



*An initiative of the ABIM Foundation*



## 5 QUESTIONS to Ask About Medical Tests Before You Have Surgery

- 1 What are medical tests before surgery?** Sometimes, before surgery, you will get medical tests, also known as pre-operative or “pre-op” tests. These might include a chest X-ray, blood and urine samples, or heart and lung tests.
- 2 Do I really need these tests?** They can be helpful if you are having serious surgery, especially if you have health problems. But if your surgery is minor or low-risk, you probably don’t need them. Ask your doctor or surgeon.
- 3 What are the risks?** Ask about any false alarms the tests might cause or if they could lead to more tests, procedures, or a surgery delay.
- 4 Is this test different than the one I had recently?** Ask your doctor to check your test records from the last six months. Usually you don’t need to repeat a recent test if your condition hasn’t changed.
- 5 How much does it cost?** Ask if the tests are part of your surgery expenses and what your insurance will cover.

Use these **5 questions** to talk to your doctor about which pre-op tests you need — and which you don’t need.

Some pre-op tests 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 pre-op tests — not too many and not too few.

