

4 QUESTIONS FOR PATIENTS TO ASK

Some tests, treatments and procedures provide little benefit. In some cases, they may even cause harm. These questions can help you make sure you end up with the right amount of care — not too much and not too little. As each care situation is unique, healthcare professionals and patients should have a conversation to work out an appropriate healthcare plan together.



DO I REALLY NEED THIS TEST OR PROCEDURE?

Tests may help you and your doctor or other healthcare professionals determine the problem. Procedures may help to treat it. Understanding why your doctor is considering a test -and weighing up the benefits and risks - is always advisable, and is every patient's right and responsibility.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

If you have - or don't have - the test or procedure, what is likely to happen? Are there potential side effects? What are the chances of getting results that aren't accurate? Could that lead to more testing or another procedure?



ARE THERE SIMPLER, SAFER OPTIONS?

Sometimes all you need to do is make lifestyle changes, such as eating healthier foods or exercising more. Or an alternative test or treatment that might deliver useful information, while reducing any potential negative impacts for you.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING?

Ask if your condition might get worse — or better — if you don't have the test or procedure right away.



These questions have been adapted from the Choosing Wisely international campaign after input from consumers in New Zealand.