

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't perform unproven diagnostic tests, such as immunoglobulin G (IgG) testing or an indiscriminate battery of immunoglobulin E (IgE) tests, in the evaluation of allergy.

Appropriate diagnosis and treatment of allergies requires specific IgE testing (either skin or blood tests) based on the patient's clinical history. The use of other tests or methods to diagnose allergies is unproven and can lead to inappropriate diagnosis and treatment. Appropriate diagnosis and treatment is both cost effective and essential for optimal patient care.

### 2 Don't order sinus computed tomography (CT) or indiscriminately prescribe antibiotics for uncomplicated acute rhinosinusitis.

Viral infections cause the majority of acute rhinosinusitis and only 0.5 percent to 2 percent progress to bacterial infections. Most acute rhinosinusitis resolves without treatment in two weeks. Uncomplicated acute rhinosinusitis is generally diagnosed clinically and does not require a sinus CT scan or other imaging. Antibiotics are not recommended for patients with uncomplicated acute rhinosinusitis who have mild illness and assurance of follow-up. If a decision is made to treat, amoxicillin should be first-line antibiotic treatment for most acute rhinosinusitis.

### 3 Don't routinely do diagnostic testing in patients with chronic urticaria.

In the overwhelming majority of patients with chronic urticaria, a definite etiology is not identified. Limited laboratory testing may be warranted to exclude underlying causes. Targeted laboratory testing based on clinical suspicion is appropriate. Routine extensive testing is neither cost effective nor associated with improved clinical outcomes. Skin or serum-specific IgE testing for inhalants or foods is not indicated, unless there is a clear history implicating an allergen as a provoking or perpetuating factor for urticaria.

### 4 Don't recommend replacement immunoglobulin therapy for recurrent infections unless impaired antibody responses to vaccines are demonstrated.

Immunoglobulin (gammaglobulin) replacement is expensive and does not improve outcomes unless there is impairment of antigen-specific IgG antibody responses to vaccine immunizations or natural infections. Low levels of immunoglobulins (isotypes or subclasses), without impaired antigen-specific IgG antibody responses, do not indicate a need for immunoglobulin replacement therapy. Exceptions include IgG levels <150mg/dl and genetically defined/suspected disorders. Measurement of IgG subclasses is not routinely useful in determining the need for immunoglobulin therapy. Selective IgA deficiency is not an indication for administration of immunoglobulin.

### 5 Don't diagnose or manage asthma without spirometry.

Clinicians often rely solely upon symptoms when diagnosing and managing asthma, but these symptoms may be misleading and be from alternate causes. Therefore spirometry is essential to confirm the diagnosis in those patients who can perform this procedure. Recent guidelines highlight spirometry's value in stratifying disease severity and monitoring control. History and physical exam alone may over- or under-estimate asthma control. Beyond the increased costs of care, repercussions of misdiagnosing asthma include delaying a correct diagnosis and treatment.

## How This List Was Created

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) Executive Committee created a task force to lead work on *Choosing Wisely* consisting of board members, the AAAAI President and Secretary/Treasurer and AAAAI participants in the Joint Task Force on Practice Parameters. Through multiple society publications and notifications, AAAAI members were invited to offer feedback and recommend elements to be included in the list. A targeted email was also sent to an extended group of AAAAI leadership inviting them to participate.

The work group reviewed the submissions to ensure the best science in the specialty was included. Based on this additional members were recruited for their expertise. Suggested elements were considered for appropriateness, relevance to the core of the specialty, potential overuse of resources and opportunities to improve patient care. They were further refined to maximize impact and eliminate overlap, and then ranked in order of potential importance both for the specialty and for the public. Finally, the work group chose its top five recommendations which were then approved by the Executive Committee. AAAAI's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

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### About the ABIM Foundation:

The mission of the ABIM Foundation is to advance medical professionalism to improve the health care system. We achieve this by collaborating with physicians and physician leaders, medical trainees, health care delivery systems, payers, policymakers, consumer organizations and patients to foster a shared understanding of professionalism and how they can adopt the tenets of professionalism in practice.



To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).

### About the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) represents allergists, asthma specialists, clinical immunologists, allied health professionals, and others with a special interest in the research and treatment of allergic and immunologic diseases. Established in 1943, the AAAAI has more than 6,500 members in the United States, Canada, and 60 other countries.



For more information or questions, please visit [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 **Avoid routine multiple daily self-glucose monitoring in adults with stable type 2 diabetes on agents that do not cause hypoglycemia.**

Once target control is achieved and the results of self-monitoring become quite predictable, there is little gained in most individuals from repeatedly confirming. There are many exceptions, such as for acute illness, when new medications are added, when weight fluctuates significantly, when A1c targets drift off course and in individuals who need monitoring to maintain targets. Self-monitoring is beneficial as long as one is learning and adjusting therapy based on the result of the monitoring.

### 2 **Don't routinely measure 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D unless the patient has hypercalcemia or decreased kidney function.**

Many practitioners become confused when ordering a vitamin D test. Because 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D is the active form of vitamin D, many practitioners think that measuring 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D is an accurate means to estimate vitamin D stores and test for vitamin D deficiency, which is incorrect. Current Endocrine Society guidelines recommend screening for vitamin D deficiency in individuals at risk for deficiency.

Serum levels of 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D have little or no relationship to vitamin D stores but rather are regulated primarily by parathyroid hormone levels, which in turn are regulated by calcium and/or vitamin D. In vitamin D deficiency, 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D levels go up, not down.

Unregulated production of 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D (i.e., sarcoidosis, granulomatous diseases) is an uncommon cause of hypercalcemia; this should be suspected if blood calcium levels are high and parathyroid hormone levels are low and confirmed by measurement of 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D. The enzyme that activates vitamin D is produced in the kidney, so blood levels of 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D are sometimes of interest in patients on dialysis or with end-stage kidney disease. There are few other circumstances, if any, where 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D testing would be helpful.

Serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels may be overused, but when trying to assess vitamin D stores or diagnose vitamin D deficiency (or toxicity), 25-hydroxyvitamin D is the correct test.

