

# Resources for Patients

It is critical to be an active and engaged participant in your own care. Reading this article will help you make sure you are getting the care you need. Any time new medicines or tests are ordered for you, it is important to ask questions. It can be intimidating to ask doctors or nurses these questions, but you are not able to make informed decisions without all of the facts. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ), part of the part of the Department of Health and Human Services, was created to help with this process. The AHRQ has developed a patient guide of questions to help start the conversation with all of your health care providers.

## When your doctor orders a new medicine

- What is the name of the medicine?
- How is it spelled?
- Does it come in a generic?
- If not, then it is expensive?
- Are there programs to help me afford it?
- What condition is it for?
- How do I take it?
- How often?
- How long will I need to take it?
- When will it start working?
- When I feel better can I stop taking it?
- How many refills can I get?
- What kind of side effects are there?
- Will they affect my ability to drive or work?
- Do I keep taking my other medicines?
- Will this interact with any of my other medicines?
- What about vitamins and supplements?
- Will I need to have lab tests done while I am taking this medicine?

## When your doctor orders medical tests

- What is the test for?
- How is it done?
- How long will it take?
- Can I eat right before this test?
- When will I get the results?
- How will I know what the results mean?
- Do I need to do anything to get ready for the test?
- What will happen after this test?

## When your doctor suggests a treatment for an illness or condition

- Are there other choices?
- What are the risks?
- How will it help me?
- Will it hurt?
- If it will hurt how will you treat the pain?
- Is this the treatment you recommend?
- How much will this cost?
- Will my insurance cover it?
- Will it work?
- How long will it take to work?
- Are there side effects I should know about?
- How soon do I need to decide?
- What if I don't do anything?

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