



*An initiative of the ABIM Foundation*



**BetterHealth**

*Better you.*

# Choosing Wisely<sup>®</sup> Presentation



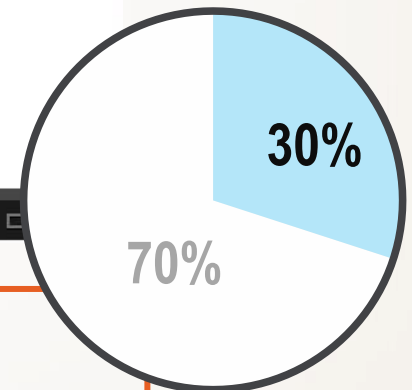
**ConsumerReportsHealth**



## Getting the most from your health care

New resources for you and your family

# More doesn't equal better



Up to 30% of health care in the U.S. is unnecessary

# About the *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> campaign

- Initiative of ABIM Foundation
- Trusted resources—including more than 30 national medical organizations and Consumer Reports
- *Choosing Wisely* encourages conversations between patients and physicians

Read more about the campaign at

<http://consumerhealthchoices.org/campaigns/choosing-wisely>

# You can get better care when you know more



Being informed helps you make smarter choices:

- The right care
- Better results



Many tools and resources help you understand options for medical care

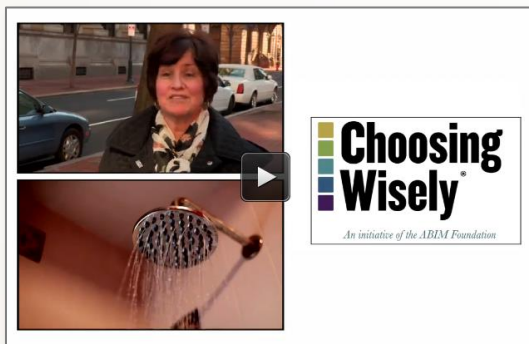
Use *Choosing Wisely* and Consumer Reports resources to help you get started

# Consumer Reports resources

## Tip sheet series



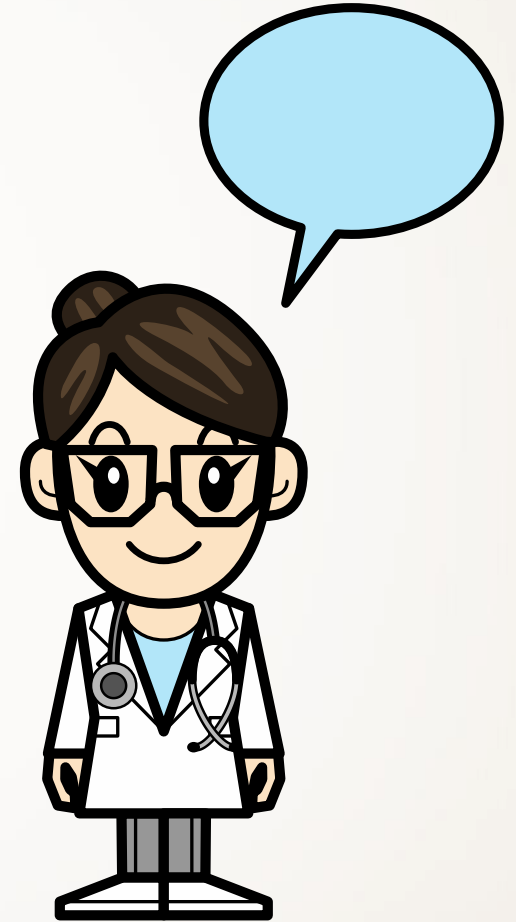
## Video series



To read, watch or download, visit <http://consumerhealthchoices.org/for-employees>.

# Your relationship with your doctor is key

- It is a partnership
- Come prepared to your visits
  - Medications
  - List of questions
  - Paper and pen
  - Bring a family member or friend
- Talk to your doctor—speak up!
  - Ask questions
  - Get clarification



# Don't be afraid to say "Whoa!"

## Ask questions:

- Do I really need this test or procedure?
- What are the downsides?
- Are there simpler, safer options?
- How much does it cost?



# Imaging and screenings

- Know the facts
- How does it relate to your symptoms, care or disease
- Share your results with your doctors



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Asking questions about  
**imaging tests**

X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs are called imaging tests because they take pictures, or images, of the inside of your body.