### 3 **Don't routinely order a thyroid ultrasound in patients with abnormal thyroid function tests if there is no palpable abnormality of the thyroid gland.**

Thyroid ultrasound is used to identify and characterize thyroid nodules, and is not part of the routine evaluation of abnormal thyroid function tests (over- or underactive thyroid function) unless the patient also has a large goiter or a lumpy thyroid. Incidentally discovered thyroid nodules are common. Overzealous use of ultrasound will frequently identify nodules, which are unrelated to the abnormal thyroid function, and may divert the clinical evaluation to assess the nodules, rather than the thyroid dysfunction. Imaging may be needed in thyrotoxic patients; when needed, a thyroid scan, not an ultrasound, is used to assess the etiology of the thyrotoxicosis and the possibility of focal autonomy in a thyroid nodule.

### 4 **Don't order a total or free T3 level when assessing levothyroxine (T4) dose in hypothyroid patients.**

T4 is converted into T3 at the cellular level in virtually all organs. Intracellular T3 levels regulate pituitary secretion and blood levels of TSH, as well as the effects of thyroid hormone in multiple organs; a normal TSH indicates an adequate T4 dose. Conversion of T4 to T3 at the cellular level may not be reflected in the T3 level in the blood. Compared to patients with intact thyroid glands, patients taking T4 may have higher blood T4 and lower blood T3 levels. Thus the blood level of total or free T3 may be misleading (low normal or slightly low); in most patients a normal TSH indicates a correct dose of T4.

### 5 **Don't prescribe testosterone therapy unless there is biochemical evidence of testosterone deficiency.**

Many of the symptoms attributed to male hypogonadism are commonly seen in normal male aging or in the presence of comorbid conditions. Testosterone therapy has the potential for serious side effects and represents a significant expense. It is therefore important to confirm the clinical suspicion of hypogonadism with biochemical testing. Current guidelines recommend the use of a total testosterone level obtained in the morning. A low level should be confirmed on a different day, again measuring the total testosterone. In some situations, a free or bioavailable testosterone may be of additional value.

## How This List Was Created

Members of The Endocrine Society (Society) along with representatives of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) formed a joint task force to identify tests or procedures which should only be used in specific circumstances. The task force identified several items for possible inclusion. Subsequent discussions compared the evidence supporting each item, the value of the recommendation to practitioners and the potential for cost savings. Members of the Society's Clinical Affairs Core Committee and AACE leadership also reviewed the initial list. Using the above criteria, the task force voted for their top five recommendations from the original list. The Society's Council and AACE's Board of Directors approved the final list for submission to the *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> campaign.

The Endocrine Society and AACE disclosure and conflict of interest policies can be found at [www.endo-society.org](http://www.endo-society.org) and [www.aace.com](http://www.aace.com) respectively.

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### About the ABIM Foundation

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### About The Endocrine Society

Founded in 1916, The Endocrine Society is the world's oldest, largest, and most active organization devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology. The Society is an international body with more than 16,000 members from over 100 countries, and represents the full range of disciplines associated with endocrinologists: clinicians, researchers, educators, fellows and students, industry professionals and health professionals who are involved in the field of endocrinology. Our members are dedicated to the research and treatment of the full range of endocrine disorders: diabetes, reproduction, infertility, osteoporosis, thyroid disease, obesity/lipids, growth hormone, pituitary tumors and adrenal insufficiency.

Visit The Endocrine Society at [www.endo-society.org](http://www.endo-society.org).



### About the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) represents more than 6,500 endocrinologists in the United States and abroad. AACE is the largest association of clinical endocrinologists in the world. The majority of AACE members are certified in endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism and concentrate on the treatment of patients with endocrine and metabolic disorders including diabetes, thyroid disorders, osteoporosis, growth hormone deficiency, cholesterol disorders, hypertension and obesity.

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## Fifteen Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't do imaging for low back pain within the first six weeks, unless red flags are present.

Red flags include, but are not limited to, severe or progressive neurological deficits or when serious underlying conditions such as osteomyelitis are suspected. Imaging of the lower spine before six weeks does not improve outcomes, but does increase costs. Low back pain is the fifth most common reason for all physician visits.

2

### Don't routinely prescribe antibiotics for acute mild-to-moderate sinusitis unless symptoms last for seven or more days, or symptoms worsen after initial clinical improvement.

Symptoms must include discolored nasal secretions and facial or dental tenderness when touched. Most sinusitis in the ambulatory setting is due to a viral infection that will resolve on its own. Despite consistent recommendations to the contrary, antibiotics are prescribed in more than 80 percent of outpatient visits for acute sinusitis. Sinusitis accounts for 16 million office visits and \$5.8 billion in annual health care costs.

3

### Don't use dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) screening for osteoporosis in women younger than 65 or men younger than 70 with no risk factors.

DEXA is not cost effective in younger, low-risk patients, but is cost effective in older patients.

4

### Don't order annual electrocardiograms (EKGs) or any other cardiac screening for low-risk patients without symptoms.

There is little evidence that detection of coronary artery stenosis in asymptomatic patients at low risk for coronary heart disease improves health outcomes. False-positive tests are likely to lead to harm through unnecessary invasive procedures, over-treatment and misdiagnosis. Potential harms of this routine annual screening exceed the potential benefit.

5

### Don't perform Pap smears on women younger than 21 or who have had a hysterectomy for non-cancer disease.

Most observed abnormalities in adolescents regress spontaneously, therefore Pap smears for this age group can lead to unnecessary anxiety, additional testing and cost. Pap smears are not helpful in women after hysterectomy (for non-cancer disease) and there is little evidence for improved outcomes.

## Fifteen Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

6

### Don't schedule elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor or Cesarean deliveries before 39 weeks, 0 days gestational age.

Delivery prior to 39 weeks, 0 days has been shown to be associated with an increased risk of learning disabilities and a potential increase in morbidity and mortality. There are clear medical indications for delivery prior to 39 weeks and 0 days based on maternal and/or fetal conditions. A mature fetal lung test, in the absence of appropriate clinical criteria, is not an indication for delivery.

7

### Avoid elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor between 39 weeks, 0 days and 41 weeks, 0 days unless the cervix is deemed favorable.

