

HOW TO CHOOSE



PRIVATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY



MEDICAL FACILITIES
MEDICAL PROVIDERS
ELDER CARE
FUNERAL HOME
CREMATORIUM



BUILDING SUPPLIES
COUNTERTOPS
ROOFING
INSURANCE



BANK
CREDIT UNION
MORTGAGE LENDER
FINANCIAL ADVISOR
INVESTMENT FIRM
FINANCIAL PLANNER



FURNITURE
MATTRESSES
INTERIOR DESIGN



EXTERMINATOR
LAWN TRACTOR
LANDSCAPER



OFFICE FURNITURE
STORAGE



INTERNET
NEWS SOURCE

THE
DISPATCH

Saturday, January 17, 2026

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Private School

Deciding how and where to educate your child is one of the most significant choices you will make as a parent. While many families opt for public education, others seek out institutions that align with their specific educational philosophies, provide smaller classes and offer greater academic challenge.

Private schools often meet these demands, with data suggesting they frequently achieve high levels of success and superior college-enrollment rates. For many, these schools are a way to prepare children for the rigors of university life or to ensure their education is rooted in specific religious values.

However, the quality of private schools is not uniform. You will find significant differences in facilities, teacher qualifications and tuition costs. If you are currently evaluating private schools for your family, consider the following factors.

Shared values

One major draw of private education is the reinforcement of specific values, modeled by faculty and shared among the student body. Because shared principles can be a powerful influence on a child's development, your first step should be finding a school that mirrors your own.

Investigate whether a school has a religious affiliation and, more importantly, how that faith is integrated into daily life. Some institutions make worship and religious classes a core part of the curriculum, while others maintain a more informal or purely secular focus. Remember that a written mission statement only tells part of the story. To truly understand the school's culture, look at its reputation in the community and the way its staff and students conduct themselves.

Quality of staff

The standards for faculty can vary greatly between private institutions. Some schools demand credentials that far exceed public school requirements, while others may have more flexible standards for hiring and training.

If teacher expertise is a priority for you, do not hesitate to ask about their faculty's backgrounds. Inquire about their degrees, where they were educated and whether they participate in ongo-

ing professional development. Often, a school's local reputation will provide more insight into the quality of its educators than a list of certificates alone, so seek feedback from other community members.

The student body

Before making a final commitment, plan to spend at least one full day visiting the campus in person. Observing a few classes will allow you to see how students behave and how the faculty manages discipline.

Speaking with parents of current or former students can provide "inside" information about any issues within the student population. While no school is without its challenges, you want to see that problems are handled effectively. Whether the school's approach is strictly disciplined or more relaxed, you must feel certain that your child will be in a safe and supportive environment. Watching student interactions both in the classroom and after hours can offer valuable clues about the school's atmosphere.

Future opportunities

Ultimately, most parents choose private education to broaden their child's future prospects. The school you select can have a major impact on everything from college admissions to participation in high-level sports and music programs.

Ask for specific data regarding college acceptance rates, as many private schools have established track records of placing students in elite universities. You should also look closely at extracurricular offerings, both for your child's current age and for their future interests. A child in elementary school may not be focused on competitive sports yet, but having access to those teams—or to arts, language and service clubs—will be vital as they grow.

A school with a robust variety of well-managed activities will provide your child with more paths to success during their middle and high school years. By carefully evaluating these values, staff members, student interactions and long-term opportunities, you can feel confident in choosing the best school for your child.

Now Accepting
Applications for the
2026-2027 Year!



HERITAGE ACADEMY

A School that Inspires, Challenges & Motivates our Students

Fully accredited by: Midsouth Association of Independent Schools and Cognia



Elementary
Grades K3-6
Vonda Winter, Principal
662-327-1556

Head of School
Sean Harrison
662-327-5272

High School
Grades 7-12
Karen Pittman, Principal
662-327-5272

Heritage Academy...Serving the educational needs of families since 1964.

Tours available for all grades daily.
Please contact Beth Lucas at bethlucas@heritagepatriots.com

www.HeritagePatriots.com



Heritage Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnic origin or sex. Qualified applicants of all races and creeds are welcome.

HOW TO CHOOSE

A University

Choosing a university is a major decision with long-term implications for both your career and financial future. For most students, this choice begins in the sophomore or junior years of high school. Many factors come into play, including your academic record, budget, the quality of the curriculum, the school's location and the availability of extracurriculars and alumni networks. Ultimately, you are the one who will navigate this important transition from high school to your professional life.

With over 4,000 institutions in the United States, finding the perfect fit can feel overwhelming. The right school can propel you toward your financial and career aspirations, while a poor fit could result in significant student debt. Here are several factors to weigh when making your choice.

Campus scale and environment

Consider whether you thrive in a small, personal setting or a expansive campus environment. Some institutions prioritize low student-to-teacher ratios, while others utilize large lecture halls for their coursework. As you narrow your options, pay close attention to the total student population and typical class sizes.

Specialized programs and reputation

A university's standing in the academic world is a critical factor that can significantly impact your career trajectory. Most institutions are particularly well-regarded for specific majors. It is important to determine if a school excels in the specific field you wish to pursue. Graduating from a prestigious institution often provides access to superior resources and improves your chances of securing employment due to strong name recognition.

Exploring minors and electives

Once you have selected a primary major, think about your secondary interests. Many schools allow for double majors or minors within your degree plan. Even if you stick to a single major, your schedule will include elective courses. These classes offer a chance to explore meaningful subjects that can add depth to your resume or even lead to a new hobby.

Occasionally, an elective can be so engaging that it prompts a change in majors. Review a school's list of elective offerings before you submit an application.

Leveraging alumni networks

Do not overlook the value of alumni connections within your family or social circle. Recommendations or networking with those already in your field can give your career a head start. Admissions departments view applicants with alumni ties favorably, and these professionals can offer practical advice on navigating the program and utilizing your degree effectively after graduation.

Social and extracurricular life

The social atmosphere and outside-of-class activities are essential components of the college experience. The relationships you build beyond the classroom are invaluable; some schools are known for robust Greek life, while others boast elite athletic programs. Participating in these activities helps you network and build friendships that often last a lifetime. Ensure the school's overall culture aligns with your personal values.

Online learning opportunities

If you have personal obligations or simply work better at home, online classes are a viable path. Distance learning can reduce costs, particularly regarding travel, and often allows you to move through the material at an accelerated pace. This flexibility can help you graduate sooner or balance a busy lifestyle. If you choose this route, verify the school's reputation and academic credentials. Today, many traditional universities offer a mix of online and in-person learning, allowing you to earn a prestigious degree with maximum flexibility.

Once you have identified schools that meet your criteria, plan an in-person visit. Most campuses host designated days for prospective students to tour facilities and meet with faculty and current students. While choosing a university is a complex process, understanding your own academic and personal needs will help you find the ideal institution.

A photograph of three students walking across a white metal truss bridge. The students are a young woman on the left, a young man in the center, and another young woman on the right. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. The man is wearing a dark blue t-shirt with a white 'W' logo and black shorts. The woman on the left is wearing a dark blue t-shirt with a white 'W' logo and light blue jeans. The woman on the right is wearing a light blue t-shirt and light blue jeans. Large, semi-transparent blue letters spelling 'BE BOLD' are overlaid on the image. The background shows the bridge's structure and some trees in the distance.

Nationally ranked, The W offers a personalized learning experience and unique programs at one of the most affordable tuition rates in the region.

Join a campus community that will empower you to follow your dreams. **Be Bold**—your future starts here!

MUW.EDU

The
W

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Building Supply Store



Whether you're building a new home, remodeling a kitchen, or managing rental properties, choosing the right building material provider can make or break your project. Price matters, but reliability, expertise and service matter even more. Here are a few key things to look for when selecting a local building material supplier.

Look for expertise you can rely on

A quality building material provider should be more than just a place to buy lumber. Look for a team with experienced, dedicated salespeople who understand construction from the foundation up. Knowledgeable staff can help you choose the right products, spot potential issues early and keep your project moving forward without costly delays.

One supplier for the majority of the job

Working with multiple suppliers can slow a project down. A strong provider should offer a wide range of materials, including lumber, treated materials, windows, doors, kitchen cabinets, molding and other essential components. Having everything in one place saves time, simplifies ordering and ensures consistency throughout the build.

Services that add real value

The best suppliers go beyond simply selling products. Services like blueprint takeoffs help builders and remodelers estimate materials accurately, reducing waste and surprises.

Technology tools — such as kitchen cabinet drawings and job visualization — allow customers to see the finished result before construction begins, improving confidence and decision-making.

Dependable delivery, no matter the size

Timely delivery is critical. Choose a supplier with the equipment and fleet to handle deliveries of all sizes, from small remodels to full home builds. Large trucks, dependable scheduling and a wide service area can keep your jobsite stocked and productive.

A commitment to customer service

Strong customer service isn't just a bonus — it's essential. Look for a company that values respect, takes pride in its work and truly cares about the success of your project. A dependable supplier should stand behind their word, communicate clearly, and deliver excellence every step of the way.

Choosing local makes a difference

Local building material providers understand the needs of the community they serve. Look for a local, family owned supplier that supports homeowners, builders, remodelers and rental property managers with dependable service, quality materials, and a team that genuinely cares about your business and your project. When your project matters, choosing the right supplier makes all the difference.



FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED FOR *Five* GENERATIONS

**Building, Repair,
Maintenance Supplies,
Windows, Doors and
Much More!**

**CALL US TODAY TO GET
HELP ON YOUR PROJECT
OR GET YOUR NEXT
QUOTE ON MATERIALS!**



**NEW
HOME**

BUILDING STORES

WWW.NEWHOMEBUILDING.NET

1701 MAIN STREET | COLUMBUS, MS | 662-328-4451

MONDAY - FRIDAY 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Roofing Company

When it's time to replace your roof, hiring a skilled contractor ensures the job is done right and built to last for many years. This is not the moment to cut corners with a fly-by-night company just to save a few dollars upfront.

Your first step in finding a reliable partner is to ask your family, friends and neighbors for their personal recommendations. You can also look on the internet for roofing contractors in your area. Some websites offer lists of professionals, along with reviews of their work.

During your research, it is wise to focus on the quality of their craftsmanship as well as their cleanup process. You likely do not want to find shingle scraps or stray nails left behind after the crew has finished the job. Don't hire professionals who leave debris on your property when the work is done.

Some contractors travel across the country looking for work, often appearing only after a community has experienced a heavy storm or natural disaster. Because these "storm chasers" are primarily interested in making money from insurance claims, they often cannot provide realistic guarantees for their work. You might find they are on the other side of the country if your roof starts to leak later on.

Becoming acquainted with local contractors is especially important if you live in an area prone to hurricanes or high winds. It is always helpful to know exactly who to call if your house needs repair work in the future.

Generally, a reputable roofer should provide a guarantee lasting between five and twelve years. If a company has been operating for less than five years, you may find it difficult to determine the long-term quality of their work.

Continue to ask questions about time frames and estimates. Get a written estimate before proceeding with any work. Communicating with the contractor will let them know that you will be taking a hands-on approach to this project.

Find out whether the roofers recommend standard or architectural shingles, what they will do if they find damaged decking and when they might be available to start. Ask about the warranty and request to have it in writing.

You should verify that every professional working on your property is licensed and bonded. Insurance is particularly vital for roofing contractors, as they must be able to cover any accidental damage they might cause to your home. It is equally essential that their workers are covered by insurance in the event someone is injured on the job.

Before any work commences, you must receive a written contract from the roofer, which you should read over carefully. This document will state the final cost, the specific materials to be used and exactly what the work will entail.

By following these tips, you can feel confident that you have found the best roofing contractor in your community.

A TRUSTED NAME in roofing since 1969.

- Fully bonded & insured for any size job
- Single-ply roofing services
- Specialize in commercial roofing
- Residential roofing of any size
- Repair services
- Custom metal roof and wall panels
- Custom sheet metal fabrication
- Coating restoration

**Call our experienced
management team today
to request a consultation:
662.327.4590**

A photograph of a worker on a roof. The worker is wearing a dark shirt, khaki pants, and a tool belt. They are positioned on a shingled roof, and a brick chimney is visible on the left side. The sky is blue with some clouds. The company logo is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

**HOLLIS
ROOFING, INC.**

662.327.4590 • www.hollisroofing.com • 213 Conway Drive • Columbus, MS

HOW TO CHOOSE

An Interior Designer

Interior designers can bring a “wow” factor to any room in your home or office. By designing a cohesive theme, they skillfully coordinate furniture, colors and artwork to create a space that is both stylish and full of personality.

Working with a designer not only helps clarify your vision but can also save time and money using their professional contacts to access paint, fabrics, furniture and installation. Perhaps most importantly, their expertise can help you avoid costly design mistakes.

Here are a few things to consider if you think an interior designer could benefit your living or work space.

Know your personal taste

First, think about your personal tastes. Browsing magazines, saving images online or printing designs you love can help you recognize patterns in your personal preferences. Organizing these images in a folder or binder, along with notes about why each one stands out, can give your designer valuable insight into your preferences.

It is also a good idea to learn some interior design terminology so you can speak the same language as the designer. Do you know the difference between a club chair, armoire and highboy? Understanding common terms allows you to communicate clearly and reduces the chance of misunderstandings later in the process.

Locate interior designers

To find a qualified professional, start by reviewing directories from organizations such as the American Society of Interior Designers or the National Kitchen and Bath Association. Personal referrals are also invaluable. If you admire a friend’s home, ask who designed it.

Narrow your search to three designers and schedule interviews. These meetings often take place in the designer’s office so you can view samples and past projects, although some professionals prefer to visit your home to better understand the space and offer tailored suggestions.

Cost of an interior designer

Always ask how a designer structures their fees. There are typically three common billing methods.

Some charge an hourly rate, often requiring a minimum number of hours paid in advance, with the option to purchase additional time later.

Others use a cost plus model, adding a percentage to the price of furnishings and materials purchased on your behalf. If you choose this option, being upfront about your budget is essential. They will welcome your honesty.

The third choice is a combination of by-the-hour and cost-plus.

Certification and training

Currently, 28 states require interior designers to be certified. These certifications are overseen by organizations such as the National Kitchen and Bath Association and the American Society of Interior Designers. To meet their requirements, a designer must hold at least an associate’s degree, complete an apprenticeship, and pass a certification exam. Many professionals continue their education after initial certification to demonstrate advanced or specialized skills.

