeon is approved to operate at the facility.

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The early interactions of a medical professional can have a lasting impact on how your child views or reacts to health-related issues for the rest of his or her life.

Many children are afraid of going to a doctor, so it's important to find someone your child will feel comfortable with from the beginning.

That's what makes choosing a good pediatrician for your child so important.

A friendly physician will help your child develop a positive attitude toward health and wellness and

ease anxieties about regular checkups. Keep these matters in mind to help make your search more rewarding.

Recommendations

Talk to people whose judgment you trust. Ask family, friends and acquaintances for recommendations. Parents will be happy to share about their experiences at the pediatrician's office.

You can also check with your family doctor or OB/GYN who delivered your baby. They will have informed recommendations to help you select the best doctor.

Don't just collect one or two names. Ideally, you

should have a list of at least three professionals. It will help you compare and made the right selection.

Insurance

Next, look at your insurance policy. Find out if any of the people on the list are part of your network plan. Remember that children visit the doctor more frequently than adults because they catch a lot of viruses while building up their immune systems. Doctors not covered by your insurance should be crossed off your list. You might also reconsider your insurance policy.

Narrowing the List

It is time to arrange a meeting with each physician so you can find out who will work best with your child.

Look at their office locations. They should be in a convenient location, not far from your home. You will probably visit this doctor quite often, so convenience is a big factor.

When you meet with the doctor, focus on his or her philosophy. Some physicians prefer to run lots of tests. Others have a more relaxed and homespun approach.

Parents who follow a wellness philosophy might have to look harder to find a doctor who is open-minded about alternative medicine. If you are interested in alternative vaccine schedules, be sure to find out if your doctor is receptive to this idea.

The Visit

Bring your child along for this meeting. It will help you gauge their interaction.

The doctor should make your child feel at ease. He should be patient, tolerant and friendly.

You must feel comfortable with this medical professional as well. He should take the time to answer your questions thoughtfully.

Inquire about their emergency policy. Does the office accept walk-ins? If your child gets sick in the middle of the night, can you call the pediatrician or nurse? Find out about office hours and when you need to visit the hospital instead.

Is the office decorated with children in mind? Is it a safe, inviting atmosphere? Does the practice use modern equipment? Are exam rooms clean?

Many pediatricians now offer separate waiting rooms for children who are not sick. These "well child" waiting areas help stop the spread of viruses. If your child is there for a checkup, it is a bad idea to have him sit next to another child who has the flu.

With this strategy, you should have an easier time selecting a pediatrician. Choosing well now will save you time and trouble in the future.



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How to Choose a Dermatologist

Selecting the right dermatologist isn't an off-the-shelf process. Finding the dermatologist who can address your needs means finding one who specializes in the particular area of skin care that your needs demand. It's not as simple as picking a phone number out of the directory and expecting a one-size-fits-all result.

Dermatology is multifaceted, and dermatologists focus their practice on one of many areas of treatment. Each dermatologist possesses a set of complex skills and can perform specific procedures.

In other words, not all dermatologists are the same.

If you need to consult a dermatologist, keep the following things in mind.

Know Their Specialty

What does a dermatologist do? In general, a dermatologist is a doctor who specializes in treating skin conditions. But their practice can focus on one of many sub-specialties. Only some of these specialties may be an appropriate match for your health needs.

One thing all dermatologists have in common is their basic medical training. All certified dermatologists earn medical degrees, followed by three years of post-residency training in a specialty area that treats patients with conditions relating to their skin, hair and nails.

There are general practitioners: many dermatologists do have general practices, and they see patients who may have a wide variety of skin problems. Often, people with common skin conditions such as acne or wrinkles will consult a general-practice dermatologist.

Other dermatologists, though, specialize within a narrower aspect of the profession. Dermatology practices dealing with cosmetics, surgery or conditions that affect children are some examples of specialists in the field.

Consultations

Each practice is different, but many dermatologists are willing to provide a first-visit consultation for a flat fee. They may be willing to apply this fee toward a procedure, should 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