Ideally, labor should start on its own initiative whenever possible. Higher Cesarean delivery rates result from inductions of labor when the cervix is unfavorable. Health care clinicians should discuss the risks and benefits with their patients before considering inductions of labor without medical indications.

8

### Don't screen for carotid artery stenosis (CAS) in asymptomatic adult patients.

There is good evidence that for adult patients with no symptoms of carotid artery stenosis, the harms of screening outweigh the benefits. Screening could lead to non-indicated surgeries that result in serious harms, including death, stroke and myocardial infarction.

9

### Don't screen women older than 65 years of age for cervical cancer who have had adequate prior screening and are not otherwise at high risk for cervical cancer.

There is adequate evidence that screening women older than 65 years of age for cervical cancer who have had adequate prior screening and are not otherwise at high risk provides little to no benefit.

10

### Don't screen women younger than 30 years of age for cervical cancer with HPV testing, alone or in combination with cytology.

There is adequate evidence that the harms of HPV testing, alone or in combination with cytology, in women younger than 30 years of age are moderate. The harms include more frequent testing and invasive diagnostic procedures such as colposcopy and cervical biopsy. Abnormal screening test results are also associated with psychological harms, anxiety and distress.

## Fifteen Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

11

### **Don't prescribe antibiotics for otitis media in children aged 2–12 years with non-severe symptoms where the observation option is reasonable.**

The “observation option” refers to deferring antibacterial treatment of selected children for 48 to 72 hours and limiting management to symptomatic relief. The decision to observe or treat is based on the child’s age, diagnostic certainty and illness severity. To observe a child without initial antibacterial therapy, it is important that the parent or caregiver has a ready means of communicating with the clinician. There also must be a system in place that permits reevaluation of the child.

12

### **Don't perform voiding cystourethrogram (VCUG) routinely in first febrile urinary tract infection (UTI) in children aged 2–24 months.**

The risks associated with radiation (plus the discomfort and expense of the procedure) outweigh the risk of delaying the detection of the few children with correctable genitourinary abnormalities until their second UTI.

13

### **Don't routinely screen for prostate cancer using a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test or digital rectal exam.**

There is convincing evidence that PSA-based screening leads to substantial over-diagnosis of prostate tumors. Many tumors will not harm patients, while the risks of treatment are significant. Physicians should not offer or order PSA screening unless they are prepared to engage in shared decision making that enables an informed choice by patients.

14

### **Don't screen adolescents for scoliosis.**

There is no good evidence that screening asymptomatic adolescents detects idiopathic scoliosis at an earlier stage than detection without screening. The potential harms of screening and treating adolescents include unnecessary follow-up visits and evaluations due to false positive test results and psychological adverse effects.

15

### **Don't require a pelvic exam or other physical exam to prescribe oral contraceptive medications.**

Hormonal contraceptives are safe, effective and well-tolerated for most women. Data do not support the necessity of performing a pelvic or breast examination to prescribe oral contraceptive medications. Hormonal contraception can be safely provided on the basis of medical history and blood pressure measurement.

## How This List Was Created (1–5)

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) list is an endorsement of the five recommendations for Family Medicine previously proposed by the National Physicians Alliance (NPA) and published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, as part of its Less is More™ series. The goal was to identify items common in primary care practice, strongly supported by the evidence and literature, that would lead to significant health benefits, reduce risks and harm, and reduce costs. A working group was assembled for each of the three primary care specialties; family medicine, pediatrics and internal medicine. The original list was developed using a modification of the nominal group process, with online voting. The literature was then searched to provide supporting evidence or refute the activities. The list was modified and a second round of field testing was conducted. The field testing with family physicians showed support for the final recommendations, the potential positive impact on quality and cost, and the ease with which the recommendations could be implemented.

More detail on the study and methodology can be found in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* article: [The “Top 5” Lists in Primary Care.](#)

## How This List Was Created (6–10)

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) has identified this list of clinical recommendations for the second phase of the *Choosing Wisely* campaign. The goal was to identify items common in the practice of family medicine supported by a review of the evidence that would lead to significant health benefits, reduce risks, harms and costs. For each item, evidence was reviewed from appropriate sources such as evidence reviews from the Cochrane Collaboration, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The AAFP’s Commission on Health of the Public and Science and Chair of the Board of Directors reviewed and approved the recommendations.

In the case of the first two items on our list – “Don’t schedule elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor or Cesarean deliveries before 39 weeks, 0 days gestational age” and “Don’t schedule elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor between 39 weeks, 0 days and 41 weeks, 0 days unless the cervix is deemed favorable” – we collaborated with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in developing the final language.

## How This List Was Created (11–15)

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) has identified this list of clinical recommendations for the third phase of the *Choosing Wisely*® campaign. The goal was to identify items common in the practice of family medicine supported by a review of the evidence that would lead to significant health benefits, reduce risks, harms and costs. For each item, evidence was reviewed from appropriate sources such as the Cochrane Collaboration, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and other sources. The AAFP’s Commission on Health of the Public and Science and Board of Directors reviewed and approved the recommendations.

AAFP’s disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org).

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*About the American Academy of Family Physicians*

Founded in 1947, the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) represents 105,900 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care. Approximately one in four of all doctor's office visits are made to family physicians. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care.



For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP's award-winning consumer website, [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't recommend percutaneous feeding tubes in patients with advanced dementia; instead, offer oral assisted feeding.

In advanced dementia, studies have found feeding tubes do not result in improved survival, prevention of aspiration pneumonia, or improved healing of pressure ulcers. Feeding tube use in such patients has actually been associated with pressure ulcer development, use of physical and pharmacological restraints, and patient distress about the tube itself. Assistance with oral feeding is an evidence-based approach to provide nutrition for patients with advanced dementia and feeding problems; in the final phase of this disease, assisted feeding may focus on comfort and human interaction more than nutritional goals.

2

### Don't delay palliative care for a patient with serious illness who has physical, psychological, social or spiritual distress because they are pursuing disease-directed treatment.

Numerous studies—including randomized trials—provide evidence that palliative care improves pain and symptom control, improves family satisfaction with care and reduces costs. Palliative care does not accelerate death, and may prolong life in selected populations.

