Questions to Ask Your Child's Primary Care Provider

WYOMING family TO family HEALTH INFORMATION CENTER

As you plan for your child's medical care, use these questions as a guide for learning more about your primary care provider's (PCP) practice. You may want to use them whether you are choosing a new PCP for your child or if your child already has one. You can use them when meeting with a specialist or other health care providers.

1. What is the diagnosis?
- **What caused the condition?**
- **How will this condition affect my child in the future?**
- **Should I watch for any symptoms and when do I notify you if they occur?**
- **What activities can my child do or not do?**

2. What is the treatment for my child's condition?
- **When will the treatment start and how long will it last?**
- **What are the benefits of this treatment, and how successful is it?**
- **What are the risks and side effects with this treatment?**
- **Are there foods, drugs, or activities that my child and I should avoid while on this treatment?**
- **If my child's treatment includes taking a medicine, what should I do if I miss a dose?**
- **Are other treatments available?**

3. What kinds of tests will my child have?
- **What do you expect to find out from these tests?**
- **When will I know the results?**
- **Do I have to do anything special to prepare my child for any of the tests?**
- **Do these tests have any side effects or risks?**
- **Will my child need more tests later?**

4. Who in your office will be involved in my child's care?

5. Who do I talk to about:
- **Scheduling or changing an appointment?**
- **Medical information?**
- **Insurance and billing information?**
- **Help in an emergency?**
- **Services related to my child's special needs?**
- **Getting letters of medical necessity?**

6. Who do I talk to when you are not available?
- **Will I be speaking to a nurse or a doctor?**
- **Can you introduce me and my child to other PCP's in the practice so they will know about my child's special health needs?**
- **What if I absolutely need to reach you?**
- **What hospital(s) do you work with?**

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7. What if my child needs to see a specialist?

- **How do you choose a specialty doctor or a therapist?**
- **How do you choose a counselor or mental health provider?**
- **How will you communicate with the specialist caring for my child, and how will you keep me informed?**

8. How do you work with other people caring for my child?

- **Will you help develop health care education plans for Early Intervention and my child's school?**
- **If my child needs to be hospitalized, will you visit us in the hospital? Will you be involved in discharge and home care planning?**

9. How will decisions be made about my child's care?

- **What role will I have in making treatment decisions?**
- **Will you help me make decisions about specialty care options?**
- **I have certain beliefs about my child's care. How do you feel about them?**
- **If I want to get a second opinion regarding my child's diagnosis or treatment, will you help me?**
- **Can you advise me if I have questions about new treatment or procedures that could be helpful for my child?**

10. How will I be kept informed about my child's special health care needs?

- **How will I get basic information about my child's diagnosis?**
- **Will you tell me about research developments that might affect my child's care?**
- **Who will train me if I need to give my child special medication or treatment?**

11. Will you help me plan for my child's short and long-term needs?

- **Will you help me understand what to expect about my child's development and long-term health care needs?**
- **Will you be honest with me even if it means saying, "I don't know?"**
- **What if I am having trouble dealing with the stress of parenting my child? Are you willing and able to help me?**
- **As my child grows older, how can you help us prepare for the transition to adolescence and adulthood?**
- **Are you comfortable discussing sexuality, alcohol and drug use, and other risky behaviors with my teen?**
- **What will happen when my teen needs to transition to adult-oriented health care?**

Other tips:

- **If you don't understand your doctor's responses, ask questions until you do understand.**
- **Take notes, or get a friend or family member to take notes for you or bring a recoding device.**
- **Ask your doctor to write down his or her instructions to you.**
- **Ask your doctor for printed materials about your child's condition.**
- **If you still have trouble understanding your doctor's answers, ask where you can go for more information.**