

Key Questions About Your Care

By Penny Simkin, PT, CD (DONA)

Answers to the following questions will help you participate in your care responsibly and help you know what to expect.

When a test is suggested:

1. What is the reason for it? What problem are we looking for?
2. What will it tell us? How accurate or reliable are the results?
3. If the test detects a problem, what will happen next?
4. If the test does not detect a problem, what will happen next?

When a treatment or intervention is suggested:

1. What is the problem? Why is it a problem? How serious is it? How urgent is it that we begin treatment?
2. Describe the treatment. How is it done? How likely is it to detect or solve the problem?
3. If it does not succeed, what are the next steps?
4. Are there risks or side effects to the treatment?
5. Are there alternatives (including waiting or doing nothing?)
6. Ask questions 2,3, and 4 about any alternatives.

In an emergency it may not be possible to fully explore these questions. Your caregiver should tell you how serious and urgent the situation is.