3

### Don't leave an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) activated when it is inconsistent with the patient/family goals of care.

In about a quarter of patients with ICDs, the defibrillator fires within weeks preceding death. For patients with advanced irreversible diseases, defibrillator shocks rarely prevent death, may be painful to patients and are distressing to caregivers/family members. Currently there are no formal practice protocols to address deactivation; fewer than 10% of hospices have official policies. Advance care planning discussions should include the option of deactivating the ICD when it no longer supports the patient's goals.

4

### Don't recommend more than a single fraction of palliative radiation for an uncomplicated painful bone metastasis.

As stated in the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) 2011 guideline, single-fraction radiation to a previously un-irradiated peripheral bone or vertebral metastasis provides comparable pain relief and morbidity compared to multiple-fraction regimens while optimizing patient and caregiver convenience. Although it results in a higher incidence of later need for retreatment (20% vs. 8% for multi-fraction regimens), the decreased patient burden usually outweighs any considerations of long-term effectiveness for those with a limited life expectancy.

5

### Don't use topical lorazepam (Ativan), diphenhydramine (Benadryl), haloperidol (Haldol) ("ABH") gel for nausea.

Topical drugs can be safe and effective, such as topical non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for local arthritis symptoms. However, while topical gels are commonly prescribed in hospice practice, anti-nausea gels have not been proven effective in any large, well-designed or placebo-controlled trials. The active ingredients in ABH are not absorbed to systemic levels that could be effective. Only diphenhydramine (Benadryl) is absorbed via the skin, and then only after several hours and erratically at subtherapeutic levels. It is therefore not appropriate for "as needed" use. The use of agents given via inappropriate routes may delay or prevent the use of more effective interventions.

# How This List Was Created

The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine's (AAHPM) president appointed a special task force to coordinate the development of the Academy's recommendations. Chaired by a member of the Board of Directors who had previously overseen AAHPM's education and training committees, the task force included representatives of the Academy's Quality and Practice Standards Task Force, Research Committee, Ethics Committee, Public Policy Committee and External Awareness Task Force, as well as at-large appointees that represent distinguished leaders in the field. The task force solicited input from AAHPM's 17 Special Interest Groups, and task force members also offered their own suggestions for the list. Considering the potential impact and evidence to support the proposed recommendations, the task force identified seven finalists for which a rationale and evidence base was further developed. All AAHPM members were invited to comment on and rank these seven recommendations. Member feedback informed the task force's final deliberation, which included narrowing the list to the "Five Things" and refining the verbiage of the recommendations. The list was then reviewed and approved by the AAHPM Executive Committee.

AAHPM's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.aahpm.org](http://www.aahpm.org).

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### About the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine

The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) is the professional organization for physicians specializing in Hospice and Palliative Medicine. AAHPM's 4,900 members also include nurses and other healthcare providers committed to improving quality of life for patients and families facing life-threatening or serious conditions. AAHPM is dedicated to advancing the discipline of Hospice and Palliative Medicine through professional education and training, development of a specialist workforce, support for clinical practice standards, research and public policy.



For more information, visit [www.aahpm.org](http://www.aahpm.org).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't perform electroencephalography (EEG) for headaches.

EEG has no advantage over clinical evaluation in diagnosing headache, does not improve outcomes and increases cost. Recurrent headache is the most common pain problem, affecting 15% to 20% of people.

### 2 Don't perform imaging of the carotid arteries for simple syncope without other neurologic symptoms.

Occlusive carotid artery disease does not cause fainting but rather causes focal neurologic deficits such as unilateral weakness. Thus, carotid imaging will not identify the cause of the fainting and increases cost. Fainting is a frequent complaint, affecting 40% of people during their lifetime.

### 3 Don't use opioid or butalbital treatment for migraine except as a last resort.

Opioid and butalbital treatment for migraine should be avoided because more effective, migraine-specific treatments are available. Frequent use of opioid and butalbital treatment can worsen headaches. Opioids should be reserved for those with medical conditions precluding the use of migraine-specific treatments or for those who fail these treatments.

### 4 Don't prescribe interferon-beta or glatiramer acetate to patients with disability from progressive, non-relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis.

Interferon-beta and glatiramer acetate do not prevent the development of permanent disability in progressive forms of multiple sclerosis. These medications increase costs and have frequent side effects that may adversely affect quality of life.

### 5 Don't recommend CEA for asymptomatic carotid stenosis unless the complication rate is low (<3%).

Based on studies reporting an upfront surgical complication rate ranging from 2.3% (ACAS) to 3.1% (ACST) among patients undergoing carotid endarterectomy (CEA) for asymptomatic stenosis of >60%, and an absolute risk reduction for stroke or death of roughly 5–6% in the surgical group at 5 years, several specialty societies (Goldstein et al, 2011; Brott et al, 2011; Chaturvedi et al; Ricotta et al) have recommended that surgery for asymptomatic patients should be reserved for those with a perioperative complication risk of <3% and a life expectancy of greater than 3–5 years. The cited 3% threshold for complication rates may be high because more recent studies have reported lower stroke rates with improvements in both surgical (Brott, 2010) and medical (Marquardt) management. However, there are no recent randomized trials comparing these treatments. Given this, the more recent AHA guidelines (Brott 2011) state that it is “reasonable” to perform CEA for asymptomatic patients with >70% stenosis if the surgical complication rate is “low.”

Reported complication rates vary widely by location (Kresowik), and are dependent on how complications are tracked (self-report vs. neurologist's evaluation vs. administrative data (Wolff T). Despite calls for rigorous monitoring 15 years ago (Goldstein), most patients will likely need to rely on the surgeon's self-reported rates.

# How This List Was Created

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) established a *Choosing Wisely Working Group* to develop its list of recommendations. Members of this group were selected to broadly represent varying practice settings and neurological subspecialties. Neurologists with methodological expertise in evidence-based medicine and practice guideline development were also included. The working group solicited recommendations from AAN members, which were then rated based upon their judgments of harm and benefit that would result based upon compliance with the recommendation. Based on committee voting and a literature review, candidate recommendations were sent to relevant AAN sections, committees, specialty societies and patient advocacy groups for review and comment. The working group reviewed this feedback and voted on the final Top Five recommendations, which were approved by the AAN Practice Committee and Board of Directors.

