



# Five Questions To Ask a Doctor Before Agreeing to a Test or Procedure

Al Lewis, Quizzify Founder and MIA Health Care Consultant

There are 5 classic questions to ask your doctor before a test or procedure. You may not be asking them, for one of three reasons.


## 1. You don't know these five questions

You are not alone. Neither did we here at Quizzify, before we started Quizzify. Here they are, right on the original Choosing Wisely poster.


## 2. You read them, but you don't remember them

We've fixed that very elegantly by making these questions downloadable right into your Apple Wallet. This assumes you are reading Well Aware on your iPhone right now and that the internet gods are smiling upon us.

If the tech isn't working or if you are on a PC or a pad right now, you can use your iPhone later to find this Quizzify post, where you can scroll to this picture and – once again, using your iPhone – click on “Add to Apple Wallet.” (Android users will have to wait until the next issue of Well Aware.)



An initiative of the ABIM Foundation



FOUNDATION

### 5 QUESTIONS to Ask Your Doctor Before You Get Any Test, Treatment, or Procedure


- 1 Do I really need this test or procedure?** Medical tests help you and your doctor or other health provider decide how to treat a problem. And medical procedures help to actually treat it.
- 2 What are the risks?** Will there be side effects? What are the chances of getting results that aren't accurate? Could that lead to more testing or another procedure?
- 3 Are there simpler, safer options?** Sometimes all you need to do is make lifestyle changes, such as eating healthier food or exercising more.
- 4 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.
- 5 How much does it cost?** Ask if there are less-expensive tests, treatments or procedures, what your insurance may cover, and about generic drugs instead of brand-name drugs.

---

**Use these 5 questions to talk to your doctor about which tests, treatments, and procedures you need — and which you don't need**

Some medical tests, treatments, and procedures provide little benefit. And in some cases, they may even cause harm.

Talk to your doctor to make sure you end up with the right amount of care — not too much and not too little.



www.choosingwisely.org/patient-resources  
©2016 Consumer Reports

### 3. You've read them and remember them, but don't want to confront your doctor

Many people (including some of us here at Quizzify) are reluctant to question those authority figures wearing white coats. That's why the last line of the version in the Wallet says: "If you're reluctant to ask these questions, blame us!"

It's not "confrontation." It's simply asking questions. Almost by definition, a good doctor welcomes this type of informed interaction. If your doctor discourages this – or even gives off a vibe discouraging this – you might want to change doctors.

### 4. To summarize...

Americans are the most overscreened, overdiagnosed, overtreated, over-medicated society on earth, partly because we often demand inappropriate healthcare and partly because we don't question doctors as much as we should.

Remember the Quizzify observation: "Just because it's healthcare doesn't mean it's good for you." For example, our recent articles on back pain and stents (Part 1, with Part 2 next month) cover classic examples of overused procedures that are often inappropriate.

*Stay tuned for more Classic Questions. We'll be covering scans, surgeries, and drugs in later issues. All will be downloadable into your phone. And, yes, including your Androids.*