Style

You will likely find that the best designers have strong design philosophies, but the ideal professional is one who can understand and reflect your personal style. Since you are the one living in the home, it is important to choose someone flexible and communicative who adapts to your preferences rather than expecting you to adapt to theirs. If a designer does not respond well to feedback, they may not be the right fit for you.

After interviewing several candidates and identifying a strong connection, you can move forward with discussions about timelines and costs. Be sure to wait until a written contract is in place before making any payments.

With thoughtful research and a clear sense of your own style, you can find a designer who transforms your house into a place that truly feels like home.



Penny Bowen
PENNY BOWEN
designs, inc.

409 college street | downtown columbus
662-241-5055 | www.pennybowen.com

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Furniture Store

When it comes to choosing furniture, there's nothing quite like experiencing it firsthand—whether you're sitting, lying down or simply feeling the materials. That's why visiting a furniture store in person often leads to better purchases.

With so many styles and options available, it's worth taking the time to try pieces out before committing. Even if you've spent hours browsing online, seeing furniture arranged in a room setting can completely change your perspective on what fits your home. Sometimes it just makes more sense to step away from the screen and explore local stores.

Finding the perfect combination of taste, style, and budget can be a challenge, but it's also a chance to get creative. You might even discover that the process is genuinely enjoyable.

Quality that lasts

You should prioritize finding a store that carries high-quality furniture built for longevity. While inexpensive accessories can be bought cheaply and changed often, big furniture investments — sofas, dining tables and the like — need to be purchased for the long term. This means you should value solid construction over a trendy appearance.

Solid construction isn't always apparent at first glance. It should feel solid, not flimsy, of course. Beyond that, find out as much information as possible about the frame, materials and what kind of warranty it comes with. Knowledgeable staff can explain how their items are manufactured and why those construction methods are important for your home. The best stores employ staff who act as helpful guides and educators rather than high-pressure salespeople.

Value, not just price

You may find it is better to invest more in a

quality piece than to save money on something that will not stand the test of time. As the size of your investment increases, the importance of durable design and quality becomes even more critical.

An affordable sofa is not a true value if it is made with weak or low-quality materials.

Similarly, a high-priced love seat is not a wise purchase if the internal frame is not built to last. It is often safest to look for brands that have earned a strong reputation and a long track record of excellence.

Service and delivery

Every store has a different customer service policy. Choose one that is well known for being loyal to its customers. You should inquire about return and exchange policies, as some stores may allow you to swap an item if it does not meet your expectations. It is also smart to ask about any restocking fees that might apply if a return is permitted.

Additionally, you should ask about delivery options, including the cost, the distance they are willing to travel and the estimated arrival time.

When you are comparing different stores, remember to factor these delivery fees into the total cost. A low price on a couch will not actually save you money if it is paired with an expensive delivery charge. You might find that paying slightly more for the furniture itself is worth it if the store offers reduced or free delivery.

Ultimately, the quality of the furniture and the level of service you receive are the most important factors to consider. Once you find a store that excels in both, you can enjoy the process of beautifying your home for many years to come.



ROCK BOTTOM

Furniture | Mattresses | Appliances

201T Alabama St. | Columbus, MS 39702 | 662.570.4747

115 Hwy. 12 | Starkville, MS 39759 | 662.268.8412

HOW TO CHOOSE

Granite Countertops

Often considered the heart of the home, the kitchen is where families gather, meals are made and style and function come together. When it comes to a kitchen, countertops are often the central design statement. While you have many options to choose from, few materials can match the classic appeal and long-lasting durability of granite.

Real estate agents frequently point to granite as a significant selling point, and it has become the standard choice for kitchens and bathrooms in both new builds and renovated homes.

If you are currently shopping for new surfaces, granite is a material you should definitely consider. Here are some things to keep in mind.

Educate yourself

It is helpful to know that not all granite is created equal. While all natural granite is formed through similar geologic processes — creating a unique variety of colors mixed with quartz crystals — there is a wide range of differences in the stone itself.

You might find that picking your stone solely from a catalog picture or a tiny sample leads to disappointment. Instead, you should visit a home store in person to explore the selection. Seeing the slabs for yourself will help you understand the different types available and how they vary in mineral composition and color.

Is it granite?

The popularity of granite has grown tremendously over the last decade, which has also led to a rise in alternative products that mimic its look.

The countertops you assumed were granite in a hotel or at a friend's house could have actually been a synthetic material. Some of these alternatives are created to be more budget-friendly or even more durable than real stone, but a reputable countertop company can help you weigh the strengths and weaknesses of every option on the market.

Fitting your design

Depending on where the stone was quarried, you can find granite slabs in colors ranging from black and white to shades of brown, blue and red. You will also see incredible variety in the crystal patterns and veining of each individual slab.

While selecting your stone is a personal choice, a few basic design principles can guide you.

Just as you might experience with paint, lighter stone colors can help a small room feel much more open and spacious. Likewise, dark colored granite can make a small kitchen feel even smaller.

If your kitchen is spacious and bright, you will find that your choices are nearly endless because almost any slab will look wonderful. But for smaller, darker kitchens, your choices will be a bit more limited because dark countertops can make the space feel gloomy and hemmed-in.

You should look for a color that offers a nice contrast and pairs well with your cabinet materials. For a striking look, dark granite can look beautiful when paired with light-colored wood cabinets.

The other colors in your decor will play a role in your choice, too, from the flooring to the paint on the walls and even the kitchen hardware and appliances you're using. Some countertop companies will even offer the experience of a decorator to help you make the right choice.

The other elements of your decor, such as your flooring, wall paint and even your appliances and hardware should also influence your decision. Some companies will even provide you with the help of a decorator to ensure you make the right choice. If you are planning to sell your home soon, you should consider how potential buyers might view your selection. In this case, it is usually better to avoid polarizing colors or trends that might fade quickly. Conservative choices are often the best bet for a quick sale.

By taking the time to learn about the different styles available, you can add lasting beauty and value to your home.

THE GRANITE GUYS

WE MOVE MOUNTAINS FOR YOUR COUNTERTOPS!

BEAUTIFUL. DURABLE. AFFORDABLE.



CUSTOM FABRICATION AND
INSTALLATION OF GRANITE,
MARBLE, QUARTZ, QUARTZITE
AND SOAPSTONE.

662.329.8687

2859 S. FRONTAGE RD.
COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI

MSGRANITEGUYS.COM

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Mattress

A quality mattress is often the deciding factor between waking up refreshed or spending the night tossing and turning. Because humans spend roughly a third of their lives asleep — or attempting to fall asleep — investing in a healthy sleep environment is essential for long-term health and longevity.

If your current bed is lumpy or excessively hard, you likely wake up feeling stiff and poorly rested. Finding a mattress tailored to your body type and preferred level of firmness will help you drift off more quickly and improve the overall quality of your sleep.

The mattress industry has evolved significantly, moving beyond traditional showrooms to include memory foam technology, high-tech comfort sensors, and convenient online companies that ship directly to your door. While the sheer volume of choices and price points can feel overwhelming, the selection process is actually quite straightforward if you take it step-by-step.

Start your search by asking friends and family for their personal recommendations, then move your research online to compare features and narrow down your list.

View this purchase as a long-term investment in your physical well-being. Don't immediately shy away from high-end models; these premium options are frequently featured in closeout events or holiday sales. Investing in quality pays off, as a well-made mattress lasts longer and is less prone to sagging or structural breakdown over time.

Take a moment to evaluate your current bed size. You may find that now is the perfect time to upgrade to a larger mattress that allows you to fully stretch out and relax.

As you shop, keep these specific considerations in mind:

■ Do you need a firm or soft mattress? People with a bad back, neck or leg pain, or other circulatory problems might require firm support to keep their spines aligned. Other people prefer flexible support that fits the contours of their bodies.

■ Do you sleep with another person? Mattresses made of memory foam might be beneficial, as it will give you a personalized

experience without disturbing the other person's sleep.

■ Standard mattresses can exacerbate allergies if you are sensitive to lint, cotton, dust or dust mites. If you or your partner have allergies, consider getting a latex, foam or water mattress. You might also think about getting a hypoallergenic mattress cover.

When you are looking at actual mattress options, the following are popular choices:

■ Pillow-top mattresses are famous for their softness; however, they do have levels of firmness. They also require a larger bottom sheet because the pillow-top adds to their extra thickness.

■ Coil spring construction are great choices for people who want a firm mattress. This option has the ability to keep your spine aligned. Most mattress stores can show you samples of their product lines. Choose the best construction you can afford.

■ "Memory" or high-density foam or latex mattress are helpful if you have physical issues, such as skeletal pain or circulatory problems. This mattress conforms to the shape of the body. It also minimizes pressure points from the head, shoulders and hips.

■ Adjustable air mattresses allow each person to change the firmness through electronic and mechanical devices that control air chambers. It is an ideal choice for partners who need to have different mattress preferences and needs. You can also alter firmness for yourself, depending on your physical condition.

When you are out shopping, don't be afraid to actually lie down and test the beds. Roll over and pay attention to how your body reacts to ensure you are truly comfortable.

Be sure to ask about the warranty or guarantee. A 10-year warranty is the industry standard; if a company offers less or none at all, you should look elsewhere. Some online brands also offer satisfaction guarantees that allow for returns.

Ultimately, your mattress is a significant long-term investment. If you choose wisely, you will enjoy years of deep sleep and more energetic days

Upgrade your mattress today!



Twin \$179⁹⁹ *mattress only*
Twin \$279⁹⁹ *set price*

Full \$189⁹⁹ *mattress only*
Full \$289⁹⁹ *set price*

Queen \$199⁹⁹ *mattress only*
Queen \$299⁹⁹ *set price*

King \$399⁹⁹ *mattress only*
King \$499⁹⁹ *set price*

Shop these quality brands:

ASHLEY
SLEEP

nectar

DREAMCLOUD

chime
BY ASHLEY

TEMPUR-PEDIC

purple

STEARNS
& FOSTER

Sealy

Beautyrest

Serta

GHOSTBED

bedgear

MOLECULE

Casper

ROCK BOTTOM

Furniture | Mattresses | Appliances

201T Alabama St. | Columbus, MS 39702 | 662.570.4747

115 Hwy. 12 | Starkville, MS 39759 | 662.268.8412

HOW TO CHOOSE

Office Furniture

Buying office furniture is no simple task. Your furniture needs to do more than just look good. It should be functional, comfortable, and create a positive impression for everyone who walks into your office. You have a lot to think about. Desks and chairs need to fit the work being done, storage should be the right size and durable, and guest chairs, end tables and lighting all need to work together in your space.

Don't let all the options overwhelm you. There are stores ready to help you find exactly what you need. Keep a few key points in mind as you shop, and you will see how much easier the process becomes.

Customer impression

Every piece of furniture and every decoration leaves a lasting impression on your clients.

Looks matter. Coordinated furniture and accessories make your office appear organized and reliable. People are often suspicious of businesses that use worn-out chairs and mismatched decor. It can make your office — and the work you do — seem careless and haphazard.

New leather chairs will look out of place next to an old, worn avocado green table. To create a strong appearance, replace entire sets at once. Your office will instantly feel more professional and welcoming.

High-quality sales

Choose furnishings and supplies that will last. Constantly replacing items is not a smart business move. High-quality pieces may cost more upfront, but they save you time and money in the long run. Smart business owners know that quality matters, even down to the smallest details.

For example, a cheap ream of paper might seem like a good deal, but it can leave a bad impression on customers and frustrate your staff

when it jams the printers. Look for stores that offer long warranties. A desk with a 10-year warranty can save you money and shows the company stands behind its products.

Comfort

It only makes sense that you should feel as comfortable as possible while working. It is vital that your office furniture feels safe for your staff and customers. It will have a huge effect on office morale and the health and productivity of your employees.

You could possibly face legal action or worker compensation claims if your office furniture is not ergonomically correct. Ill-fitting furniture is the cause of carpal tunnel syndrome, repetitive stress injuries and neck and back injuries. Even if you don't have to pay worker comp claims, you might still end up paying the costs of employees who are out of work because they have been injured.

Choose office chairs that can be adjusted. Talk to your employees about their needs. Whether you need pillows, cushions or platforms, a little luxury can go a long way toward making your workplace more productive. You may even want to consider a standing desk arrangement.

Convenience

The best retail shops have in-depth knowledge about their inventory. They will inform you about which supplies or furniture will look best in your environment. An experienced salesperson will provide insights that are not in a catalog. Look for stores that focus on great customer service. You deserve personal attention. Verify that they have a reasonable return policy as well.

A store with a convenient location, store hours that match your schedule and good service will probably offer you great value for your money.

Sullivan's

OFFICE SUPPLY

Your workspace is our business.

Commercial Furniture

Our primary focus is commercial furniture, however we cater to a diverse range of markets and work to make sure customer's concerns are met with effective solutions.

Interior Design Services

Get one-on-one interior design help from our dedicated professionals at no extra charge. Let us measure your space, plan an effective layout, and help you select from a variety of furniture.

Delivery & Installation

Our installation team provides services to the Golden Triangle Region. We deliver, install, and you get back to work!

662.323.5222

204 E. Main St. Starkville

www.sullivansoffice.com



As a family-owned company with a team of dedicated professionals and a combined 50+ years of experience, our team is determined to find the best possible solution for your work space.

Our commitment to both business success and client satisfaction fuels our approach. We are passionate about understanding your individual needs and delivering solutions that exceed your expectations.



HOW TO CHOOSE

A Storage Facility

Self-storage facilities have long served as a practical solution for those transitioning between homes, managing unique collections, or simply dealing with a lack of space at their current residence.

These centers offer various unit sizes and square footage to accommodate different needs. Most facilities prioritize safety through monitoring and often provide 24-hour access to renters. If you are currently in the market for a unit, you have likely noticed a high volume of facilities competing for your business.

Before making a final selection, there are several vital factors you should keep in mind.

Choosing a location

When picking a storage company, proximity is an important consideration. Ideally, the facility should be situated near your residence or workplace to ensure you can reach it easily. Having a convenient location becomes especially important when you need to frequently drop off or pick up items.