AAN's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.aan.com](http://www.aan.com).

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### About the American Academy of Neurology

With more than 25,000 members, the American Academy of Neurology is the world's largest association of neurologists dedicated to promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care. A neurologist is a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing, treating and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke, Parkinson's disease and epilepsy. The Academy provides valuable resources for neurologists and neuroscience professionals worldwide who look to the Academy for the most comprehensive professional development, career enhancement, and practice improvement opportunities available.



For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't perform preoperative medical tests for eye surgery unless there are specific medical indications.

For many, preoperative tests are not necessary because eye surgeries are not lengthy and don't pose serious risks. An EKG should be ordered if patients have heart disease. A blood glucose test should be ordered if patients have diabetes. A potassium test should be ordered if patients are on diuretics. In general, patients scheduled for surgery do not need medical tests unless the history or physical examination indicate the need for a test, e.g., the existence of conditions noted above. Institutional policies should consider these issues.

2

### Don't routinely order imaging tests for patients without symptoms or signs of significant eye disease.

If patients do not have symptoms or signs of significant disease pathology, then clinical imaging tests are not generally needed because a comprehensive history and physical examination will usually reveal if eye disease is present or is getting worse. Examples of routine imaging include: visual-field testing; optical coherence tomography (OCT) testing; retinal imaging of patients with diabetes; and neuroimaging or fundus photography. If symptoms or signs of disease are present, then imaging tests may be needed to evaluate further and to help in treatment planning.

3

### Don't order antibiotics for adenoviral conjunctivitis (pink eye).

Adenoviral conjunctivitis and bacterial conjunctivitis are different forms of infection that can be diagnosed by the ophthalmologist by clinical signs and symptoms, and if needed, by cultures. Antibiotics are useful for patients with bacterial conjunctivitis, particularly those with moderate to severe bacterial conjunctivitis. However, they are not useful for adenoviral conjunctivitis, and the overuse of antibiotics can lead to the emergence of bacteria that don't respond readily to available treatments. In cases of diagnostic uncertainty, patients may be followed closely to see if their condition resolves on its own, or if further treatment is required.

4

### Don't routinely provide antibiotics before or after intravitreal injections.

The routine use of antibiotics before or after intravitreal injections is unnecessary because research has shown that topical antibiotics don't prevent the occurrence of eye infection. The risks of antibiotic eye drops include allergic reactions. The overuse and repeated exposure to antibiotics can lead to the emergence of bacteria that don't respond readily to available treatments. Routine antisepsis is appropriate and important for prevention of eye infection.

5

### Don't place punctal plugs for mild dry eye before trying other medical treatments.

Medical treatments to address dry eye are available, such as artificial tears, lubrication and hot, moist compresses. These medical methods, as well as ways to modify the environment, should be tried first to improve dry eye and normalize the tear film before using punctal plugs. If the patient's tear film and eyelids have been treated and dry eye symptoms persist, then punctal plugs can be added.

## How This List Was Created

The American Academy of Ophthalmology's Medical Director of Health Policy and Health Policy Committee led the Academy's list development process. Members of the Health Policy Committee initially identified potential recommendations based on relevance, appropriateness and potential for improvement and efficiency. Through society notifications and newsletter notices, other ophthalmic organizations and subspecialty societies and members were invited to offer feedback and recommend ideas to be included in the final recommendations. Health Policy Committee members and the Medical Director of Health Policy reviewed the ideas and supporting evidence, and ranked them in order of potential impact. The top five recommendations were presented to the Academy's Board of Trustees for approval.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org).

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For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Avoid performing routine post-operative deep vein thrombosis ultrasonography screening in patients who undergo elective hip or knee arthroplasty.

Since ultrasound is not effective at diagnosing unsuspected deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and appropriate alternative screening tests do not exist, if there is no change in the patient's clinical status, routine post-operative screening for DVT after hip or knee arthroplasty does not change outcomes or clinical management.

2

### Don't use needle lavage to treat patients with symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee for long-term relief.

The use of needle lavage in patients with symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee does not lead to measurable improvements in pain, function, 50-foot walking time, stiffness, tenderness or swelling.

3

### Don't use glucosamine and chondroitin to treat patients with symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee.

Both glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate do not provide relief for patients with symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee.

4

### Don't use lateral wedge insoles to treat patients with symptomatic medial compartment osteoarthritis of the knee.

In patients with symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee, the use of lateral wedge or neutral insoles does not improve pain or functional outcomes. Comparisons between lateral and neutral heel wedges were investigated, as were comparisons between lateral wedged insoles and lateral wedged insoles with subtalar strapping. The systematic review concludes that there is only limited evidence for the effectiveness of lateral heel wedges and related orthoses. In addition, the possibility exists that those who do not use them may experience fewer symptoms from osteoarthritis of the knee.

5

### Don't use post-operative splinting of the wrist after carpal tunnel release for long-term relief.

Routine post-operative splinting of the wrist after the carpal tunnel release procedure showed no benefit in grip or lateral pinch strength or bowstringing. In addition, the research showed no effect in complication rates, subjective outcomes or patient satisfaction. Clinicians may wish to provide protection for the wrist in a working environment or for temporary protection. However, objective criteria for their appropriate use do not exist. Clinicians should be aware of the detrimental affects including adhesion formation, stiffness and prevention of nerve and tendon movement.

# How This List Was Created

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) routinely develops evidence-based clinical practice guidelines as valuable tools to advance the physician-patient communications process and enhance the diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions. AAOS physician volunteer work groups develop evidence-based clinical practice guidelines to serve as an educational tool based on an assessment of the current scientific and clinical information and accepted approaches to treatment. The most recent approved clinical practice guidelines have been published in the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*. AAOS staff, led by the medical director, conducted a review of the approved clinical practice guidelines previously developed by the work groups and selected a variety of topics frequently used in orthopaedic surgical practice. After input from the orthopaedic specialty society leaders and approval from the AAOS Presidential Leadership and Board of Directors, the final five topics were selected for this campaign. The AAOS disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org).

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To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).



