



Talking to Your Doctor About Medical Tests



Overview

Medical tests are an important part of healthcare. Blood tests, x-rays, cancer screenings and other studies help your doctor find out if something's wrong. They help show if treatment is working. But before you agree to have a medical test, it's good to ask some questions. Here's what you need to know.

The basics

First, cover the basics. Ask why you need to have this test. Why is it being done? What will it show? And what will it cost? Ask questions so there are no surprises.

Preparation

Next, ask if you need to prepare for the test. For some tests, you may need to have an empty stomach. Or you may need to be ready to give a urine sample. Be sure you know how to prepare so your test is accurate.

Side effects

Some tests can have potential risks or side effects. Ask about these. Make sure you understand the risks so you'll know if the test is worth it for you.

Results

And finally, ask about the results. If the test is being done by a specialist, will the results be sent to your doctor? When and how will you be notified? And what can you expect to know about your health after the test results are in?

Conclusion

By asking the right questions, you'll be able to make good decisions about your healthcare.