Additionally, it is wise to avoid facilities located in high-crime areas, as centers in safer neighborhoods generally offer better overall security.

Evaluating security

The safety of your property throughout the rental period is paramount. You should visit a potential facility in person to inspect their safety measures, or at least speak with a detailed representative over the phone if a visit isn't possible. The most reliable centers typically utilize three distinct layers of protection:

- A sturdy security fence that is difficult to scale and topped with barbed wire to prevent unauthorized entry.

- Robust, heavy-duty doors secured by electronic codes, physical keys or biometric scanners to protect your unit.

- Professional security personnel who remain on the premises around the clock.

Unit sizes and climate control

The volume of items you intend to store will dictate the size of the unit you require. Options can range from compact 24-square-foot lockers to large units exceeding 300 square feet for vehicles or furniture. For delicate items like musical instruments, it is essential to find a facility that offers climate control. You can often request specific units that regulate both temperature and humidity levels to protect your belongings.

Access and operating hours

Think about how frequently you will need to enter your unit. While some renters only need to visit once or twice over several months, others may require access multiple times per week. Ensure the facility's operating hours align with your own availability. If your schedule is often in flux, a center that permits 24-hour access may be your best bet.

Balancing price and quality

Avoid making your decision based on the lowest price alone. A bargain-basement rate might indicate that the facility is cutting corners on building maintenance or essential security features. Choosing the cheapest option could lead to the much higher "cost" of having your property damaged or stolen. While smaller units are naturally more affordable than larger ones, you should be wary of any facility whose overall pricing seems significantly lower than the local average.

The most effective way to identify a reliable storage center is through personal recommendations from people you trust. Online research and advertisements can also provide helpful leads, but it is important to compare several different providers before making a choice. Start your search early, proceed carefully, and trust your judgment throughout the process.



NEED MORE SPACE?

RENT MORE SPACE!

RAS

RENT-A-SPACE

Columbus, MS

662-327-5656

© The Dispatch



- 5 Locations in the Columbus Area
- Indoor Climate Controlled Self Storage Units
- On Site Management
- Clean Well Kept Facility
- Office Space Available
- Computerized Gate and Building Access
- Free Use of Hand Carts and Dollies
- Moving Boxes and Supplies for Sale
- Electronic Security and Surveillance Cameras
- Drive Thru Canopy for Loading and Unloading

WWW.COLUMBUSRENTASPACE.COM

HOW TO CHOOSE

An Exterminator

An invasion of ants, spiders, roaches, rodents and termites can become unmanageable, perhaps even threatening the structure of your home. This is when professionals can step in to help protect your home. Pest control is NOT a DIY trend. A deep understanding of pest behavior, proper product selection and correct application methods separates true professionals from amateurs.

The right professional pest control company can provide safe, effective, trustworthy and reliable service. Here are some tips to help you choose the right pest control company.

Knowledge is key

Effective pest control starts with expertise. Professional pest control companies use integrated pest management strategies to create effective and targeted plans customers. In the war on pests, knowledge is the most effective weapon. Pest identification, a deep understanding of available products and experience in various application methods are just a few items that separate the amateurs from the professionals.

Local matters – a lot

It is important to select a company that is committed to the community they serve. “Big Box” pest control companies often have a one-size-fits-all approach, whereas local companies have a better understanding of the people and pests specific to an area or region. This understanding allows local companies to tailor a more individualized experience, ultimately better serving you, the customer.

Big Box companies have annual spring campaigns to sell, sell, sell and then leave. Local companies often have a greater long-term commitment to the communities which they service, some having served their communities

for multiple generations.

Price doesn't always equal value

People often say “you get what you pay for”, but that is not always the case. Price shopping for the lowest rates can leave a customer with a less knowledgeable operator, or a company that does not use the best products available.

Whereas companies with the highest price at times may be overcharging for their services or using fear tactics to sell unneeded services because they are more profitable.

Choose a competitively priced pest control company dedicated to long term superior service.

Customer service

When choosing any service provider, customer service should be a top consideration. Some companies want you to conform to their programing. Great customer service allows the customer to choose services and times that best fit their lifestyle and schedule. Pest control service is not a one size fits all; it should be tailored to each customer and situation!

NorthEast Exterminating is a fourth generation, locally owned and operated pest and termite control company serving the Golden Triangle and Beyond. Since 1951, NorthEast Exterminating has combined the latest innovations in pest control technology with good old-fashioned customer service. Their team understands that effective pest control is about more than bugs—it's all about people. For homeowners seeking trusted, local expertise and personalized service, NorthEast Exterminating offers free quotes and a long-standing family tradition of customer care. As they've said for generations: “If it Crawls... Call NorthEast Exterminating.”

Create a **HEALTHIER** and more comfortable space with effective perimeter and interior pest control.

- RODENTS
- ANTS
- ROACHES
- FLEAS / TICKS
- BED BUGS
- MOSQUITOS
- SPIDERS
- TERMITES



If it crawls, call...

**NorthEast
Exterminating
LLC**

Jimmy Linley • Richard Linley

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Lawn Tractor

If you manage a substantial lawn or a large piece of land, you have likely considered investing in a lawn tractor at some point. The wide variety of models available today, along with the range of tasks they can handle, makes them an appealing purchase. Selecting the right tractor involves weighing several key factors, including your property's acreage, required towing power, and your budget.

Below is some guidance to help you find the machine that best suits your needs.

The right fit

Lawn tractors are available across a wide range of prices and capabilities, starting around \$1,800 for a basic entry-level model and rising to \$10,000 or more for professional, commercial-grade equipment. Between these extremes, you will find a diverse array of features and varying levels of build quality. To choose the right tractor, begin by clearly defining how you plan to use the machine.

The total area of your lawn is a key consideration; larger properties typically benefit from a wider mowing deck. Consider whether you plan to use the tractor for tasks beyond mowing, such as clearing snow or transporting gardening materials. High-end lawn tractors often function more like small agricultural machines than standard riding mowers, and many can be equipped with attachments such as trailers, baggers, heavy-duty tillers and snowblowers.

Ultimately, you are investing in more than just a mower. These machines serve as versatile platforms for a variety of outdoor projects. Even if you don't plan to purchase add-ons immediately, check which accessories are compatible with each model. Having these options available in the future can be a major advantage.

Speed and maneuverability

Efficiency is a top priority for homeowners

who want to complete yard work quickly. While a wide mowing deck allows you to cover more ground in a single pass, it is also important to consider the tractor's speed and transmission. Pay attention to how much effort is required to shift gears and maneuver around obstacles.

Zero-turn mowers have become a popular choice because they can pivot instantly and precisely, making them suitable for yards of all shapes and sizes. Once primarily used by professional landscaping crews, these mowers are now increasingly accessible for residential use. They are especially effective for mowing around house foundations, play sets and other confined spaces.

Durability

Because you want your investment to last, it is important to research a brand's reputation for durability. Review consumer feedback and ask friends or family who have experience with lawn care brands for their recommendations. You can also gain valuable insights by visiting a local retailer and speaking with an experienced salesperson.

While the market offers many inexpensive, entry-level riding mowers, many of these models lack a proven track record for longevity. Over the long term, it is usually more cost-effective to invest in a sturdy model from a trusted manufacturer. Examine the build quality of different models carefully to ensure they are up to the tasks you have in mind.

You may not need the heavy-duty engineering or high cost of a commercial unit, but it is wise to purchase the highest-quality model within your budget and follow the recommended maintenance schedule. This approach helps ensure you get the maximum value from your purchase. Finally, finding a reliable dealer is a critical step. Once you locate an established local shop with a history of satisfied clients, you will be well positioned to choose the tractor that is right for you.



TOUGH JOBS NEED TOUGH MACHINES!

EQUIPMENT SALES • RENTALS • EXPERT SERVICE



L SERIES COMPACT TRACTORS



Z SERIES ZERO-TURN MOWERS



KX SERIES COMPACT EXCAVATORS



DAILY, WEEKLY & MONTHLY
RENTALS AVAILABLE!



- ✓ Expert sales pros skilled at finding the right model
- ✓ Huge selection in-stock
- ✓ Unparalleled parts & service support
- ✓ Great low-rate financing

H&R AGRI-POWER
THE POWER TO GET YOU **MORE!**

841 SOUTH FRONTAGE RD
COLUMBUS, MS 39701
662-328-5341
WWW.HRAGRIPOWER.COM
f t i y i n

ask about **LOW-RATE FINANCING DEALS!**

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Landscaper

Choosing a professional landscaper can elevate your home's beauty and make your outdoor living space more enjoyable. Whether you are starting with a new build or refreshing an existing yard, these experts bring specialized skills and access to high quality plants and hardscaping materials.

Because creating a stunning lawn and garden can be challenging, hiring a professional makes both the initial project and long term maintenance far more manageable.

If you are in the market for a landscaping service, keep the following advice in mind.

Types of landscapes

Different aesthetic styles require specific expertise from a landscaper. Before beginning your search for a professional, identify which look best suits your personal taste.

Formal gardens are defined by geometric patterns and balanced designs. In this style, plants serve as focal points, creating a strong sense of symmetry throughout the yard. To execute this look successfully, a landscaper must be highly skilled in precise hedge pruning.

In contrast, informal landscapes are characterized by a sense of "organized chaos." While plant placement may appear random, the landscaper must be proficient in thoughtfully incorporating urns and planters into the design.

The English garden style places the home at the center of the design, with every element of the outdoor space flowing together seamlessly. Landscapers who specialize in this style must be adept at training climbing vines, which are a vital component of the look.

Oriental designs lean toward minimalism, utilizing evergreens, moss and rocks to create a sense of quiet and calm.

Designing a woodland garden, meanwhile, requires a professional with extensive knowledge of native species and the ability to showcase them in a natural setting.

Finally, there is a growing demand for eco-friendly landscaping options. This approach requires a professional who understands native flora, water conservation techniques and methods for minimizing the need for frequent lawn mowing.

Set your budget

Decide on a realistic budget and commit to staying within those limits. Determine what you can afford for both the initial work and ongoing annual upkeep. Having a clear budget allows you to prioritize effectively, ensuring your most important needs are met.

You may find that some trade-offs are

necessary. For example, if installing a new retaining wall is your top priority, you might need to postpone adding an irrigation system. Conversely, if automatic watering is most important, you could reduce the frequency of professional lawn mowing to offset costs.

Do not be discouraged if your budget is limited. Some professionals may offer competitive rates to earn your business or suggest creative, cost-effective solutions to help you achieve your vision.

Prioritize your needs

Clarifying your specific goals will help you determine which services to look for in a landscaping company. Most firms offer a wide range of services, including routine lawn and garden care, weed management, tree trimming, new garden installations, irrigation repairs and hardscaping projects such as retaining walls.

Get referrals

Your neighbors can be excellent resources for finding reliable landscaping help. If you admire a yard in your neighborhood, consider asking the homeowner for the name of their landscaping provider. This also gives you the opportunity to ask about the company's strengths and weaknesses. You may even be able to observe the crew while they are working nearby.

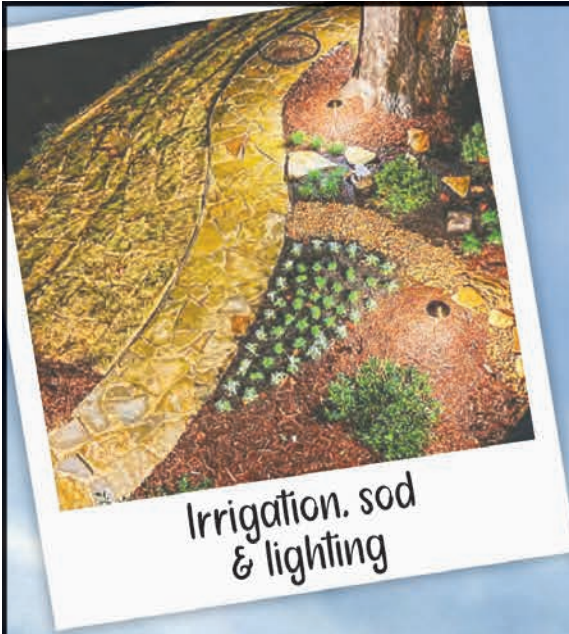
Watching a team in action can offer valuable insight into their professionalism, work habits, and employee conduct before you ever make contact.

You can also research landscaping companies online, but be sure to read client testimonials carefully. Keep in mind that negative reviews are not always entirely accurate. In some cases, a dissatisfied customer may exaggerate a minor issue due to a personal grievance. Likewise, be cautious of overly positive reviews, as some businesses may post glowing feedback from individuals who have not actually used their services.

For additional verification, check with the Better Business Bureau (BBB). They can provide information on past complaints and how the company addressed and resolved those disputes.

Consider availability

Another vital consideration is the company's schedule. One of your first questions should be how often they can visit for routine maintenance. If you prefer to be on-site while the work is being done, make sure their working hours align with your availability.



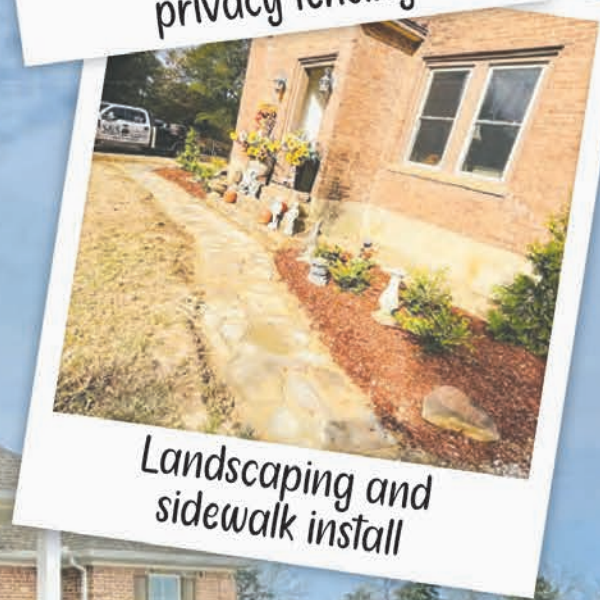
Irrigation, sod & lighting



Landscaping at Heritage Academy



Now offering privacy fencing!