### About the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) is proud to be a partner in the *Choosing Wisely*® campaign. As the premier provider of education for orthopaedic surgeons and allied health professionals, the Academy champions the interests of patients and advances the highest quality of bone and joint health. The more than 37,000 orthopaedic surgeon members aim to increase people's quality of life by improving mobility, reducing pain and returning patients to their jobs and hobbies.

The AAOS has been a leader in developing quality improvement and safety programs—from the "Sign Your Site" campaign aimed at eliminating wrong-site surgery to the introduction of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines and appropriate use criteria to enhance the diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions. By partnering in the *Choosing Wisely* campaign, the AAOS hopes to facilitate dialogue between patients and physicians about appropriately using diagnostic and therapeutic interventions and avoiding those that are unnecessary.

For more information, visit [www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org).



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't order computed tomography (CT) scan of the head/brain for sudden hearing loss.

Computed tomography scanning is expensive, exposes the patient to radiation and offers no useful information that would improve initial management. CT scanning may be appropriate in patients with focal neurologic findings, a history of trauma or chronic ear disease.

2

### Don't prescribe oral antibiotics for uncomplicated acute tympanostomy tube otorrhea.

Oral antibiotics have significant adverse effects and do not provide adequate coverage of the bacteria that cause most episodes; in contrast, topically administered products do provide coverage for these organisms. Avoidance of oral antibiotics can reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance and the risk of opportunistic infections.

3

### Don't prescribe oral antibiotics for uncomplicated acute external otitis.

Oral antibiotics have significant adverse effects and do not provide adequate coverage of the bacteria that cause most episodes; in contrast, topically administered products do provide coverage for these organisms. Avoidance of oral antibiotics can reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance and the risk of opportunistic infections.

4

### Don't routinely obtain radiographic imaging for patients who meet diagnostic criteria for uncomplicated acute rhinosinusitis.

Imaging of the paranasal sinuses, including plain film radiography, computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is unnecessary in patients who meet the clinical diagnostic criteria for uncomplicated acute rhinosinusitis. Acute rhinosinusitis is defined as up to four weeks of purulent nasal drainage (anterior, posterior or both) accompanied by nasal obstruction, facial pain-pressure-fullness or both. Imaging is costly and exposes patients to radiation. Imaging may be appropriate in patients with a complication of acute rhinosinusitis, patients with comorbidities that predispose them to complications and patients in whom an alternative diagnosis is suspected.

5

### Don't obtain computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) in patients with a primary complaint of hoarseness prior to examining the larynx.

Examination of the larynx with mirror or fiberoptic scope is the primary method for evaluating patients with hoarseness. Imaging is unnecessary in most patients and is both costly and has potential for radiation exposure. After laryngoscopy, evidence supports the use of imaging to further evaluate 1) vocal fold paralysis, or 2) a mass or lesion of the larynx.

## How This List Was Created

The American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery’s (AAO-HNS) Patient Safety and Quality Improvement (PSQI) Committee was charged with developing the Foundation’s recommendations for the *Choosing Wisely* campaign. The PSQI Committee initially sought the input of the Specialty Society Advisory Council (SSAC) and requested each member society submit potential topics along with supporting evidence. From those submissions, an initial list of 20 items was distributed to Academy and Foundation committees and the Guidelines Development Task Force (GDTF) for review.

PSQI Committee leadership reviewed feedback from the committees and identified six potential recommendations for inclusion in the campaign. The six topics were selected based on their supporting evidence (for example, clinical practice guidelines), committee support, and the current use (frequency) of the test or procedure. The members of SSAC ranked the six topics, and the top five topics were submitted to the Foundation board for approval.

AAO-HNS’ disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.entnet.org](http://www.entnet.org).

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### About the American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery and Its Foundation

The American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery is the world’s largest organization representing nearly 12,000 otolaryngologist–head and neck surgeons who treat the ear, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. Medical disorders in this specialty are among the most common affecting patients, young and old. The AAO-HNS Foundation works to advance the art, science, and ethical practice of otolaryngology–head and neck surgery through education, research, and lifelong learning.



For more information, visit [www.entnet.org](http://www.entnet.org).

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For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Antibiotics should not be used for apparent viral respiratory illnesses (sinusitis, pharyngitis, bronchitis).

Although overall antibiotic prescription rates for children have fallen, they still remain alarmingly high. Unnecessary medication use for viral respiratory illnesses can lead to antibiotic resistance and contributes to higher health care costs and the risks of adverse events.

2

### Cough and cold medicines should not be prescribed or recommended for respiratory illnesses in children under four years of age.

Research has shown these products offer little benefit to young children and can have potentially serious side effects. Many cough and cold products for children have more than one ingredient, increasing the chance of accidental overdose if combined with another product.

3

### Computed tomography (CT) scans are not necessary in the immediate evaluation of minor head injuries; clinical observation/Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network (PECARN) criteria should be used to determine whether imaging is indicated.

Minor head injuries occur commonly in children and adolescents. Approximately 50% of children who visit hospital emergency departments with a head injury are given a CT scan, many of which may be unnecessary. Unnecessary exposure to x-rays poses considerable danger to children including increasing the lifetime risk of cancer because a child's brain tissue is more sensitive to ionizing radiation. Unnecessary CT scans impose undue costs to the health care system. Clinical observation prior to CT decision-making for children with minor head injuries is an effective approach.

4

### Neuroimaging (CT, MRI) is not necessary in a child with simple febrile seizure.

CT scanning is associated with radiation exposure that may escalate future cancer risk. MRI also is associated with risks from required sedation and high cost. The literature does not support the use of skull films in the evaluation of a child with a febrile seizure. Clinicians evaluating infants or young children after a simple febrile seizure should direct their attention toward identifying the cause of the child's fever.

5

### Computed tomography (CT) scans are not necessary in the routine evaluation of abdominal pain.

Utilization of CT imaging in the emergency department evaluation of children with abdominal pain is increasing. The increased lifetime risk for cancer due to excess radiation exposure is of special concern given the acute sensitivity of children's organs. There also is the potential for radiation overdose with inappropriate CT protocols.

