Choosing Wisely

Questions to ask at your medical appointment

Information for patients and their families

Choosing Wisely helps patients and health professionals talk to each other about tests, treatments and procedures. This supports you to make decisions together, improving care and reducing treatment that may not be needed.

On the reverse side of this factsheet you will find some questions you may like to ask our clinical staff.

These questions are provided to guide you on what to ask your clinicians to help you make the right decisions about your healthcare.

Some tests, treatments and procedures provide little benefit. Asking these questions before you have any tests or treatments will help you get the right amount of care you need.

We joined the Choosing Wisely Australia initiative to improve our patients’ experience of our health service.

Got questions? We’re listening.
Some questions to ask your health professional:

1. **What are the benefits?**
   Tests may help you and your clinician determine the problem. Treatments such as medicines, and procedures may help you resolve the problem.
   It is important that you understand the purpose of why a test, treatment or procedure is being recommended so that you are informed about what is involved and whether you feel comfortable with this recommendation.

2. **What are the risks?**
   Ask your clinician if there will be any side effects and what the chances are of needing more tests, treatment or another procedure.
   Also ask what the recovery may entail.

3. **What are the alternatives?**
   It’s important to investigate with your clinician all options available to you. Often lifestyle changes, such as diet, or exercising may help alongside other treatments.

4. **What if I do nothing?**
   Ask if your condition may get worse or better if you don’t have the test, treatment or procedure.
   If you are considering a safer option such as change in diet or lifestyle, ask for advice on how long you should try these options before seeing your GP or returning for your next appointment.

5. **What are the delivery options?**
   How can my care be delivered? In clinic/hospital, via telehealth, with my GP, or in my home?

**TIPS:**
- Write down your questions before your appointment.
- Bring a friend, family member, or carer - they can help you understand the information and help take notes.
- Listen carefully and if at any time you don’t understand what is being said, ask your doctor to repeat or explain the information in another way.