Landscaping and sidewalk install



S&S LANDSCAPING & NURSERY




Spring is only two months away! We're excited to announce that we're adding another landscaping crew to our team. If you're planning any landscaping projects for 2026, now is the time to get on the schedule!

We're now offering privacy fencing. We have very talented woodworking team members and can't wait to help you create or repair the perfect private space for your property.

Contact us today to schedule an estimate and lock in your spot!

4330 Hwy. 12 E., Columbus, MS | 662-574-9811 | sandslandscaping.net

 @sandslandscaping

 @sandslandscapingwillspann

HOW TO CHOOSE

An Insurance Agency

At various stages of life, purchasing insurance is often a necessary step. Whether for your home, vehicle, health or business, insurance is designed to protect you from financial loss and provide security for your loved ones in the event of disability or death.

Because these protections are so important, choosing a trustworthy insurance company is a worthwhile investment of your time. A high-quality insurer serves as a reliable partner, offering accurate information, fair pricing and consistent service.

Since marketing materials can sometimes be misleading, having a clear plan and understanding your exact needs will help you identify the best options.

Know your policy

Premiums and coverage types can vary widely from one provider to another. Before committing to a plan, it's essential to understand exactly what you are purchasing and how the costs will impact your budget. During the research phase, insurance representatives should act more as educators than high-pressure salespeople. Although your options may seem complicated due to varying deductibles, exclusions and pricing levels, a good company will clearly explain these details so you can make an informed decision. Be sure to compare similar policies carefully. If a premium seems unusually low, it may come with additional limitations or a higher deductible. Gathering as much information as possible about each policy will help you feel

confident in your final choice.

Customer service

The quality of customer service is an important factor when choosing an insurance company. You can start by asking friends or family members who have filed claims about their personal experiences. Since some companies have stronger reputations than others, these stories can give you a clearer sense of how you might be treated. Each insurer has a different approach to communication. Some rely on local agents, while others offer 24-hour phone lines or digital tools. Many modern companies combine these methods, providing access to both national support and a local advisor.

Financial strength

An insurance company is truly only as reliable as its balance sheet, making financial strength an especially important consideration. Every insurer receives independent ratings based on its financial stability, and your agent should be able to explain what those ratings mean. A strong rating provides peace of mind by indicating that the company can fulfill its obligations in the event of a major or catastrophic claim. In addition, a well-capitalized and reputable insurer is often able to offer a broader range of coverage options.

The right insurance company will treat you well at every point of interaction, provide dependable coverage and issue claim payments promptly when they are needed.

SHELTER STRONG

Terrific customer service, a policy you can count on, and rates that won't break the bank. Shelter's strength comes from providing all three, and our customers have relied on us for more than 75 years.



Priscilla King, FSCP, LUTCF
940 Tuscaloosa Road
Columbus, MS 39702
662-328-9988
PGKing@ShelterInsurance.com



Angela Criddle
2411 Hwy. 45 N., Ste. 2
Columbus, MS 39705
662-328-4959 (Call or Text)
ACriddle@ShelterInsurance.com



AUTO • HOME • LIFE

We're your Shield. We're your Shelter.
ShelterInsurance.com

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Bank

Choosing where to manage your money is a significant decision. In a world that is increasingly cashless, you need a financial institution that offers banking options tailored to your life, whether that means in-person service, a high-quality app, or a user-friendly website.

Finding the right bank remains one of your most vital financial choices — even if you rarely step foot inside a physical branch. If you haven't looked for a new bank recently, you will find that the variety of institutions competing for your business is wider than ever.

The type of bank you select — be it a major national brand, a local credit union or a digital-only internet bank — should reflect your specific financial needs and how you prefer to handle your paycheck. Regardless of how you choose to access your funds, picking the right partner still requires careful research.

Here are a few key factors to consider.

Interest rates

Banks are constantly looking for ways to stay competitive. One common method to attract new customers is by offering attractive interest rates. While savings rates can vary significantly between institutions, most banks adjust their yields based on changes to the federal funds rate.

If you think these rates don't matter much, consider that for larger deposits, even a few percentage points can make a major difference in your earnings. It pays to use online tools to shop around for the best rates available in your area.

Fees

Banks are well-known for charging fees on specific types of transactions. For instance, a checking account might limit how many checks you can write each month before a fee kicks in, or it might require a minimum balance to keep the account active.

Many banks advertise “free” checking, but you should always verify that it is truly cost-free. Often, there are strings attached, such as the requirement to maintain a certain balance at all times. Always review the fee schedule to ensure the terms are acceptable to you.

Convenience

Having access to branches in convenient

locations is a major plus.

If you travel often, make sure your bank is part of a larger national network. Some banks will even reimburse you for fees charged at other banks' ATMs.

Additionally, look into their digital banking features. Is the website secure and easy to use? Online banking is an excellent tool for paying bills and moving money between accounts. Check if they offer a mobile app that can handle remote deposits and other daily tasks. Being able to monitor your balance at a moment's notice is a huge convenience.

Overdraft safeguards

Everyone makes mistakes now and then. Accidental overdrafts happen, but every financial institution handles them differently.

Many banks provide protection in the form of a high-interest line of credit.

Others charge a flat fee every time an account is overdrawn, while some offer no coverage at all. Be sure to look into these policies before you make your final choice.

Stability

It is essential to consider how stable a bank actually is. Before handing over your money, take a look at the institution's history and overall financial health.

Most banks use a fractional reserve system to invest the funds you deposit. A bank with a strong balance sheet should be able to handle market volatility without issue.

Furthermore, most banks are insured by the FDIC for up to \$250,000 per depositor. This coverage can vary depending on how many accounts you hold.

While these safeguards make your money very secure, bank failures are still a possibility. A solid institution will limit its exposure to “toxic” assets that could put its finances at risk.

Services

Most banks provide a broad range of services. Whether you are looking for a loan or a simple checking account, choose a bank that meets your needs with the lowest possible fees.

It should offer as much convenience as possible. By being a vigilant shopper, you can ensure a positive experience with a trustworthy bank.

Golden Triangle Team BOC

Meet your local leaders in The Golden Triangle! We are committed to building lasting customer relationships by ensuring excellent customer service and providing personal financial solutions. After all, we are your neighbors, your friends, and we look forward to partnering with you in success.



Contact your local branch and ask for one of our BOC team leaders to find out how we can help you bank smarter!

Columbus



Mark Crigler



Ben Upton



Matt Brown



Russell Young



Bruff Sanders

Starkville



Brian Jones



Johnny Ray



Marcus Wood

West Point



Bank of Commerce

bankcom.com

FDIC

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Credit Union

Credit unions work a bit differently than traditional banks, which can make them an attractive option for managing your finances. Credit unions work a bit differently than traditional banks, which can make them an attractive option for managing your finances.

Unlike commercial banks, credit unions are nonprofit organizations owned by their members — essentially anyone who maintains an account with them. Rather than paying out to shareholders, these institutions return profits to their members through higher interest on savings and reduced service fees. Most of these organizations prioritize a personalized level of service. They tend to be community-centric, focusing on the needs of their members and the specific workplaces or groups they serve.

Despite their smaller feel, credit unions provide the same range of services as major banks, including competitive rates on auto loans, student loans, mortgages and credit cards. Furthermore, your deposits are federally protected up to \$250,000, just as they would be at a traditional bank. In short, they offer excellent value, though you must meet specific membership criteria to join.

Your first step in selecting a credit union should be to research the options in your local area and review their entry requirements. Some institutions limit membership to employees of certain companies, public service sectors or school districts. However, many others are open to anyone who is willing to meet their specific guidelines. In some cases, you might qualify simply by joining a local food co-op or a related community organization.

A basic web search is a great way to start building a list of nearby candidates. From there, you can narrow down your choices by looking into eligibility rules, available services and the fees each one charges. Be sure to verify the

current interest rates for their various accounts. If this information isn't readily available on their website, a quick phone call can get you those figures.

You should also ask about any costs associated with the specific accounts you plan to open. Much like traditional banks, some credit unions may charge a fee if your balance drops below a certain minimum. Look for other stipulations as well; for example, some high-yield accounts require you to use your debit card a set number of times each month. If you need a specific type of financing, confirm that the credit union actually offers it. Once you have a few options, compare their interest rates and any promotional deals to find the best possible terms.

Convenience is another essential factor to weigh. Check their operating hours for both weekdays and weekends, and locate their physical branches and ATMs. It is also wise to investigate their digital tools, such as mobile apps and online banking platforms.

Pay close attention to the fee schedule for ATM and debit card transactions. If you are a frequent ATM user, those small charges can quickly become expensive. To combat this, many credit unions participate in national "shared branch" networks. This provides you with broader access to services and ATMs while you are on vacation or if you move to a new city. This can also be incredibly helpful if you have children attending college away from home. Once your research is finished, create a list of the pros and cons for each institution to compare them side-by-side.

After you have made your final selection, visit a branch in person to get a full walkthrough of their services. This will help you fully understand and take advantage of all your new membership benefits



From Service to Soaring, Your Future is Our Horizon.

Our journey began as Columbus Air Force Base FCU, proudly serving those who served our nation. As we grew, we transformed into Triangle FCU, expanding our mission to include the community while continuing to honor our military roots.

Today, we're more than a credit union; we're your trusted financial partner, committed to integrity, growth, and excellence.

Together, we'll navigate toward brighter horizons, because your future deserves to soar.



Proudly serving the Golden Triangle since 1959.

www.trianglefcu.com

Phone: 662-434-6052



HOW TO CHOOSE

A Mortgage Lender

For many people, a mortgage is the largest financial commitment they will ever make. That is why taking the time to find the right mortgage lender is so important. Different lenders offer varying interest rates, policies, and approaches to loan management, all of which can affect your overall experience and long-term costs.

A good mortgage professional is knowledgeable about their loan products and willing to spend the time needed to explain them clearly. They take pride in guiding you through what can be a confusing process while keeping your financial priorities and best interests in mind.

Doing some advance research on common loan options before meeting with a lender can help you determine whether they are truly focused on your needs and allow you to better evaluate their expertise and professionalism.

Purchaser's rights

The volume of forms, disclosures and financial terminology involved in purchasing a home can be overwhelming for first-time buyers. It is important to proceed carefully throughout the home-buying process and to fully understand what you are signing, as well as the obligations you are taking on. A signature represents a binding commitment.

While some buyers may have a brief window to withdraw, doing so often carries financial consequences. Even if you cancel within that period, you may forfeit deposits or owe additional costs based on the terms of the agreement.

If a lender rushes you through paperwork or pressures you to sign, they are not acting in your best interest. A responsible professional will ensure you understand every document before moving forward.

Communication

The best mortgage lenders take the time to understand your long-term financial goals. They will ask how long you plan to stay in your new home, as this information helps them recommend mortgage products that best fit your needs. If a lender fails to ask these types of questions, it should be considered a red flag.

Local lenders

Seeking out a mortgage lender in your community is often the best option. Interest rates can change daily, and a local lender is more attuned to shifts in the local housing market and how they may affect you. In addition, local lenders can closely monitor your loan application and are typically more accessible to answer questions and provide timely guidance throughout the process.

Personal referrals

Ask friends and family about their experiences with mortgage lenders, as they may be willing to recommend professionals they trusted for their own home loans. Word of mouth is often one of the most reliable ways to identify quality lenders in your area.

Once you have a list of potential options, take time to verify their backgrounds so you can feel confident in their ability to assist you.



BANKFIRST
Mortgage

BANK NMLS #454063 | LENDER NMLS #261277

Member **FDIC** |  **EQUAL HOUSING LENDER**

Jimmy McPherson

Whether you're buying, building, or refinancing, trust Jimmy McPherson for quick, accurate advice and the right financing options.



 (662) 320-8931

bankfirst.mortgage/jmcperson
Golden Triangle Area

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Financial Advisor

No matter what your current net worth is, a financial advisor can be a valuable partner in helping you manage your money wisely and reach your financial goals. They can guide you in meeting both short-term and long-term objectives, whether you're focused on investing, growing your savings or managing debt. The best financial advisors are fiduciaries, qualified professionals who are committed to act in your best interests.

A financial advisor offers you an objective, seasoned perspective that helps simplify the many options for saving, investing and spending your money. They can also introduce you to management strategies you may not have considered, assist in reducing your tax burden and provide steady guidance during periods of economic uncertainty.

To find a trustworthy financial advisor, start by asking people you know. Friends and family might have some good recommendations. You can also look for local advisors online or check your community newspaper for nearby firms. Just be sure to research each advisor carefully, keeping your own situation and goals in mind. Once you have a list of three or four possibilities, look closely at each choice. You may find it beneficial to select a professional who holds the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) designation. A certified financial planner has passed rigorous exams to obtain a certificate.

After you verify an advisor's qualifications, contact the certifying organizations to find out whether there have been any complaints against each professional. If so, find out how the complaints were resolved. You are also entitled to request a list of satisfied clients with financial goals similar to your own so you can hear about their personal experiences.

Areas of expertise

Financial products can help support your well-being and give you peace of mind. Some common ways to invest include bonds, mutual funds, stocks, commodities and digital currencies. Weighing risk is essential. Certain products will naturally be a better fit for your personal portfolio than others. An experienced advisor has the skills to build a customized portfolio designed specifically for your needs.

You can also conduct your own research to identify a specific market segment that feels right for your circumstances. Then look for an advisor who specializes in that investment. If you are interested in commodities, for example, your prospective advisor should have a clear history of experience in that specific market.

Rate of success

The historical success of an advisor will

likely be a major factor in your final decision. You should examine the track record of each professional to see if their recommendations have consistently performed better than the market average over time.

A dedicated advisor will use thorough research to strengthen your portfolio and improve your potential returns.

During times of economic stagnation or difficulty, you will find that experience becomes incredibly important. You may want to ask if the advisor has successfully navigated previous market downturns. Do clients thrive in bleak environments? Or have clients taken multiple hits to their portfolios?

You should be wary if clients appear to be doing too good during tough times. Someone with an extraordinary success rate might be too good to be true.

Fees or commissions

Inquire about how your advisor is paid for services. Most offer fee-based or commission-based services. It will greatly influence your selection.

An advisor who earns commissions may be more inclined to recommend products that offer them a professional payout. This arrangement could potentially increase your exposure to risk without any real benefit to you. Only use a commission-based advisor if they have a proven track record of success and also have your best interest in mind.