# How This List Was Created

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) employed a three-stage process to develop its list. Using the Academy's varied online, print and social media communication vehicles, the first stage invited leadership of the Academy's 88 national clinical and health policy-driven committees, councils and sections to submit potential topics via an online survey. The second stage involved expert review and evaluation of the management groups that oversee the functions of the committees, councils and sections. Based on a set of criteria (evidence to document unproven clinical benefit, potential to cause harm, over-prescribed and utilized, and within the purview of pediatrics) a list of more than 100 topics was narrowed down to five. Finally, the list was reviewed and approved by the Academy's Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

AAP's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).

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### About the American Academy Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.



For more information, visit [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't put asymptomatic children in weak reading glasses.

Low "farsightedness" is a normal finding in children. Children can easily focus to see at near, with their large accommodative reserve. If the reading glasses prescription is low (less than +2.00 diopters), their innate ability to focus can be used to see clearly at both distance and near. If the eyes are not crossed, prescription of weak glasses is generally not necessary.

2

### Annual comprehensive eye exams are unnecessary for children who pass routine vision screening assessments.

Early childhood vision screening done as part of routine well-child care accurately identifies most children with significant eye problems that are otherwise asymptomatic. Annual comprehensive eye examinations increase financial costs, a child's absence from school and parental time away from work, with no evidence that the comprehensive exam detects asymptomatic vision problems better than timely, methodical and recurrent screening efforts. Comprehensive eye exams are appropriate for children who do not pass a vision screening.

3

### Don't recommend vision therapy for patients with dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disorder in which a person has trouble understanding written words. This occurs because the brain has a problem distinguishing and separating the sounds in spoken words, called a phonological deficit. Dyslexia is not due to a vision disorder. Children with dyslexia do not have any more visual problems than children without dyslexia. Vision therapy does not work for this population because the eyes are not the problem.

4

### Don't routinely order imaging for all patients with double vision.

Many people with double vision, or diplopia, want a CT scan or MRI to see if it is caused by a brain tumor or other serious problem. Much of the time, following a comprehensive eye evaluation, neither test is necessary. The most common causes of double vision are refractive error, dry eyes, cataract and non-neurologic eye misalignment, all readily diagnosed by a complete exam. Only a minority of cases of diplopia result from problems within the brain.

5

### Don't order retinal imaging tests for children without symptoms or signs of eye disease.

Retinal imaging, such as taking a photograph or obtaining an Ocular Coherence Tomography (OCT) image of the back of a child's eye, can be useful for documenting or following known retinal or optic nerve pathology. These imaging studies should not be obtained routinely for documentation of normal ocular anatomy in asymptomatic children.



## How This List Was Created

The President and the Executive Vice President of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus met with its Board of Directors. These 10 pediatric ophthalmologists leading the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus then generated a list of 10 potential topics. Each individual ranked the topics and the top five recommendations were chosen. Each recommendation was sent to a recognized expert in that specific area or to a committee of experts to complete the template. The American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus disclosure and conflict of interest policies can be found at [www.aapos.org](http://www.aapos.org).

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### About the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus

The American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS) is the flagship specialty organization for pediatric ophthalmologists in the U.S. with more than 1,500 U.S. and international members. AAPOS's mission is to enhance the quality of health care by fostering excellence and professionalism in pediatric ophthalmology and adult strabismus. AAPOS provides information and advocacy for its members in ophthalmology, pediatrics and related subspecialties.

For more information or questions, please visit [www.aapos.org](http://www.aapos.org).



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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't perform stress cardiac imaging or advanced non-invasive imaging in the initial evaluation of patients without cardiac symptoms unless high-risk markers are present.

Asymptomatic, low-risk patients account for up to 45 percent of unnecessary "screening." Testing should be performed only when the following findings are present: diabetes in patients older than 40-years-old; peripheral arterial disease; or greater than 2 percent yearly risk for coronary heart disease events.

2

### Don't perform annual stress cardiac imaging or advanced non-invasive imaging as part of routine follow-up in asymptomatic patients.

Performing stress cardiac imaging or advanced non-invasive imaging in patients without symptoms on a serial or scheduled pattern (e.g., every one to two years or at a heart procedure anniversary) rarely results in any meaningful change in patient management. This practice may, in fact, lead to unnecessary invasive procedures and excess radiation exposure without any proven impact on patients' outcomes. An exception to this rule would be for patients more than five years after a bypass operation.

3

### Don't perform stress cardiac imaging or advanced non-invasive imaging as a pre-operative assessment in patients scheduled to undergo low-risk non-cardiac surgery.

Non-invasive testing is not useful for patients undergoing low-risk non-cardiac surgery (e.g., cataract removal). These types of tests do not change the patient's clinical management or outcomes and will result in increased costs.

4

### Don't perform echocardiography as routine follow-up for mild, asymptomatic native valve disease in adult patients with no change in signs or symptoms.

Patients with native valve disease usually have years without symptoms before the onset of deterioration. An echocardiogram is not recommended yearly unless there is a change in clinical status.

5

### Don't perform stenting of non-culprit lesions during percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) for uncomplicated hemodynamically stable ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI).

Stent placement in a noninfarct artery during primary PCI for STEMI in a hemodynamically stable patient may lead to increased mortality and complications. While potentially beneficial in patients with hemodynamic compromise, intervention beyond the culprit lesion during primary PCI has not demonstrated benefit in clinical trials to date.

# How This List Was Created

The American College of Cardiology (ACC) asked its standing clinical councils to recommend between three and five procedures that should not be performed or should be performed more rarely and only in specific circumstances. ACC staff took the councils' recommendations and compared them to the ACC's existing appropriate use criteria (AUC) and guidelines, choosing items for the five things list that had the tightest inappropriate score in the AUCs and were Class III recommendations in the guidelines. The ACC's Advocacy Steering Committee and Clinical Quality Committee each then reviewed the five items before sending it to the ACC Executive Committee for final review and approval. ACC's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at <http://www.cardiosource.org/RWI>.

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To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).

### About the American College of Cardiology:

The American College of Cardiology (ACC) is a 40,000-member nonprofit medical society comprised of physicians, surgeons, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists and practice managers, and bestows credentials upon cardiovascular specialists who meet its stringent qualifications. The College is a leader in the formulation of health policy, standards and guidelines, and cardiovascular research. The ACC provides professional education and operates national registries for the measurement and improvement of quality care.



