

Choosing Wisely in Maine



[Choosing Wisely](#)® is an initiative of the [ABIM Foundation](#) to help physicians/health care providers and patients **engage in conversations** about the overuse of tests and procedures and support physician/health care providers efforts to help patients make smart and effective care choices.

Recognizing the importance of physicians/health care providers and patients working together, leading medical specialty societies, along with [Consumer Reports](#), have joined Choosing Wisely to help improve the quality and safety of health care in America.

As part of Choosing Wisely, each participating medical specialty society has created lists of [“Five Things Physicians/Health Care Providers and Patients Should Question”](#) that provide specific, evidence-based recommendations physicians and patients should discuss to help make wise decisions about the most appropriate care based on their individual situation.

A flyer titled "Imaging tests for lower-back pain" with the subtitle "You probably do not need an X-ray, CT scan, or MRI". It features the Choosing Wisely logo, logos for Consumer Reports Health and the American Academy of Family Physicians, and a photograph of a person's back. The text explains that imaging tests like X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs are often unnecessary for lower-back pain and can lead to unnecessary surgery and costs. It also notes that imaging tests have risks, such as radiation from X-rays and CT scans.

Things Maine Providers and Patients Should Question

Through the guidance of the Choosing Wisely in Maine Leadership Group composed of physicians and other providers, consumers, employers, payers and other key stakeholders, *Choosing Wisely in Maine* has identified these focus areas:

1. Cardiac imaging (EKGs, stress tests, cardiac catheterization) for patients at low risk for heart disease
2. Imaging tests (CT scan, MRI) for low back pain
3. Antibiotics for upper respiratory infections
4. Imaging tests (CT scan, MRI) for uncomplicated headaches
5. Bone-density (DEXA) scans for low-risk women
6. Sleeping pills or sedatives (e.g. benzodiazepines) for insomnia, agitation, or delirium in older adults
7. Opioids or butalbital as pain medications for treating migraine headaches



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 care 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 foods 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 the **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.



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