They are used to guide diagnosis and treatment of many different medical conditions. But some uses of these tests have been identified—by medical societies participating in the Choosing Wisely® campaign—as ones that you should question if they are offered, because sometimes they are not needed.

**Here are three common situations where that might be the case:**

- **CHEST X RAYS BEFORE SURGERY**  
Many people have a chest X-ray before they have an operation. This is called a "pre-op" chest X-ray. If you have a heart or lung disease, you may want to get an ultrasound X-ray to see where medical problems, like an enlarged heart, congestive heart failure, or fluid around the lungs. These could mean that your surgery should be delayed or canceled.  
**However:** If you don't have signs or symptoms of a heart or lung disease, you should think twice about having a chest X-ray before surgery.
- **A CHEST X-RAY USUALLY DOESN'T HELP** If you do not have symptoms of a heart or lung disease, and your risk is low, an X-ray probably will not help. It is not likely to show a serious problem that would change your treatment plan.
- **A CHEST X-RAY DOES NOT HELP THE SURGEON ON THE ANESTHESIOLOGIST MANAGE YOUR CARE.** Most of the time, a careful medical history and physical exam are all you need.
- **A CHEST X-RAY CAN HAVE RISKS.** Risks from radiation exposure may add up, so it is best to avoid it when you can.
- **A CHEST X-RAY CAN SHOW SOMETHING THAT LOOKS TO BE ABNORMAL.** This is often a false alarm. But you will need follow-up tests to make sure it's a serious problem. This can cause anxiety, cost you money, and expose you to risks from other tests.

[Click here to learn when these tests are appropriate.](#)

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ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT  
**medical tests**

Even doctors say that sometimes the tests they order may not be necessary.

The consequences? Sometimes the tests carry risks of their own. An inaccurate result may lead to even more testing. And of course, your time and money could have been spent on something more useful.

How can you protect yourself from that? What sorts of questions should you ask when your doctor orders a test?

**Here's what we recommend:**

- "Do I really need this test?" The answer should be direct and simple. Tests should help you and your doctor decide how to treat your problem.
- "What are the downsides?" Discuss the risks as well as the chance of inaccurate results or findings that will never cause symptoms but may require further testing.
- "What happens if I do nothing?" Ask if your condition might worsen—or get better—if you don't have the test now.
- "How much does it cost?"  
The answer may surprise you.  
For example, here are three common tests that have been identified for medical societies participating in the Choosing Wisely® campaign as ones that patients should question if they are offered, because sometimes they are not needed.

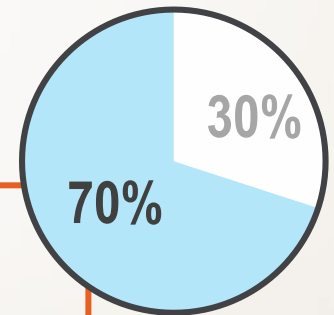
- **BONE DENSITY TESTS**  
A bone density test is a way to measure the strength of your bones. The test, called a DEXA scan, is a kind of X-ray. Many people get a bone density test every two years.  
The main reason to have the test is to find and treat serious bone loss. But most men and women under age 65 probably don't need the test.  
• Most people have no bone loss or have mild bone loss (osteopenia). Their risk of breaking a bone is low.  
• A bone density test gives out a small amount of radiation. But the harmful effects of radiation can add up, so it is best to avoid it when you can.  
• The most common drugs to treat bone loss have many risks. Common side effects include upset stomach, difficulty swallowing, and heartburn.  
• The treatments have limited benefits. Many people are given drugs because they have mild bone loss. But there is little evidence that these drugs help them. And even if the drugs do help, they may only help for a few years.

[Click here to learn when these tests are appropriate.](#)



# A little prevention goes a long way

- Lifestyle choices have the largest impact on your health
- Taking care of yourself prevents health problems and saves you money
- Simple actions
  - Maintain a healthy weight
  - Pay attention to how you feel
  - Take action when you sense something is wrong
  - Get regular health care checkups and screenings



70% of diseases are preventable

# Tips & resources

See the full set of *Choosing Wisely* and Consumer Reports employee resources at <http://consumerhealthchoices.org/for-employees>