

Changing Your Care Provider

What to Do If You Have Second Thoughts About Your Choice of Caregiver

As you become more educated by reading, taking a childbirth class, and talking to friends, it is common to wonder if the provider you chose early in pregnancy is still the best choice to help you have a healthy and satisfying birth. If you have concerns about your care, talk openly with your provider. If you still feel unsettled, consider finding a provider who will meet your needs better.

It's not uncommon to resist making what feels like a drastic change late in your pregnancy. But it is wise to explore your assumptions before you decide for good. For instance, you may think...

I already have a relationship with my current provider.

It is more important that you feel supported in your decision making than to have a limited, ineffective relationship with your provider. Also, remember that your prenatal visits will be more frequent in the last months of your pregnancy. You can expect to have enough visits to get to know a different provider.

It's too late in my pregnancy.

It's not too late if the new caregiver or birth setting does not have policies that prevent you from making a change at this time. Many providers will accept new clients as late as 36 weeks or even later, although it is best to make the switch sooner whenever possible. If you are not completely satisfied with your choice of provider or setting, explore your options immediately. Interview other providers before making this important decision.

I don't feel comfortable "firing" my care provider.

Most midwives and doctors understand that their clients' needs and wishes change over the course of pregnancy, and they don't take it personally when a woman wants to make a change. Even if your care provider doesn't react well, know that it is your decision based on what you know is best for you. Why risk having negative memories of your birth experience or receiving care that doesn't meet your needs just to avoid hurting someone's feelings?



Make sure your provider understands your birth preferences early on.

My provider knows what's best for me.

This is *your* birth, and only you know best how you will feel supported. Unfortunately, many providers practice in a way that serves their interests, not yours. Others practice "cookbook medicine"—applying the same care to all women regardless of their individual circumstances. If you don't feel like you're getting personal attention, or if you feel more like a "number" than an individual, it's time to start looking for a different provider.