



## Health & Wellness: 10 Questions to Ask When Interviewing Prospective Health Care Providers by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Illness and injury can be frightening, puzzling, and can create secondary anxiety. So can their therapies and costs. Whether a suggestion comes from an internist or acupuncturist, surgeon or shaman, we can greatly reduce health-related stress by becoming active, informed participants in our own health care. Being unwell is one of life's greatest fears, and most stressful experiences, so let's talk about ways to prevent some of the stress we may experience in the search for professionals to support our optimal health.

Select health-care providers "as if your life depended upon it." In my own search for a new primary physician I sought a skilled, well-educated, traditionally trained physician, but I also required that (s)he be well-versed in (*and genuinely intrigued by*) integrative healing arts, and mind/body practices. It was not easy, and it took two years. But it was worth it. I asked every friend and every good doctor I knew, about physicians they trust and respect. Most did not have such a relationship with their physicians. Over time, I met with three internists, all fine doctors with excellent credentials and on staff at good hospitals. I selected one who also took time to look into my eyes and listen, answer my questions respectfully and thoughtfully, and communicate genuine care and a sense of who I am, beyond "*the sore throat in room 2.*" Three fine physicians, but I chose one with whom I feel most comfortable. The time to develop that relationship is before we need it. I've always liked the family practitioner model, which allows the doctor to know a family, its history and what its needs might be. I also surmised that this was someone with whom my aging parent, who lives nearby, would also feel comfortable.

### 10 Q's to Ask When Interviewing Prospective Health Care Professionals:

A "partnership in wellness" should be one goal of every patient and every doctor. The following questions may be helpful to you when interviewing a prospective physician.

1. How long have you been in practice?
2. What do you consider your strength, and which areas interest you most?

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**Health & Stress: 10 Important Questions to Ask**  
by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

3. Why did you become a thoracic surgeon? (*allergist, therapist, etc.*)
4. Where did you study? (*including residencies, fellowships, etc.*)
5. What hours are you in, and what's the after-hours procedure in your practice?
6. What is your greatest satisfaction/frustration in medicine today?
7. With which complementary healing arts are you familiar?
8. With which hospitals are you affiliated?
9. Do you accept my insurance? What is your billing procedure?
10. Mental Note: Did (s)he: Firmly shake your hand? Look into your eyes? Seem friendly and interested? Put you at ease? Feel like someone you could talk to if faced with a crisis?

Remember: A high percentage of doctor's visits are associated with stress-related illness... or illness-related stress. The more we practice techniques and strategies that release stress, anger and depression, fewer office visits may become necessary. It is often the doctor's job to facilitate the body's own remarkable healing capabilities. Ask questions and make informed choices. Then relax, trust the process, and listen to your body-mind.

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