

# Your Health: Fact Not Fiction

## How To Be A Smarter Patient And Live Longer

This information is meant help you become a smarter, more active patient. We hope it will help you understand when tests and treatments are necessary — and when they aren't.

### High value care: What is it?

“High value care” describes health care in which the benefits outweigh the harms and costs. It is customized based on the values and concerns of *each individual patient*. It is not about rationing... it is about being rational. And, it can be different for every patient — there is no “recipe” book, when it comes to health care for all.

**FACT:** The United States spends more than \$700 billion every year on unnecessary tests and treatments.

**FACT:** In the United States, we use medical tests more than other developed countries, but we are not healthier. We have a lower life expectancy than 21 other developed nations.

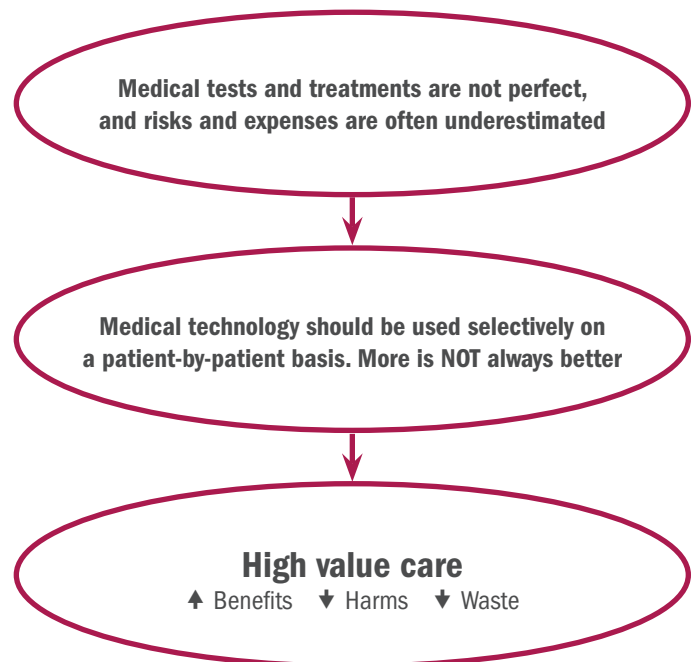
### Why less might actually be more

Some tests and treatments might have risks that outweigh their benefits including:

- Pain
- Radiation exposure
- False positives\*
- Unnecessary treatment
- Overdiagnosis\*\*
- Anxiety
- Missed work
- High costs
- Complications

\* A “false positive” is when a test is wrong by saying that you have a disease you don't have, which can lead to further invasive testing.

\*\* “Overdiagnosis” is when a test gives you a diagnosis that is unlikely to ever affect your health, and it may be better not to have the test at all, particularly when it results in unnecessary treatment or testing.



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## General Guidelines For High Value Care & Better Health

### To Do List

#### Hypertension Screening

**Why:** Treating hypertension has proven benefits for preventing strokes, heart disease and kidney disease.

#### Cholesterol Screening

**Why:** This screening can help inform treatment plans for people who have risk factors for heart disease.

#### Colon Cancer Screening

**Why:** Early detection helps decrease mortality from colon cancer.

#### Glucose Screening

**Why:** Often in the early stages of diabetes, symptoms are not prominent, but early treatment leads to much better outcomes.

#### Universal HIV Screening (once)

**Why:** Early detection and treatment for HIV saves lives.

#### Depression Screening

**Why:** Treatment can improve one's quality of life.

#### Screening for Smoking, Alcohol, Drug Use

**Why:** These behaviors affect overall health and can lead to problems at work and at home.

#### Flu Vaccine (yearly)

#### Pertussis/Tetanus Vaccine (every 10 years)

#### **IF you are female:**

#### Pap Smear (every 3 years)

**Why:** There is no benefit from annual pap smears.

#### **IF you were born in the U.S. between 1945-1965:**

#### Hepatitis C Screening

**Why:** Early detection and treatment of Hepatitis C saves lives.

#### **IF you are 65 years or older or smoke cigarettes, have chronic heart or lung disease, diabetes, alcoholism, cirrhosis or immune problems:**

#### Pneumovax Vaccine

### To Question List

#### ? **Imaging Tests for Nonspecific Low Back Pain**

**Why:** Test results will not change your course of care in the first 6 weeks.

#### ? **Imaging Tests for Headaches**

**Why:** Usually, information offered by the patient is enough to make a diagnosis. This test rarely provides useful information (less than 1% of the time); has a high false positive rate (20-30%); and if it is done via CT scan, results in radiation exposure.

#### ? **Antibiotics for Sinusitis**

**Why:** Most sinus infections are viral, which do not respond to antibiotics.

#### ? **Pre-Operation Chest X-Rays**

**Why:** For patients without breathing problems, the test does not improve surgical outcome or patient safety, and is an unnecessary radiation exposure.

#### ? **Routine Electrocardiograms (for asymptomatic, low-risk people)**

**Why:** The chance of low-risk individuals having silent heart disease is tiny.

#### **IF you are male:**

#### ? **Prostate Specific Antigen Screening**

**Why:** There is controversy and conflicting data over whether the screening has an impact on saving lives.

#### **Screening tests not recommended:**

#### ☒ **Total body scans**

#### ☒ **Pelvic Ultrasound**

#### ☒ **Ca 125**

#### ☒ **CEA**

#### **Everyone is different.**

The example guidelines here, as well as other tests and screenings, should ALWAYS be discussed with your healthcare providers.

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## Engaged Patient: What It Means

Being an engaged patient means being an active and vocal partner in your health care. It means knowing your health history, values, and individual concerns, and discussing them with your doctors. It means knowing you have the right to ask questions, and not being afraid to ask them.

### Why be an engaged patient?

- Better chance of receiving high value care
- Less chance of being overdiagnosed

### How to be an engaged patient

1. Collaborate with your healthcare professionals
2. Know your health history and medications
3. Be prepared with your questions... and don't be afraid to ask them!

### Some key questions to ask about tests

1. Is there a true benefit to doing this test?
2. Will the results change my treatment?
3. Is there an effective and safe treatment for the disease?
4. Do the benefits of finding and treating the disease outweigh the harms associated with testing and treatment?
5. Would it be better to wait and see what happens?

## Keys To Longer Life: How to Live Longer

Those who live to be 100+ tend to live in larger households, live close to their children, eat lots of vegetables, be optimistic, educated, and married

### Start with your diet

- ✓ Eat more fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Eat more whole grains
- ✓ Eat more fish, less red meat
- ✓ Drink more water
- ✓ Include low-fat dairy in your diet

### Be sure to exercise

- ▶ **Aerobic activity**  
30 minutes ▶ 5 days every week
- ▶ **Muscle strengthening activity**  
8-10 exercises ▶ 2 or more days every week
- ▶ **Stretching & Flexibility**  
10 minutes ▶ 2 or more days every week



### Be sure to be engaged

Connect, Communicate, Collaborate with your healthcare providers to:

- ✓ ensure you receive high value care
- ✓ avoid being over-tested, over-diagnosed, and over-treated

### and most importantly...

- ✓ get the best possible care for you and your loved ones!

DOCTOR + PATIENT

CONNECT COMMUNICATE COLLABORATE

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