When you need someone who puts your best interests first, go with a fee-based advisor. They will be compensated only for the time spent on serving your portfolio.

Interview and finalizing

Once you have narrowed your prospects to two or three possibilities, schedule a meeting with each professional. During this consultation, communicate your goals honestly and clearly. A quality financial planner should act as a supportive guide who keeps you well-informed. They will continually increase your knowledge about your current financial situation and how to improve it.

After you have shortened your list to just one or two advisors, you can move forward with a more formal request. You should ask each candidate to create a written plan that outlines the path from your current situation to your desired future. Get a written copy of this proposal.

This document should have your short-term and long-term goals, and also state who else will profit from the proposal.



FINANCIAL CONCEPTS

**YOUR TEAM BUILDS
FOR EVERYONE ELSE.**

***WHO'S BUILDING
FOR THEM?***

**VISIT
OUR SITE:**



FINCON.NET

2980 N FRONTAGE RD | 662.327.1480

FINANCIAL CONCEPTS IS A REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISOR.

HOW TO CHOOSE

An Investment Firm

Investing money effectively requires a great deal of skill and knowledge, whether you are considering stocks, bonds or commodities. While some people prefer to manage their own finances, many choose to work with investment firms staffed by highly trained professionals. Most of these firms specialize in stocks but also offer a range of services to help you diversify your portfolio.

If you are ready to entrust your investments to a professional, selecting the right firm is a crucial step in growing your personal wealth. A quality investment firm is genuinely invested in your future and acts on your behalf to protect your assets. They should provide guidance on tax strategies and investment decisions that reflect your goals and intentions.

Because entrusting your finances to an outside party involves risk, it is essential to ensure your team operates with integrity and follows your wishes. Choosing the right firm requires looking beyond just the cost of their services. Here are some things to consider when choosing a company to help you invest your money wisely.

Trustworthiness

The first thing to judge is whether the firm deserves your trust. The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) recommends you ask the potential investment firm a series of questions:

- What experience do you have working with people who are like me?
- What licenses do you currently hold? Are you registered with a state, the SEC or FINRA? If so, in what capacity?
- What relevant professional designations do you hold?
- Do you have any special areas of expertise?
- How long have you been with your current firm? Where did you work before?
- What investment products and services do you recommend to your clients? Why?
- Are there any products or services you don't recommend? Why?
- How much will I have to pay for your services? What is your usual hourly rate, flat fee or commission?
- Are you compensated any other way for handling my account? If so, how and how much?
- Do you or your firm impose any minimum

account balances? If so, what are they? And what happens if my portfolio falls below the minimum?

- How frequently will we meet to discuss my portfolio and the progress we are making toward my investment goals?
- How will you communicate investment performance results to me?
- For brokerage firms, is your firm a member of SIPC?
- Who else in your office will handle my account?
- Have you or your firm ever been disciplined by the SEC, FINRA, a state securities regulator, or another federal or state financial regulator?
- Have you ever had a professional license revoked?

While these questions can provide valuable insights about a firm, they are not the only way to gather information. You can also ask friends, family and coworkers about which investment firms they use and what their personal experiences have been like.

Listening

One of the most important aspects of choosing an investment firm is evaluating how well the professionals listen and respond to your specific needs.

Everyone has different goals, objectives and risk tolerances, and these factors naturally change over time. Selecting a firm that truly understands your evolving needs and can effectively respond to them both now and in the future is a crucial part of the decision-making process.

Proven process

Finally, the firm you choose should have a proven process for achieving real results for its clients. The best firms can point to a long-term track record demonstrating how they have guided customers through all types of market conditions, including bull and bear markets, as well as periods of rising or falling interest rates. They possess the experience and consistency needed to help you navigate changing — and sometimes stressful — economic conditions. By selecting a firm that meets regulatory standards, listens closely to your personal goals and has a track record that inspires confidence, you can find an investment partner worth keeping for the long term.

Thank you for voting



FINANCIAL CONCEPTS



- BEST FINANCIAL ADVISOR
- BEST FINANCIAL PLANNER
- BEST INVESTMENT FIRM

AMONG THE BEST:

- CUSTOMER SERVICE

FINCON.NET

2980 N FRONTAGE RD | 662.327.1480

FINANCIAL CONCEPTS IS A REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISOR.

Third Party Ratings - Disclosure | 2025 Best of the Triangle Voting took place from 3/1/2025 - 3/30/2025 | Award received 4/30/2025

"The Best of the Triangle" ... Best Investment Firm, Best Financial Planner, Best Financial Advisor, Among the Best Customer Service, surveys are conducted as a blind poll each year. The Commercial Dispatch, organizers of the award, have run a poll each year, for the past 20 years, and applicants are required to complete an extensive application writing in names for the different categories. For the vote to count the reader must vote in 10 different categories. The Best of the Triangle references the businesses located within the Golden Triangle. The Golden Triangle is a common term used to reference the proximity of the cities Columbus, West Point, and Starkville. Commercial Dispatch reserves the right to restrict the local winners to only persons whose primary residence is within a 60-mile radius of Columbus, MS. One of the primary goals of the survey is to help wealth management firms improve their business operations. Award listings, rankings and/or recognition by unaffiliated rating services and/or publication should not be construed by a client or prospective client as a guarantee that he/she will experience a certain level of results if Financial Concepts is engaged, or continues to be engaged, to provide investment advisory services, nor should it be construed as a current or past endorsement of Financial Concepts by any of its clients. Financial Concepts is a registered investment advisor.

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Financial Planner

Financial planners serve as trusted partners in helping you manage your money and work toward your life goals. They offer valuable guidance by reviewing your budget, building sustainable spending plans and creating strategies for short- and long-term savings, including retirement and education planning.

While many people often mistake financial planners for financial advisors, it is important for you to understand the distinct differences between these two roles. Financial advisors typically focus on executing stock trades, managing specific investments and providing specialized tax advice to maximize your returns.

If you find yourself needing broader assistance with your comprehensive financial objectives, you should seek out a financial planner you can truly trust.

Your search can begin by requesting referrals from friends, family members or other individuals you respect who have successfully built up their financial reserves.

If you notice that their modest savings have grown significantly over time, a skilled financial planner likely played a role in that success.

You should carefully look into the professional and educational background of every recommendation you receive. It is a good idea to find out if the person has experience working with clients whose financial circumstances match your own.

Planners who have earned undergraduate degrees in finance or business show a clear dedication to this career path. You must also verify that each prospect has the correct

certifications, as these are required to practice legally in the field. While credentials can vary based on your location and the type of advice you need, every professional must have formal training.

Once you have a few options, you should meet with several different planners to gauge how much you trust them. Integrity is one of the most important qualities to look for, and during your meeting, you should be honest about your financial goals.

Building wealth should be a primary goal, as minimizing risks while maximizing returns will help your resources grow. Whether your dream is to launch a small business or send your children to college, you should share those thoughts openly with your planner.

You should also feel comfortable detailing your current debt levels, as your financial planner needs to understand every aspect of your financial situation. The full picture could motivate your planner to make your money work harder so you can break free from debt.

Finally, you should discuss how the planner is compensated, as some are paid a flat rate while others receive a percentage of investment profits. These matters must be discussed openly so you understand how their pay might affect the advice they give you. Some unscrupulous individuals might advocate for risky investment strategies for their own financial gain.

Taking the time to do this research will help you select the best financial planner in your area. By making a careful choice, you will be well on your way to a much healthier financial future.

*Don't
chance it!*

TAKE CONTROL
OF YOUR 401(K)



FINANCIAL
CONCEPTS

CHANCE



FINCON.NET

2980 N FRONTAGE RD | 662.327.1480

FINANCIAL CONCEPTS IS A REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISOR.

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Physical Therapist

If you are struggling with physical pain or limited mobility, a physical therapist can be a vital partner in your rehabilitation. Whether your body is recovering from a recent surgical procedure, a sudden injury, the natural effects of aging or the physical toll of a sedentary lifestyle, professional help can make a difference. In these situations, your physician might recommend physical therapy as a way to return to a more active and healthy way of life.

A skilled physical therapist does more than just supervise exercises; they help you understand your own anatomy and provide tailored advice on lifestyle adjustments and routines to mitigate pain. Because this field relies on a unique blend of scientific knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal skill, finding the right match is essential. While most practitioners are highly trained, many focus on specific types of injuries and utilize different therapeutic methods.

For example, if you're dealing with back problems, you can try therapy focused on strengthening your core. This approach can provide immediate relief while also helping your body become more functional and resilient over time. If you think this might benefit you, start by talking with your primary care doctor.

The role of therapy in recovery

Insurance providers often recognize the value of physical therapy, frequently requiring it as a first step before approving costly surgeries. In many instances, dedicated therapy can actually remove the need for surgery altogether.

When surgery is necessary, however, therapy remains a critical component of the post-operative healing process. A physical therapist is often the key to a successful outcome following a rotator cuff repair. Similarly, patients with degenerative conditions in the neck or back can find significant relief through a structured regimen. Therapy helps alleviate pressure and pain, often allowing patients to regain their full range of motion without the traditional need for surgical intervention.

Physical therapists also specialize in restoring function after unique injuries. For

instance, someone who has had a finger reattached requires specialized guidance to regain sensation and fine motor control. Likewise, those who have been immobile for a long period may need help relearning how to function independently.

Logistics and insurance

When starting your search, keep your insurance requirements in mind, as you may be restricted to in-network providers to receive full coverage. Your plan might also cap the total number of sessions allowed or require you to pay a portion of the cost through co-pays or co-insurance.

Once you have identified a few potential therapists, look into their professional background. Do not hesitate to ask them about their experience with your specific condition and their overall success rates. You can also verify their standing by checking with your state's licensing board for any history of formal complaints.

The importance of support and comfort

The most effective therapists provide emotional encouragement alongside physical treatment. Rehabilitation is demanding work, particularly for those in significant pain. When your energy wanes, a good therapist offers the motivation needed to keep going. By safely pushing you to your physical limits, they help ensure a more complete recovery.

This inspiration is vital for regaining independence, particularly for elderly patients who struggle with mobility. It is also essential that you feel completely at ease with your chosen professional. Because they may need to examine sensitive areas for signs of inflammation or perform manual massage as part of your treatment, you must feel safe in their care.

Your therapist will likely assign exercises for you to perform at home. Following these recommendations closely is one of the best ways to accelerate your healing. By combining the expertise of a professional with your own dedication, you can achieve a full recovery and get back to enjoying your life.

Focused on your **full recovery**, so you can focus on what **matters most to you.**

At Elite PT, our licensed physical therapists use manual therapy, a hands-on technique that's proven to get better outcomes so you can start moving and feeling better, faster.

Choose better outcomes. Choose Elite PT.

AMORY

1112 US-278 E, Ste A • P (662) 257-4048

BROOKSVILLE

214 Highway 388, Ste 2 • P (662) 738-4546

COLUMBUS

199 Brookmoore Drive • P (662) 328-4542

COLUMBUS

65 Dutch Lane • P (662) 241-4545

STARKVILLE

513 Academy Road • P (662) 268-8013

WEST POINT

5721 Highway 45 Alt S • P (662) 346-7279



BRINGING YOU BACK TO YOUR BEST • MYELITEPT.COM

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Chiropractor

Millions of people seek the expertise of chiropractic physicians every year for their healthcare needs. This profession is dedicated to a manual, non-pharmaceutical approach to wellness; while it is primarily recognized for spinal adjustments, practitioners also address various other physical issues using methods that are both safe and clinically validated.

As the benefits become more apparent, a growing number of insurance providers are including chiropractic services as a standard benefit or through specific plan additions.

Generally, individuals dealing with persistent or mysterious physical discomfort are the ones who turn to these specialists most often. These experts are skilled at reducing pain localized in the back, neck or head. The core philosophy of chiropractic care is that correcting spinal alignment can alleviate broader physical tension and distress.

For many, the results are significant; it is common for patients to feel a noticeable decrease in pain before they even walk out of the clinic door. Many individuals describe a swift recovery in the function of their joints, bones, ligament, and muscles.

Beyond pain relief, this type of care can bolster your general well-being. Regular adjustments can even help mitigate minor issues like sinus pressure or recurring headaches. To find a practitioner that fits your lifestyle, keep the following considerations in mind.

Professional standards

The American Chiropractic Association notes that accredited professionals complete at least 4,200 hours of combined clinical, laboratory and classroom education. Typically, students finish four years of pre-medical studies followed by an additional four or five years of intensive professional schooling.

Their curriculum goes beyond general anatomy to focus deeply on the musculoskeletal system, nerve pathways, pressure points and bone health. Selecting a doctor who has mastered these specific disciplines often leads to a more successful

treatment outcome.

Before you commit to a provider, do not hesitate to ask about their specific training and professional background. Ensure they hold a valid, current license and possess specific experience treating the type of ailment you are facing.

Insurance and costs

A high number of insurance plans now incorporate chiropractic visits into their standard medical coverage.

It is always a good idea to confirm your benefits beforehand; you may find that staying “in-network” results in a significantly lower co-pay.

However, if you are paying out of pocket, many clinics provide competitive cash-pay rates or flexible payment options to keep care accessible. Even without traditional insurance, obtaining high-quality and affordable chiropractic treatment is entirely possible.

Be sure to ask about any available specials; some offices provide discounts for new patient referrals, family groups or seasonal promotions.

Seeking recommendations

It is very likely that someone you know — whether a friend, relative or colleague — has had a positive experience with a local chiropractor. Reach out to your social circle for personal referrals.

When you get a name, ask about the doctor’s personality and how they manage their calendar; for example, is it easy to book a last-minute session, and what is their overall philosophy on holistic wellness? Some offices may also recommend integrated therapies, such as massage, to enhance your recovery.

Given the potential for long-term physical improvement, chiropractic care is a valuable and cost-effective investment in your health. With a bit of diligent searching, you will likely find a top-tier provider in your community.

Taking the time to research local options ensures you receive the personalized care you deserve.



CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH CENTER

DR. SUSIE JOHNSON



CHIROPRACTIC CARE CAN...

- BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM
- IMPROVE BALANCE & POSTURE
- IMPROVE JOINT MOBILITY
- HELP BACK, HIP & NECK PAIN
- TREAT PAIN FROM SCIATICA & SCOLIOSIS
- HELP WITH HEADACHES


OUR OFFICE ALSO OFFERS NUTRITIONAL COUNSELING & HAIR ANALYSIS



You Can Trust that Only the Doctor will do your Exam and we are a Hands-On Manual Adjustment Clinic.

CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT TODAY!
662.327.8232

613 18TH AVENUE NORTH | COLUMBUS, MS
www.drsusiejohnson.com

In Network with Blue Cross Blue Shield 

HOW TO CHOOSE

An Assisted Living Facility

Assisted living centers provide a vital support system for individuals who require help managing the complexities of daily life, whether due to the natural process of aging, a physical injury, a disability or the need for post-surgical rehabilitation. These centers provide a supportive environment where staff can assist with personal care like dressing, bathing and managing medications, ensuring your family member feels dignified and cared for. Beyond physical help, many facilities offer a sense of community through shared transportation and social gatherings.

Because we are living longer than ever, the industry has blossomed, offering more diverse options than ever before — from simple assistance to specialized medical attention. Entrusting a loved one's well-being to others is a major step, and while safety is a top priority, the heart of the decision is about finding a place where they can truly belong.

Whenever possible, walk through this process alongside your loved one; their voice is essential, and their happiness will be the foundation of their new life. Start by reflecting on what matters most to both of you, focusing on the quality of care, the feel of the environment and staying close to family.

Personal care

Consult your loved one's physician to determine the level of care needed for them to function safely. The doctor can also provide guidance toward a facility that meets those specific needs. It's important to understand the qualifications and certifications that the staff should have, ensuring the center's employees are well-equipped to handle medical requirements. By understanding the care your loved one truly needs, you can avoid paying for unnecessary services and find a facility that is the right fit.

Amenities

The accommodations at these centers can vary significantly, ranging from upscale, detached cottages to comfortable condominiums or smaller apartment-style units. It all depends on what you are looking for, what you can afford and what is available.

As you visit facilities, try to personalize

each space. Imagine how your loved one's belongings might fit into the area and where decorations will be placed. Does the atmosphere bring about a feeling of peace and tranquility? How are the rooms decorated? Are they tasteful and soothing, or do they remind you of a hospital setting?

Look at the home amenities and consider how you would feel about living there. The facility should ideally be a place where you would want your loved one to reside while remaining within your financial means.

Recreation and activities

Game and meeting areas provide residents with opportunities to socialize, build friendships and reduce feelings of isolation. Leaving their units and engaging with the community is an important part of enhancing quality of life. Make sure any prospective facility offers a variety of activities and dedicated spaces to keep your loved one active and engaged.

A high-quality facility will typically provide programming that aligns with the resident's personal hobbies. For example, a family member who enjoys creative work would benefit from a center that features a designated craft area or organized art classes.

Gardens and landscaping

The landscaping of an assisted living center can give you a good indication about the quality of the facility. A garden and lawn that are well-tended are positive signs of a well-managed center.

If your loved one finds comfort in nature, you should look for a facility that offers park-like settings. Some centers provide community gardens and accessible walkways for the residents to enjoy. The ability to experience the natural beauty of the changing seasons can be both soothing and uplifting for the residents. A manicured outdoor environment can make a significant difference in a loved one's daily life.

Choosing the right facility is ultimately about finding a professional balance between necessary medical services and comfortable amenities. With diligent research and careful thought, you can find a location that provides both comfort and excellent care.

THE ARRINGTON



Assisted Living & Memory Loss

- ✓ *Tasty Healthful* **Meals**
- ✓ *Compassionate Loving* **Care**
- ✓ *Highly-Trained Professional* **Staff**
- ✓ *Clean & Bright* **Accommodations**
- ✓ *Engaging Group* **Activities**



BEDFORD SUITES

16 Private Rooms Located Within The Arrington

24-Hour Secure Care

The Pointe
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY



State of Mississippi
Licensed



662-241-0001

234 Windsor Blvd. | Historic Columbus, MS | plantation-pointe.net | Since 1998

CALL JAN FOR A CAMPUS TOUR

HOW TO CHOOSE

In-Home Care

For many older adults, staying in the home they love is a top priority — they want to maintain independence while receiving just enough support to manage daily life safely. In-home care offers an ideal solution, combining personal freedom with peace of mind for both seniors and their families. Rather than facing the stress that can come with moving to a nursing home, seniors can stay in familiar surroundings while receiving assistance with daily living and health management.

Professional caregivers can visit your home to provide essential services directly to you or your loved one. This approach is not only comfortable and convenient, but it is often more affordable than moving to a full-time residential facility. Many in-home care providers also assist with errands, light housekeeping and meal preparation.

Consulting your loved one's primary care physician is a helpful first step. Your doctor can assess the level of care needed and may offer trusted referrals to reputable providers.

After speaking with several in-home care agencies, you can compare the services they offer. Most providers fall into three main categories:

Medical care

In-home care providers can differ widely in the level of medical support they offer. Some provide around-the-clock supervision, while others focus on simpler tasks such as monitoring blood sugar or providing medication reminders. It's important to ask about the medical qualifications of any provider you are considering to ensure their staff have the appropriate certifications, degrees and training.

If you are unsure about the level of medical attention you need, your doctor is the best

resource. Your physician can also advise you on the specific qualifications a caregiver should have to safely and effectively support your health.

Personal care

Caregivers can also provide support with personal aspects of daily life, including grooming, mobility and managing specific dietary needs. They are often available to help prepare meals or handle simple errands, helping the household run smoothly. These professionals focus on the physical tasks that enable a person to live safely and comfortably in their own home.

Companionship

Beyond assisting with physical tasks, in-home care professionals offer companionship and meaningful interaction for individuals who might otherwise feel isolated. They may read aloud, discuss current events or enjoy a game of cards together. Quality providers understand that human connection and mental stimulation are essential for overall well-being.

Before signing any contract, it's important to carefully review the specific services that will be provided. You want to make sure you're receiving the assistance needed without paying for medical services that may not be necessary if only personal care is required.

It's also essential that everyone feels comfortable with the caregivers, as they will quickly become part of daily life. Speaking with others who have faced similar situations can provide valuable referrals.

Finding the right combination of services ensures that a loved one receives the comfort, companionship and care they deserve while remaining in the home they love.



Live your **best** life possible.

"My Husband and I were so please with our caregivers from ComForCare. They were so professional, congenial and did an excellent job caring for my husband while he was recovering. Also, they did an excellent job maintaining our home. Highly recommend them as home care service." Mrs. M



Senior Personal Care in the Golden Triangle

With home care services, we can provide personal care plans through an in-home evaluation and interviews between the client, family and the ComForCare team to help determine the best plan of action for the individual based on their specific needs.

- Home Care Assistants
- Meal Preparations
- Grooming & Hygiene
- Medication Reminders
- Light Housekeeping
- Transportation

662.244.7226
Call today to experience the
ComForCare difference

2401 5TH STREET NORTH SUITE 1 | COLUMBUS, MS | COMFORCARE.COM/MISSISSIPPI/COLUMBUS

HOW TO CHOOSE

An Ophthalmologist

Ophthalmology is the medical field dedicated to diagnosing and managing various eye disorders. An ophthalmologist is a medical doctor who specializes in this area, focusing on the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases. These professionals are qualified to conduct eye examinations, issue prescriptions for contacts or glasses and execute surgical operations as required. By 2025, the state of Mississippi had roughly 317 licensed ophthalmologists in practice.

Different types of eye doctors

It is important to understand the distinctions between an ophthalmologist and an optometrist. An optometrist is a healthcare professional focused on examining, diagnosing and managing conditions and diseases that impact the visual system. While they are licensed healthcare providers who have finished a four-year program and passed national boards, they are not medical doctors.

Optometrists are trained to carry out eye exams, provide vision correction through lenses and manage typical issues like glaucoma, pink eye or dry eye. Although they can treat certain conditions, they will refer patients to an ophthalmologist for more serious or complex issues that necessitate surgery or invasive procedures.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology highlights that routine eye checkups are vital for both ocular health and general well-being.

Having a dedicated eye doctor is crucial because our eyes are essential organs, and vision problems can significantly diminish one's quality of life. Furthermore, frequent exams can identify the initial symptoms of disease and help prevent the loss of sight.

Selecting an ophthalmologist

There are several factors to keep in mind when choosing an eye care professional. You should verify their certifications and qualifications and seek out recommendations from friends, family or other medical providers.

It is also wise to look into a doctor's specific experience and their history of success in managing any particular eye conditions you may be experiencing.

Insurance

Other practical considerations include whether the doctor accepts your specific insurance plan, as well as the convenience of their office hours and location. To find out if a provider is covered, you can contact the customer service number found on your insurance card to confirm if they are in-network.

Most insurance websites also offer a provider directory that you can search by location, name or specialty. Some insurers even provide mobile apps to help you locate in-network doctors. If you have any doubts, you can always ask the office staff to confirm your benefits and coverage before you book your visit.

Vision is
precious.
Don't take yours
for granted.



Bennett
Ophthalmology
Group
Advanced Eye Care

J. Dan Bennett, M.D.
Diplomate of the American Board
of Ophthalmology
Board Certified Ophthalmologist

2475 Fifth St. N. | Columbus, MS | 662-328-1254

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Hearing Aid

Hearing aids have the potential to enrich the lives of individuals with hearing loss by restoring their ability to socialize with confidence and navigate the world safely. While technology has long existed to address these deficits, older models were often characterized as bulky, uncomfortable and visually unappealing.

Modern devices are available in a wide range of sizes, shapes and colors, each designed to address specific hearing conditions. Some contemporary models can even be controlled through smartphone applications.

Whether a person prefers a visible device or a more discreet option, a properly selected and fitted hearing aid allows individuals to engage more fully in hobbies, careers, education and time with loved ones.

Basic or premium

Today's simplest digital hearing aids require the wearer to make manual adjustments, such as changing the volume or selecting a specific listening program for their current environment.

In contrast, premium hearing aids are designed to perform these adjustments automatically. Advanced technology allows these instruments to respond to changes in the listening environment by selecting the appropriate mode and volume without any action required from the user. Other models offer electronic controls that enable users to fine-tune the device according to their personal preferences for different situations.

Styles

Modern hearing aids are available in a wide variety of styles, some of which are nearly invisible to those around you.

Invisible-in-the-canal (IIC) models are small enough to sit deep within the ear canal, allowing them to remain discreet and largely unnoticed. This subtle design has made them a popular choice for many users.

In-the-canal (ITC) instruments are slightly larger and often offer advantages such as longer battery life and improved directional sound control.

Full-shell in-the-ear (ITE) models fill the entire bowl of the ear, accommodating larger

batteries and additional features, making them well suited for individuals with more severe hearing loss.

Behind-the-ear models — including options with slim tubes and custom ear molds — are designed for comfort and provide a more “open” feeling by allowing freer airflow into the ear canal.

Expert care

The process of choosing a hearing aid largely depends on the expertise of the audiologist who performs the testing and fitting.

Audiologists undergo years of specialized training to diagnose and treat hearing loss, which can arise from many different causes and vary significantly from one individual to another. A skilled professional takes a personalized approach to selecting and customizing a device that will deliver the best possible outcome for each patient.

The most effective audiologists maintain proper licensing and ongoing training, while demonstrating a strong commitment to achieving optimal results for the individual. These professionals take the time to accurately diagnose the condition and help patients understand the specific advantages and limitations of the hearing aid options best suited to their needs.

Maintenance

Because hearing aids are complex, high-tech instruments with many small parts, they may require periodic maintenance and repairs.

When selecting a device, it is important to understand the terms of the warranty and who will be responsible for performing any necessary repairs. While many audiologists can address minor issues in their offices, more extensive repairs typically require the instrument to be returned to the manufacturer.

Purchasing your hearing aid from a provider with a long-standing presence in your community and a reputation for excellent customer service can offer added peace of mind — both in knowing you have selected the right instrument and in having reliable support in the months and years ahead.

Ready to *Hear* better?

Individuals with untreated hearing loss may withdraw from social interactions, leading to feelings of loneliness and depression. Addressing hearing loss not only improves communication but also restores emotional well-being and confidence.

Take the first step to improve your overall well-being!
Call one of our Audiologists today!

662.327.4432



PHONAK
 life is on
 A Sonova brand



ReSound GN

unitron Love the experience



Physicians Hearing Center
 at Otolaryngology Associates

COLUMBUS
 2430 5th Street N.

STARKVILLE
 976 Highway 12 E.



Micci Henry, Au.D., CCC-A

Brandi Davis, Au.D.

www.columbusoto.com

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Crematorium

Americans are more likely than ever to choose cremation over burial. This shift became even more pronounced in 2015, when cremation officially became the more frequent choice for end-of-life arrangements.

Families often select this path for a variety of reasons, ranging from personal values and environmental considerations to financial practicality.

Cremation costs are typically less than half what traditional burials are. The National Funeral Directors Association predicts that cremation will be the norm by 2040 with traditional burial at just a fraction of all choices. Deciding between these two paths requires you to weigh many factors, but the most important consideration is the final wish of your loved one.

First and foremost are the wishes of your loved one. Many people have an end-of-life plan in which they've shared how they wish their body to be cared for. When you make these decisions in advance, you can lift a significant burden off your family during a very painful time. Without these prior arrangements, you and your family may be forced to make difficult choices while you are stressed and grieving.

One of the practical benefits of cremation is that it removes the requirement to purchase an expensive casket. While you may feel a natural desire to spend more than you can afford to honor a memory, a cremation service offers you a respectful and dignified way to memorialize a loved one affordably. You can use the service as a peaceful time to mourn and remember.

A funeral home may have a partnership

or connection with a cremation center. They may have additional services, such as grief counseling or assistance with necessary paperwork. After the cremation, you will receive an urn. You can choose to bury the urn, keep it in your home or place it in a memorial building.