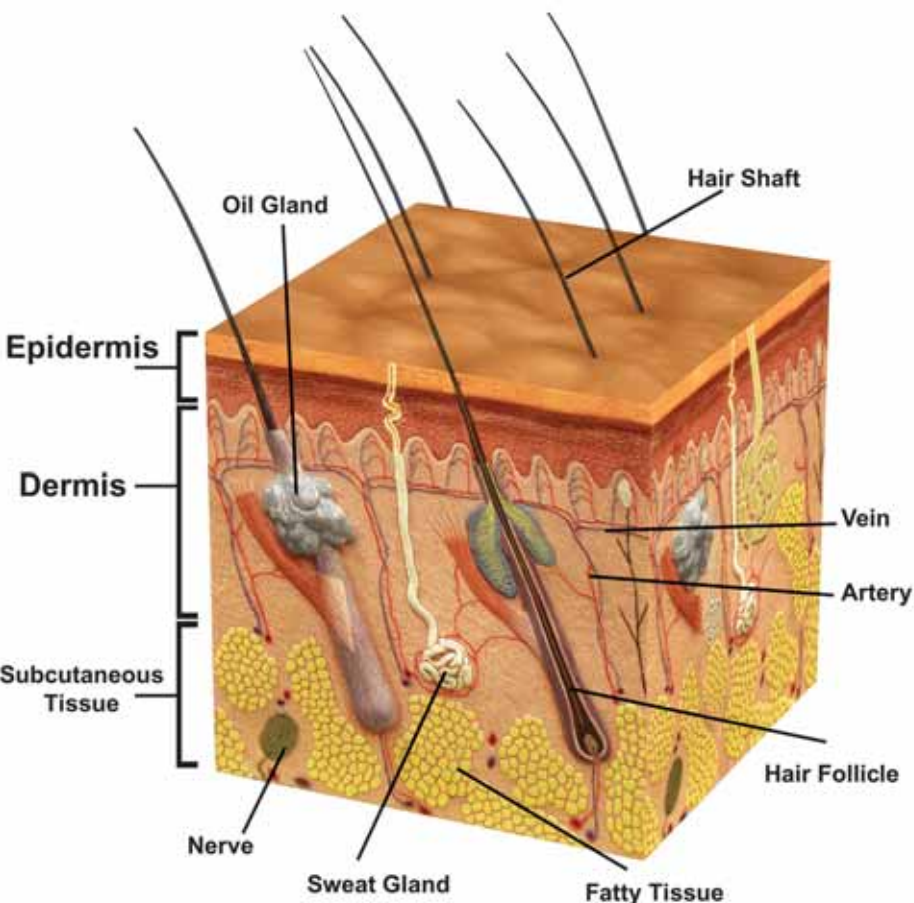
It's important for you to find out what certifications your prospective dermatologist holds. You can often find that information on the doctor's web site, and you can also double-check it with the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) online at aad.org.

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 experts 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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DR. LASHGARI, M.D.

Dr. Lashgari is a board-certified dermatologist and a member of the American Academy of Dermatology. Dr. Lashgari has had his own private practice since 1999 and is excited to join Ridgecrest Regional Hospital and bring his expertise in dermatology, dermatologic surgery, and cosmetic surgery services to the Ridgecrest community.

FOR AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE CALL (760) 499-7260



How to Choose a Podiatrist

Your feet are easy to take for granted — until they start having problems.

If your feet don't feel right, you don't feel right. Foot problems are difficult to ignore. That's why we should all know how to find a good podiatrist to treat foot problems.

Podiatrists are doctors who specialize in treating foot or ankle problems. They are able to diagnose and correct a number of foot-related troubles, including: pain and swelling, psoriasis, pinched nerves and heel pain.

You really shouldn't take the health of your feet lightly. Your feet are important for balance and strength, especially as you age.

Don't wait for foot pain to become unbearable.

Use these tips now to find a good podiatrist in your area.

Get References

Start out in your search for the right podiatrist by collecting references from other medical professionals.

Also talk to people you know. If someone in your social network has had a foot problem, ask them about their experience.

Good physicians usually have a large number of patients who are happy to recommend them.

Talk to your primary care physician or other medical professional for advice on reputable and well-regarded podiatrists.

Know Their Specialty

Podiatry is a field with many

sub-specialties.

In recent years, it's become more common for some podiatrists to focus on sports-related injuries to the foot. When you have strained or sprained muscles from playing sports, find a podiatrist who concentrates on diagnosing and treating sports injuries.

Other doctors may help with psoriasis or chronic pain.

Whatever your problem, it can be helpful to know whether your podiatrist specializes in general or specific problems with the foot and ankle.

Payment

Check with your insurance provider to see if the podiatrist is covered by your plan. If you are unsure, call the office and ask which insurance is accepted.

Some providers require a referral from your principal doctor. Be sure to get the paperwork in order before visiting the podiatrist.

If you do not have coverage through your insurance plan, inquire about payment plans. Many doctors are willing to work with patients on a budget.

Personality

Every patient is different, and so is every doctor. Not all of them relate to patients in the same way.

Ideally, you should try to find one who communicates well with you, answers questions patiently,



solves immediate problems as quickly as possible and helps you with ongoing care.

It shouldn't be hard to find someone who is a good fit for your personality. Feeling comfortable with your doctor is key to regaining your health.

Convenience

Finally, look for a podiatrist with convenient office hours and location.

The office should be close to where you live or work. You may need to continue treatment for

weeks or months. It is difficult enough to travel if you have a foot problem. Don't make it even harder by selecting a podiatrist who is not in a convenient location.

Also, the doctor's hours should work well with your schedule. Some podiatrists have practices in multiple locations, each of which may be open for only a few days a week. Others offer extended hours on weekdays for working people. A doctor who takes his patient's lifestyle into consideration might be a good fit for you.

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DR. GEORGE RIVELLO, DPM & DR. JAMIE MIERAS, DPM

How to Choose a Skilled Nursing Facility for Your Loved One

Advanced age or debilitating health conditions can make it necessary to seek care at a skilled nursing facility.

But with so many options, picking the best facility can be difficult. Not all are the same, and no one wants to make the wrong decision when it comes to the care of a family member.

If the time has come for you to find a care facility for a loved one, here are some things to consider:

Agency Ratings And State Requirements

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

Because of these requirements, 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.

Location And Atmosphere

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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