

Coordination of your care is something we take seriously. We will always try to steer you to a specialist we feel is very competent, attentive and a good communicator. In the final analysis, however, it is your body and your health. The more complicated the issue is, the more to consider. The following has been adapted from HowsYourHealth.org. This organization promotes tools to help you get the care you want, and need, in an informed manner. We present this as food for thought, when visiting any healthcare provider.

Below are things to think about for a medical or surgical consultation. Sometimes the issues are quite straightforward, other times not quite so. Feel free to bring this paper with you to your appointment if you wish.

Whenever a new treatment or test is offered to you, please ask your doctor and yourself these questions:

- Why is this approach being offered to me? Is the test needed?
- What can I expect if this approach is used? How is it done?
- What is the most likely result one month, one year, 2 years after it has been done? In particular, what will be the most likely result if I do nothing?
- What are the other choices?
- What are the benefits and harms of the different choices?
- What will the approaches cost? Will time be needed to recover or adapt to the results of the approach?
- If possible, make a benefit and harm sheet. On one side, list the benefits of the test or treatments, on the other side, the harms.
- For an important treatment or testing decision, you can go to www.cochrane.org and look at the abstracts of Cochrane Reviews. The language is technical so you may need some help. If your topic is covered, this is the most up to date information about certain conditions and treatments.
- You can also go to <http://www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer> to build a list of questions.
- Specialty care can be expensive. You may wish to ask if follow up care in their office is needed, or if followup can safely be done through our office.
- Of course, we are always glad to help you sort out any information you receive.

And remember, most of the time you do not have rush to make a decision. If you would like to take more time before you decide what to do, ask your doctor or nurse about the possible harm, or benefit, of waiting.

As always, we are always glad to field your questions, by phone, in person, or email.

The Staff at YourMedicalHome