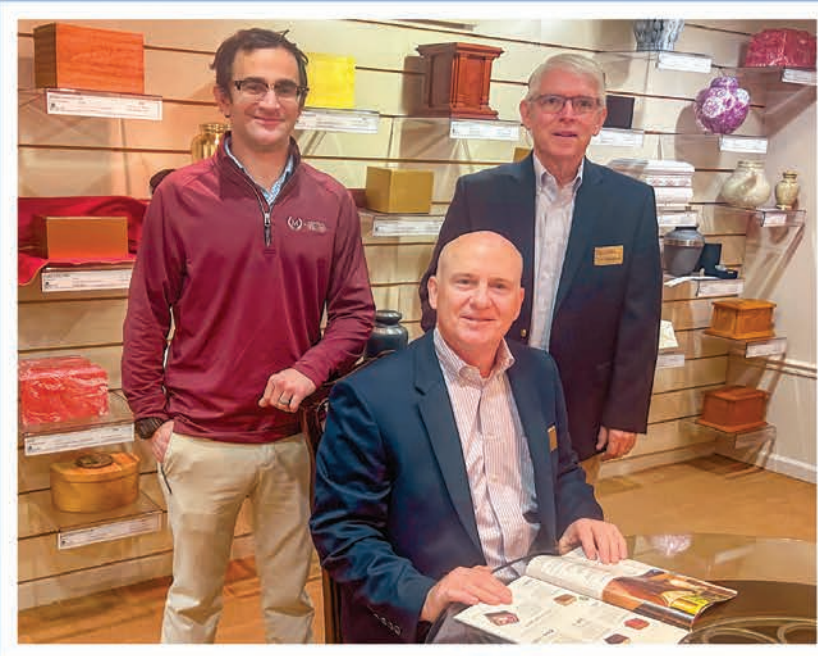
When searching for a cremation center, check with your family or friends for referrals. If you cannot get an appropriate referral, you might be able to join a cremation society. For a small fee, you will receive up-to-date information about your options and the process. Membership may also help you obtain a lower cost on cremation services. These societies will aid with many details connected to the service and disposition of remains. The Internet Cremation Society and the Cremation Association of North America are sources of information about cremation societies.

Once you have narrowed down your choices, you should consider how comfortable you feel with the staff. You should always feel at ease asking questions, and the employees you speak with should be knowledgeable, competent and pleasant. A professional team will provide you with a clear price breakdown and explain the process used to create the ashes for the urn.

By doing a little research and choosing wisely, you can make this journey a bit easier for your loved ones during a difficult time.

Discuss with your loved ones and family members their preference for when they pass. Talk with them and explain your own so that there will not be any misunderstandings or second-guessing after the fact.

Before you choose reach out to Memorial Funeral Home and Crematory



Memorial Funeral Home & Crematory has been assisting the people of Columbus and Lowndes County, MS, with expertise and compassion since 1893. Our staff includes licensed funeral directors and certified crematory operators.

We are an independently owned, comprehensive funeral home, providing our families with dignified, caring, and affordable services. We offer DVD tributes, livestreaming, a state-of-the-art web page at memorialfuneral.net, and we were the first to provide a crematory for the citizens of Columbus, Lowndes County and its surrounding communities.



MEMORIAL
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY
Lowndes County's First Crematory

716 Second Avenue North | Columbus | 662-328-4432 | memorialfuneral.net

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Funeral Home

Funeral homes provide essential support during a very sensitive time. They care for the body, handle all required paperwork, and work closely with your family to coordinate memorials or funeral services, whether at the funeral home or a place of worship.

Whenever possible, planning ahead and selecting a funeral home in advance can make the process easier. It's important to choose a home with a strong reputation — one that treats grieving families with compassion and integrity during such a vulnerable time.

Many people often select a facility simply because it is nearby or comes recommended by someone they trust. However, by limiting your search to just one funeral home, you might risk paying more than necessary for the funeral and any additional services or goods.

You can use the following tips to help make the process of choosing the right funeral home a little less stressful.

Compare prices

If you've handled funeral arrangements before, you might be tempted to go back to the same funeral home you know. While that can be a good choice for some, it might not always be the best fit for your current situation. Prices may have changed since the last time you made arrangements, so it can be wise to shop around and compare costs at different funeral homes in your community.

Ask for recommendations

Even if you've never had to choose a funeral home, you probably know someone who has.

Don't hesitate to ask friends or acquaintances if they would recommend the services they received.

They can often provide useful insights about the staff, the facilities, and even the pricing at the funeral homes they used.

Ask about packages

Whether your loved one left a specific list of final wishes or you are making these decisions yourself, it is important to ask potential funeral homes about the types of packages they offer. You will notice that not all funeral homes are the same, as each one offers different ways of handling a service.

No matter what your requirements may be, it is best to choose a home that will cater to your specific needs to make this difficult situation feel a bit less daunting.

Caring staff

When you visit a potential funeral home, your experience with the director can play a big role in your decision. A professional, caring staff will take the time to walk you through all your options with empathy, helping you make an informed choice. If the director seems inattentive or makes you feel like your loved one isn't a priority, it's a sign to consider another facility.

While coping with a loss is never easy, choosing the right funeral home can help ease some of that burden. By keeping these tips in mind, you can make sure your loved one receives the care and respect they deserve during this important time.

When Caring Counts...

Lowndes County's
Leading Funeral and
Cremation Provider



LOWNDES
FUNERAL HOME
& CREMATORY



Always giving our families more life celebration options.

- Modern, Spacious Facility
- Funeral Webcasting
- Personalized Funeral & Memorial Services
- Only On-Site Crematory
- Abundant Parking
- Family Owned & Operated

1131 N. Lehmborg Rd. • Columbus, MS
662-328-1808 • www.lowndesfuneralhome.net



*Scan the QR code to
visit our website.*

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Family Medical Clinic

Choosing a medical practice where every member of your family can receive care adds a level of convenience that really simplifies life. When everyone visits the same location, it's much easier to share medical histories, and your doctors can track your family's health consistently over the years.

Family medical clinics offer "one-stop" care for everyone in your family. These clinics are staffed with medical professionals specializing in many areas of routine care for people of all ages.

Doctors at family medical clinics often provide a wide range of treatments, from prenatal care and pediatrics to internal medicine and urgent care. Some facilities even go a step further by offering chiropractic services, dental care and behavioral health support.

Perhaps the greatest advantage you will find is the opportunity to build lasting relationships with the doctors who treat your entire family in one centralized location. To help you make the right choice, there are several key factors you may want to consider.

Your family's needs

First, it's important to evaluate your family's needs to make sure they're a good fit for the clinic.

If members of your family have any serious or unusual health conditions, finding a doctor with experience treating those issues should be at the top of your list. In some cases, you might require a specialist for ongoing treatments, while a family practice doctor might be able to manage the situation with less expense and fewer logistical hurdles.

The same thing applies for anyone very young children or elderly family members.

Preventative care

When you're looking for a clinic to work with over the long term, it's important to find a team that's great at preventing medical problems before they start. Preventive care is one of the most effective ways to improve your family's health while keeping costs under control. Making small changes to your diet or physical activity or catching minor health issues early can go a long way toward helping you live a longer, healthier life.

Ask the clinic how they can support your family not just with urgent or occasional care, but also in reducing or managing health risks before they turn into serious problems.

Schedule

Modern families often have busy lives. Between school, sports and extracurricular

activities, parents, children and grandparents can have very packed schedules. That's why an important consideration is how well the medical clinic can work into your existing schedule.

Some offices offer extended hours, which can make it much easier for you to book appointments for children without them missing significant school time. You might also find clinics that offer limited weekend hours for added flexibility.

While some clinics enable you to book same-day appointments, you might find that others have no openings for several weeks. It is helpful for you to understand their availability for same-day or next-day visits before a medical need actually arises.

Interaction

The best family medical clinics make it easy to interact with them at every level.

A professional and welcoming staff is a key component of a positive experience. The physicians, clinicians, and office personnel should all demonstrate excellent listening and communication skills. The office itself should seem organized, clean and managed well.

Increasingly, the way you interact with a clinic's technology can have a big impact on your overall healthcare experience. Look for a clinic that offers easy-to-use digital tools if you like to schedule appointments, have virtual visits or check your test results online.

Location

Depending on your family's needs, doctor visits may be a frequent part of your life. The more often your family requires medical attention, the more important it becomes for you to find a clinic with a nearby and convenient location.

If you can find a facility that provides outstanding care within an easy driving distance of your home or office, the convenience will result in much less disruption to your daily life.

Insurance

One of the most critical factors you must consider is whether the clinic accepts your specific insurance coverage; you should check with your provider to see if the clinic is in-network. Selecting a facility that is not part of your insurance plan's network can make your visits significantly more expensive, so it is best to know your out-of-pocket costs beforehand.

With some careful shopping and a few questions, you can find a quality family medical clinic that provides outstanding care in a way that fits your family's unique needs.



Whether it is your
physical health or your mental health,

ALLEGRO

is the Golden Triangle's choice
to ensure a whole body
wellness approach.

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Hospital

Most people will need hospital services at some point in their lives — whether welcoming a new baby, seeking emergency care or undergoing surgery. Depending on where you live, you may have several facilities located nearby.

It is helpful to remember that hospitals can differ greatly in how they are managed and in the range of services they offer. Many large hospitals are operated by healthcare corporations, while others are independent or supported by the local community. Although nearly all hospitals provide basic emergency and surgical care, some are far better equipped to deliver specialized services.

A great hospital is designed to be a nurturing, comfortable environment that supports the healing process. Many facilities offer amenities such as coffee shops, gift shops, libraries and quiet areas for reflection or worship.

Beyond these comforts, a quality hospital places a strong emphasis on safety by working to prevent medical errors, reduce infection rates and ensure clear, open communication between staff, patients and families.

The following factors can help you identify the hospital best suited to your needs.

Location

The location of a hospital is often a key factor in the decision-making process, as a facility close to your home or workplace is generally more convenient.

In some areas, you may have only one nearby option, and traveling a long distance for care is often impractical. In an emergency, reaching qualified medical professionals as quickly as possible is essential.

An exception may occur when a medical condition requires highly specialized treatment, which could make traveling farther necessary. Ultimately, the right choice involves balancing convenience with your specific healthcare needs.

Doctor privileges

It's important to ensure that your preferred doctor has "privileges" at the hospital you plan to use. Physicians often refer patients to hospitals where they are familiar with the facilities and know how to operate the equipment. Be sure to ask your doctor which hospitals they are authorized to practice in.

Additionally, check which hospitals are included in your insurance provider's network. Choosing a facility outside your coverage could result in significant out-of-pocket expenses.

Accreditation and certifications

You may also want to consider the certifications and awards a hospital has earned. For example, hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission meet specific standards for quality and safety.

Another notable recognition is the Magnet designation, awarded to a select few hospitals that demonstrate excellence in nursing care.

Awards and other certifications indicate that a hospital offers consistent care. The Magnet program recognizes excellence in nursing care and other aspects of hospital work.

Not all hospitals are Magnet certified. In fact, this award is only given to a select few facilities in the country.

Hospitals often specialize in different areas of medicine. One local hospital might excel in heart care, while another focuses on digestive health. Choosing the right hospital for your specific procedure can help ensure you receive the highest level of care.

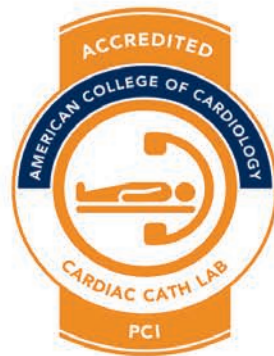
Choosing the right hospital for your specific procedure can help ensure you receive the highest level of care. Some hospitals may even transfer patients to another facility if it has better specialists or equipment for their condition.



Taking cardiac care to new heights.

At Baptist Memorial Hospital-Golden Triangle, we offer the same advanced heart care services found in larger metropolitan areas, delivered with the personalized level of compassion that sets our community-based hospital apart. Our cardiac teams are consistently accredited, certified and recognized by the nation's top health care associations for their excellence in delivering advanced care. We bring a full range of accredited cardiac services and facilities to diagnose and treat all types of heart disease right here in the heart of the Golden Triangle. When it comes to exceptional, responsive cardiac care, you can trust Baptist.

For more information, please visit
baptistonline.org/NewHeights
 or call us at 662-244-1000.



 **BAPTIST**

Get Better.

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Pediatric Doctor

Choosing a healthcare provider for your child should feel like a positive experience, not a stressful one. Pediatric specialists are skilled at creating welcoming environments that help build a healthy, lifelong relationship with medical care. By offering a gentle and friendly atmosphere, they can turn an intimidating checkup into something your child actually enjoys.

Specialist pediatric care is widely available, giving you the chance to find a setting designed specifically for children. With the right provider, your child might even look forward to their next routine visit. Since it's important to establish care early in a child's life, here's a guide to finding the best doctor in your community.

Starting your search

Start your search by putting together a list of potential pediatric dentists and their office locations. Other parents can be a huge help — ask them where they take their children and what their experiences were like. Your family doctor may also be able to provide a trusted recommendation. You can also find local options by searching online, checking community newspapers or flipping through a phone directory.

Professional organizations are another great source of verified information. The American Dental Association, for example, maintains directories of qualified specialists who uphold high standards of care. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry is another excellent resource to guide your search.

Checking with your insurance provider

If you have health insurance, your choices may be limited to a specific network of doctors. While all in-network providers are expected to

deliver quality care, it's a good idea to contact your insurance company's customer service team for guidance. Ask them for at least three pediatric specialists in your network who are currently accepting new patients. If you don't have insurance, focus on thorough research and trusted personal recommendations when making your selection.

Conducting phone interviews

Once you've narrowed down your list, call the offices directly to ask questions and take notes on their answers. Ask about the practice's history and the doctor's experience. While a younger doctor can be an excellent choice, a more experienced practitioner often has a more refined approach to working with children.

You'll also want to find out about their typical pricing, office hours, common procedures and whether they offer an introductory visit for new patients.

Meeting the doctor

The most important factor in choosing a doctor is how comfortable your child feels with them. Arrange a time for your child to meet the prospective provider in person. This visit gives you a chance to see the doctor's patience and bedside manner for yourself. When working with children, a doctor needs to be especially kind and skilled at calming a child who may be upset or crying.

The best way to see if a provider is the right fit is to watch how they interact with kids firsthand. It's a good idea to visit several offices before making a final decision. You'll know you've found the right doctor when your child starts to see them as a friend they feel comfortable visiting.



