

SMART Tips for Finding the Right Obstetrical Healthcare Provider and Hospital

The most important decision a pregnant woman can make to achieve a healthy pregnancy and delivery is the selection of a qualified healthcare provider and safe hospital. The days of picking a name out of a telephone directory or a provider benefits book are gone. And although word-of-mouth referrals from friends are helpful, it is extremely important to research a healthcare professional's credentials to avoid undesired surprises that could place both you and your baby in harm's way.

Dr. Linda Burke-Galloway—a board-certified ob-gyn, an advocate for quality healthcare and patient safety, and author of *The Smart Mother's Guide® to a Better Pregnancy*—offers these SMART tips to assist you in making one of the most important decisions of your life:

S = Seek the advice of labor and delivery nurses regarding the best obstetrical healthcare providers. (Call a local hospital and ask to be connected to the labor and delivery nurses' station.) They know which providers respond to emergencies and which ones don't.

M = Make arrangements to visit the labor and delivery suites of the hospital where you want to deliver your baby well in advance of your due date. Observe how many nurses are working and whether the patients have beds or are lined up in the hallway because beds are not available.

A = Ask the labor and delivery staff what the average nurse-to-patient ratio is.

R = Research your healthcare provider's credentials with your state board of medicine. Is he or she board certified? Have patients filed more than three malpractice suits, or has anyone been awarded a seven-figure settlement?

T = Talk to the provider's patients to obtain their opinions regarding the quality of care that they're receiving, but also trust your instincts. A woman's intuition is more valuable

than we routinely acknowledge.

When you use these SMART tips to locate a healthcare provider and hospital, you can relax and enjoy your pregnancy with the confidence that you and your unborn child will have the best possible care.

For additional information I invite you to obtain a copy of [The Smart Mother's Guide® to a Better Pregnancy](#). Remember, a healthy pregnancy doesn't just happen; it takes a smart mother who knows what to do.