The Home Doctor Is In

The Home Doctor has the answers to your building questions.Q: A recent storm wreaked havoc on my roof and I'm now facing a roof replacement project for the first time. What should I know about shingles before diving into the reroof with my contractor?A: Before I answer your question, I want to be sure you're working with a reputable contractor. Ask your roofer if he has insurance and get a written estimate for the work. It's a good idea to ask for a couple of references to follow up on in advance of signing a contract. The Better Business Bureau can also alert you to any complaints that have been filed against the company.Once you are comfortable with the contractor, it's time to investigate shingle options. Interestingly, I've found that contractors will frequently recommend a shingle identical to the one they are replacing. There are so many new options in roofing that you'd be remiss not to investigate. From dramatic color blends to high-end "luxury" looks and outstanding warranty terms, make sure your contractor gives you a number of choices.For most homeowners, I recommend asphalt roofing versus slate or wood. Generally, the more traditional materials are more costly and require a significant amount of upkeep over time. Asphalt shingles tend to endure the elements much better and some even come with impact-resistant features. They are more affordable in upfront costs. Plus, new styles of luxury asphalt shingles replicate the look of wood or slate with a likeness and affordability that are hard to beat. As far as finding a quality shingle, CertainTeed has built a good reputation with its extensive line of asphalt shingles. This is the company that pioneered the increasingly popular multilayer shingle and is known for its innovative design and bold shingle color choices, such as variegated reds, blues and greens. When investigating shingle styles, their Web site is a good place to start.The style of your home and your personal preference will determine the appropriate shingle for your house. If you want a roof built of high-quality materials and a dramatic, statement-making look, it may be worth looking at CertainTeed's new Centennial Slate™ or Landmark TL Ultimate™ luxury shingles. The former has a look of true blended slate, the latter is a wood-shake Click here for more style. Both luxury shingles come with outstanding warranties and use color and layers to capture authentic style

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Alexander Removals Derby
Address: 2nd Floor suite 4, St Andrews House, Vernongate, Derby DE1 1UJ, United Kingdom
Phone: 44 133 231 4500
Website: https://alexanderremovals.co.uk/
Hours: Monday to Sunday: 8 AM–10 PM