

For expectant parents, the list of to-do's can seem long. From finding the perfect paint color for the nursery or researching the best bottles for baby, there is a lot to prepare for. However, a new study published in the [journal Pediatrics](#) found less than 40% of parents-to-be take time to meet with their child's pediatrician before baby makes his or her appearance.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) visiting a pediatrician before giving birth could give your unborn baby a boost when it comes to good health. Dr. Rebecca Sierra, an OSF HealthCare Pediatrician, agrees.

She says the visit is an opportunity to ask questions and build a trusted relationship with your child's doctor, while giving the provider an opportunity to cover important safety topics like car seats, vaccines and even postpartum depression.

"It's a very emotional time and there are a lot of questions new parents have, and when they come in for the first time with their new baby, sometimes they're a little bit stressed and overwhelmed," said Dr. Sierra. "So we definitely encourage people to seek us out and meet us ahead of time so that we can kind of lay a plan for them for the first few months of life and they know a little bit better what to expect."

Dr. Sierra says during this visit, there are certain questions every parent should ask.

"Ask things based on, will you always see my baby at visits, will I be seeing other people at your office, what kinds of options does your office provide after hours - just logistical things about vaccines and how many visits are they going to have and when," suggested Dr. Sierra. "Questions just to understand what they can expect in that first year of life."

Dr. Sierra says the prenatal appointment is also a chance to simply see if the pediatrician is a right fit for your family. To find a pediatrician near you, click [here](#).