**CHILDREN'S
HEALTH CENTER**
— of Columbus —

Thrive

A PEDIATRIC BEHAVIORAL CLINIC BY
- CHILDREN'S HEALTH CENTER -

**READY
TO
SERVE
YOU!**



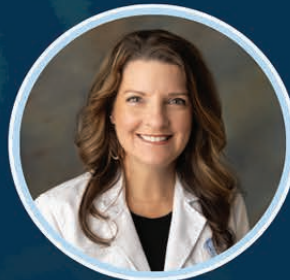
DR. RODRIGUEZ, PEDIATRICIAN



CALVIN FRENCH, DNP



DR. NAFFI, PEDIATRICIAN



JENNIFER MCCULLOUGH, FNP



DUSTY NABORS, CHMT



BRANDON HOLLEY, PA-C



BROOKE FLOURNOY, C-PNP



SARA KAIN, DNP



MITCHELL WILLIAMS, FNP-C

**CALL OR TEXT TO SCHEDULE YOUR
CHILD'S APPOINTMENT!**

(662) 329-2955

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Pediatric Dentist

A trip to the dentist should never be stressful for a child. Pediatric dentists are specially trained to create a warm, welcoming environment that helps kids build a positive, lifelong relationship with oral health. By focusing on a playful and non-intimidating approach, these professionals can turn a child's dental visit from something to fear into something to look forward to.

Specialized pediatric care is widely available, so children can receive expert treatment in a space designed just for them. In fact, the right dentist can even make your child excited for their next cleaning. Since dental care should start as early as a child's first birthday, here's a guide to finding the best provider in your area.

Starting your search

Start by putting together a list of potential pediatric dentists and their office details. Other parents can be a great resource—ask them where they take their children and what their experiences have been like. Your family dentist may also be able to give you a trusted referral.

You can also find local providers by searching online, checking a phone book, or browsing local newspapers. Professional organizations are another excellent source for verified information. The American Dental Association maintains a directory of qualified local specialists who uphold high standards of public oral health. Another top resource is the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, which can help guide your search.

Checking with your insurance provider

If you have dental insurance, your options may be limited to a specific network of providers. While all network dentists should

provide quality care, it's a good idea to reach out to your insurance company's customer service team for guidance.

Ask for at least three pediatric dentists in your network who are currently accepting new patients. If you don't have insurance, focus on thorough research and personal recommendations when making your selection.

Conducting Phone Interviews

Once you have your shortlist, call the offices directly to gather more information, and be sure to take notes. Ask about the practice's history and the dentist's experience. While newer dentists can be excellent, a more seasoned practitioner often has a well-honed approach to working with children.

You'll also want to find out about office hours, typical pricing, and common procedures, and see if they offer introductory visits for new young patients.

Meeting the dentist

The most important factor is how comfortable your child feels with the dentist. Schedule a time for your child to meet the prospective provider in person. This gives you a chance to see the dentist's patience and interpersonal skills firsthand. When working with children, a dentist needs to be friendly, patient, and able to calm a child who may be upset or anxious.

The best way to judge a dentist is by watching how they interact directly with kids. Consider visiting a few offices before making your final choice. You'll know you've found the right fit when your child starts to see the dentist as a friend they actually look forward to visiting.

Bright Smiles, Brighter Futures



HOW TO CHOOSE:

- Our practice offers a full range of pediatric dental services including preventative, restorative, and emergency and surgical intervention when necessary. In addition to our comprehensive pediatric dental services, we also now have a team with a dedicated focus on infant nutrition and oral care.
- Bright smiles and bright futures start with proper infant nutrition. Kandace is our in-house International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and she is here to help all our infants and parents during their feeding journey. Dr Katie is trained to evaluate and treat tethered oral tissues that can be problematic with infant feeding.
- For optimum care, in addition to our own lactation specialist, we work with speech language pathologists, myofunctional therapists, physical therapists, pediatricians, and more within our community and the surrounding area.

No referral is needed for an infant evaluation! So call us today if you are concerned about your infant!

We Are The Pediatricians Of Dentistry!

Call and schedule your appointment today! 662-327-0995

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Dentist

When it comes to maintaining lifelong oral health, having a trusted dental professional is essential for preventing issues and keeping teeth and gums healthy. Choosing the right dentist — and building a lasting relationship with them — is an important part of protecting your overall health. Regular visits allow your dentist to become familiar with your oral health needs, address concerns early and provide personalized care. A quality dentist will help you feel at ease and clearly explain procedures so you always understand your treatment options.

Convenience also plays a key role in maintaining consistent dental care. Selecting a dentist located near your home or workplace, with office hours that fit your schedule, makes it easier to keep appointments and prioritize your oral health.

Whether you're new to the area or simply ready to establish routine dental care, the following tips can help you find the right dentist for your needs.

Ask around

First, ask your social network for recommendations. Friends, family, and colleagues can often provide helpful insights based on their own experiences.

You can also search the internet for dental offices in your area to see what options are available. Many professionals have their own websites where you can learn more about the backgrounds of the team members. These sites can also give you a feel for how they handle appointments and what specialized services they might offer.

Your local newspaper is another great resource, as it may contain advertisements from dentists that include special discounts for new patients.

Interview dentists

Once you have a list of potential dentists, you can start reaching out by phone or email. The receptionist or office staff is typically available to answer your questions even if the

dentist is busy with patients.

You should verify that the dentist has earned a degree from a reputable school and stays current on their licensing and education. Ideally, your chosen professional will be familiar with the latest trends and technologies in dental care.

Ask whether the dental office provides emergency services. If you break a tooth or need to have a root canal done right away, you will want to use your chosen dentist. You don't want to have to search for a dentist when you are in pain.

Lead time for appointments is another consideration. Some offices may be able to see you almost immediately, while others might have a wait time of three weeks or more.

Your prospective dentist should ideally accept your insurance, but if you do not have coverage, you can always ask about their available payment plans. A professional office will also be happy to give you an estimate before they perform any work.

Office visit

After narrowing down your options, visit the dental office in person. A well-run practice will have friendly, professional staff, and a dentist who takes the time to address your questions and concerns.

It's common to feel anxious about dental visits or the possibility of discomfort. If you're nervous, share your concerns with the dentist and staff — they are experienced in helping patients feel comfortable and will take extra steps to ease your anxiety.

During your first visit, the staff will review your oral health history, explain recommended treatment options and discuss ways to prevent future issues. A quality dental practice prioritizes patient comfort and strives to create a welcoming, stress-free experience.

Your teeth play an important role in both your overall health and your confidence, and finding the right dentist is like finding a trusted partner — someone committed to helping you maintain a healthy, confident smile.

THERE ARE SO MANY REASONS TO SMILE.



VOTED
THE BEST DENTISTS
IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE
FOR 2021, 2022, 2023,
2024 and 2025
Dr. Patrick Singley
Dr. Mitchell Crane




Singley and Crane
FAMILY DENTISTRY

662-328-1600
2900 Bluecutt Rd. | Ste. 2
Columbus, Mississippi
Mon - Thurs: 8:00 - 5:00
Fri: 8:00 - 12:00
www.pscdental.com

HOW TO CHOOSE

A Credible News Source

In today's information-saturated world, distinguishing credible news sources from unreliable ones is essential for staying well informed. The growth of social media, nonstop news cycles and opinion-heavy content has made it increasingly easy to encounter misinformation. Understanding how to evaluate news outlets helps ensure you rely on journalism that is accurate, responsible and well researched.

Prioritize quality journalism

At the core of every trustworthy news source is strong journalism. Seek out outlets that follow established journalistic standards, including fact-checking, thorough research, source attribution and balanced reporting.

Consider whether the organization employs experienced journalists with expertise in areas such as politics, economics or science. High-quality journalism often provides depth, multiple viewpoints and clear sourcing. Be cautious of outlets that depend on sensational headlines, emotional language, or unnamed sources without verification.

Reputable news organizations also acknowledge mistakes and publish corrections when errors occur, demonstrating accountability and a commitment to accuracy. Reviewing whether a source has a visible corrections policy and a record of updating content when needed can be a strong indicator of credibility.

Value quality over speed

In a fast-moving news environment, speed can sometimes outweigh accuracy. Breaking news evolves quickly, and early reports may include incomplete or incorrect details. Reliable news sources focus on accuracy first

rather than being the fastest to publish.

Notice whether an outlet verifies information before releasing a story or clearly updates reports as new facts become available. While timely reporting is valuable, rushing can lead to confusion or misinformation. Trustworthy organizations are transparent about updates and avoid amplifying unconfirmed claims.

Consider the source's longevity and reputation

A news outlet's history can offer insight into its credibility. Long-established organizations have often earned public trust through years of consistent reporting. These outlets typically have structured editorial processes and resources dedicated to investigative journalism.

That said, longevity alone does not guarantee reliability. Newer outlets can also produce high-quality reporting, but they warrant closer evaluation. Examine their editorial standards, funding, and whether their work is referenced by other respected news organizations.

Look for transparency and independence

Credible news sources are open about their ownership, funding and potential biases. They clearly distinguish between news reporting, opinion content, and sponsored material. Be wary of outlets strongly influenced by political groups, corporate interests or advocacy agendas, as these factors can shape coverage.

By focusing on quality journalism, prioritizing accuracy over speed and assessing a source's reputation and transparency, readers can navigate today's complex media landscape with confidence. A thoughtful approach to news consumption not only improves understanding but also helps limit the spread of misinformation.



The Dispatch thanks the community for its continued support. We remain committed to bringing you the most in-depth journalism in the area.

We look forward to continuing to serve you in the coming years.

**THE
DISPATCH**
www.cdispatch.com

HOW TO CHOOSE

An Internet Service Provider

You will find that reliable internet service is no longer optional in today's world. With so many people working from home and essential communications moving online, choosing the right provider can significantly affect your overall quality of life.

While mergers have reduced competition in some areas, many communities still offer a choice between independent providers, tech giants like Google with fiber connections, and traditional cable companies. Even if your choices seem limited, you can still find a level of service that fits your needs at a price you can afford. Most providers offer various tiers of service, ranging from budget-friendly options to top-shelf gigabit connections.

Whether you are settling into a new home or are simply unhappy with your current provider, keeping a few key factors in mind will help you make the best choice.

Price

Cost is an important consideration, as most companies bill on a monthly basis. It is helpful to set a budget in advance, keeping in mind that faster service typically comes at a higher cost. Comparing several providers allows you to find the best value, and it is especially important to review the upload and download speeds offered at each price level. In general, higher speeds result in better overall service.

Type of connection

The type of internet connection available to you also plays an important role in your decision.

Broadband is the most common option, offering high-speed access through modems, mobile networks or coaxial cables.

Fiber optic and satellite connections are becoming increasingly available in many cities. In some areas, you may also find DSL service, which operates through a traditional landline. Although dial-up is extremely slow by modern standards and rarely used today, it may still be the only option in certain rural locations.

Purpose of connection

Make a list of what you need to accomplish on the internet. If your goal is to stream movies, work remotely or take online courses, you will likely need a faster internet connection.

However, if you primarily check email or browse basic websites, a slower and more affordable service may be perfectly adequate.

Determining the purpose of your connection will prevent you from being disappointed in the service or your bill.

Specials

Many providers offer attractive specials or bundled packages to bring in new customers. These offers may include free equipment, service upgrades or even a few months of no-cost service. Bundles often combine internet with phone and cable television services.

Look closely at providers in your area to find a package that suits you. If you already use cable or satellite TV, it is worth checking whether your provider offers a discount for adding residential internet. Your mobile phone carrier may also have package options for home internet.

The key is finding the combination that best fits your specific needs.

Customer service

Reading customer reviews can help you avoid frustration later on. Look for information about typical wait times for customer support and how often service outages occur.

It is also useful to learn how efficiently a company replaces defective equipment and resolves technical issues. Reviewing these details before signing a contract can help prevent unpleasant surprises after you become a customer.




If possible, sign up for a provider on a trial basis. If you are unsatisfied with the service, connection or products, you can cancel it without paying a penalty.



Smart Home Wi-Fi

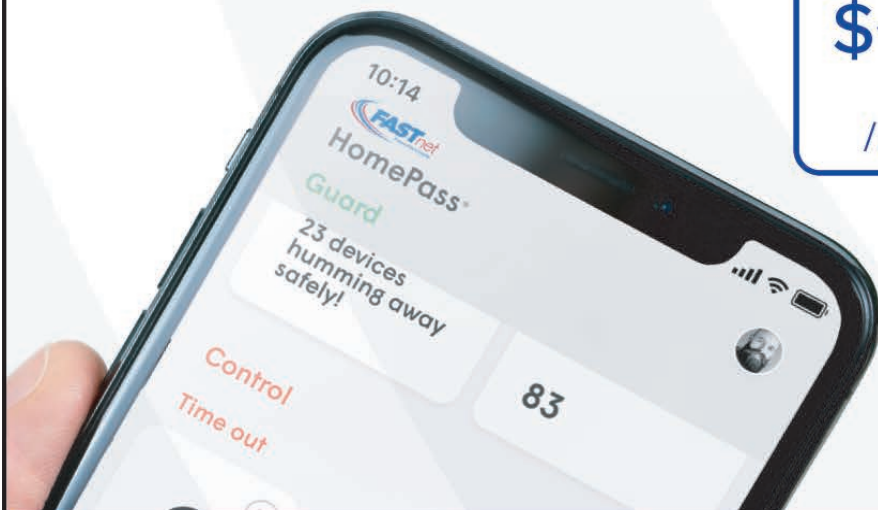
Powered by **Plume HomePass®**

Supercharge your home with Smart Home Wi-Fi!

-  Up to 2 Wi-Fi extenders for property-wide internet
-  Protection against malicious websites
-  Full Wi-Fi control (including Internet timeouts for kids)

\$10
/month

Enjoy seamless internet throughout your entire home.



Upgrade your experience today!




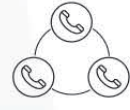
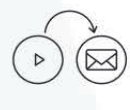

4CFASTnet.com | 1.800.431.1544



Say goodbye to pricey home phone bills!



FAMILIAR FEATURES

-  Emergency Calling
-  Three-Way Calling
-  Voicemail to Email
-  Call Screening

\$ 27⁸⁰
/month

with FASTnet internet service.

We'll help make the switch seamless and hassle-free!

Sign up today and start saving!



4CFASTnet.com | 1.800.431.1544