Learn more at [www.cardiosource.org/ACC](http://www.cardiosource.org/ACC).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 **Avoid computed tomography (CT) scans of the head in emergency department patients with minor head injury who are at low risk based on validated decision rules.**

Minor head injury is a common reason for visiting an emergency department. The majority of minor head injuries do not lead to injuries such as skull fractures or bleeding in the brain that need to be diagnosed by a CT scan. As CT scans expose patients to ionizing radiation, increasing patients' lifetime risk of cancer, they should only be performed on patients at risk for significant injuries. Physicians can safely identify patients with minor head injury in whom it is safe to not perform an immediate head CT by performing a thorough history and physical examination following evidence-based guidelines. This approach has been proven safe and effective at reducing the use of CT scans in large clinical trials. In children, clinical observation in the emergency department is recommended for some patients with minor head injury prior to deciding whether to perform a CT scan.

### 2 **Avoid placing indwelling urinary catheters in the emergency department for either urine output monitoring in stable patients who can void, or for patient or staff convenience.**

Indwelling urinary catheters are placed in patients in the emergency department to assist when patients cannot urinate, to monitor urine output or for patient comfort. Catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI) is the most common hospital-acquired infection in the U.S., and can be prevented by reducing the use of indwelling urinary catheters. Emergency physicians and nurses should discuss the need for a urinary catheter with a patient and/or their caregivers, as sometimes such catheters can be avoided. Emergency physicians can reduce the use of indwelling urinary catheters by following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's evidence-based guidelines for the use of urinary catheters. Indications for a catheter may include: output monitoring for critically ill patients, relief of urinary obstruction, at the time of surgery and end-of-life care. When possible, alternatives to indwelling urinary catheters should be used.

### 3 **Don't delay engaging available palliative and hospice care services in the emergency department for patients likely to benefit.**

Palliative care is medical care that provides comfort and relief of symptoms for patients who have chronic and/or incurable diseases. Hospice care is palliative care for those patients in the final few months of life. Emergency physicians should engage patients who present to the emergency department with chronic or terminal illnesses, and their families, in conversations about palliative care and hospice services. Early referral from the emergency department to hospice and palliative care services can benefit select patients resulting in both improved quality and quantity of life.

### 4 **Avoid antibiotics and wound cultures in emergency department patients with uncomplicated skin and soft tissue abscesses after successful incision and drainage and with adequate medical follow-up.**

Skin and soft tissue infections are a frequent reason for visiting an emergency department. Some infections, called abscesses, become walled off and form pus under the skin. Opening and draining an abscess is the appropriate treatment; antibiotics offer no benefit. Even in abscesses caused by Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), appropriately selected antibiotics offer no benefit if the abscess has been adequately drained and the patient has a well-functioning immune system. Additionally, culture of the drainage is not needed as the result will not routinely change treatment.

### 5 **Avoid instituting intravenous (IV) fluids before doing a trial of oral rehydration therapy in uncomplicated emergency department cases of mild to moderate dehydration in children.**

Many children who come to the emergency department with dehydration require fluid replacement. To avoid the pain and potential complications of an IV catheter, it is preferable to give these fluids by mouth. Giving a medication for nausea may allow patients with nausea and vomiting to accept fluid replenishment orally. This strategy can eliminate the need for an IV. It is best to give these medications early during the ED visit, rather than later, in order to allow time for them to work optimally.

## How This List Was Created

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) developed five *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> recommendations through a multi-step process that included input from ACEP members, an expert panel of emergency physicians and the ACEP Board of Directors. In 2012, ACEP appointed a task force to address cost effective emergency care. The Cost Effective Care Task Force conducted a survey that was open to all ACEP members asking for strategies to reduce cost and improve value in emergency medicine. The task force received over 200 individual suggestions, which were grouped into a set of strategies. A technical expert panel, including representatives from all aspects of emergency medicine practice, reviewed and prioritized the recommendations using a modified Delphi technique. The panel prioritized the strategies using multiple rounds of voting based on contribution to cost reduction, benefit to patients and actionability by emergency physicians. A literature review including data on cost was assembled for the highest-rated strategies. Strategies were further refined and a final list of strategies that received majority support of the panelists was created. Five of these were ultimately selected by the Board of Directors to be included in *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup>.

ACEP's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.acep.org](http://www.acep.org).

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To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).



### About the American College of Emergency Physicians

Founded in 1968, the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) has promoted the highest quality of emergency care and is the leading advocate for emergency physicians, their patients and the public. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, ACEP has more than 32,000 members and 53 chapters representing each state, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. A Government Services Chapter represents emergency physicians employed by military branches and other government agencies. Emergency physicians are recognized and valued for their commitment to high quality patient care, teaching, leadership, research and innovation. Emergency medicine is a valued and essential public service.

To learn more about ACEP, visit [www.acep.org](http://www.acep.org).



For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't use homeopathic medications, non-vitamin dietary supplements or herbal supplements as treatments for disease or preventive health measures.

Alternative therapies are often assumed safe and effective just because they are “natural.” There is a lack of stringent quality control of the ingredients present in many herbal and dietary supplements. Reliable evidence that these products are effective is often lacking, but substantial evidence exists that they may produce harm. Indirect health risks also occur when these products delay or replace more effective forms of treatment or when they compromise the efficacy of conventional medicines.

### 2 Don't administer a chelating agent prior to testing urine for metals, a practice referred to as “provoked” urine testing.

Metals are ubiquitous in the environment and all individuals are exposed to and store some quantity of metals in the body. These do not necessarily result in illness. Scientific studies demonstrate that administration of a chelating agent leads to increased excretion of various metals into the urine, even in healthy individuals without metal-related disease. These “provoked” or “challenge” tests of urine are not reliable means to diagnose metal poisoning and have been associated with harm.

### 3 Don't order heavy metal screening tests to assess non-specific symptoms in the absence of excessive exposure to metals.

Individuals are constantly exposed to metals in the environment and often have detectable levels without being poisoned. Indiscriminant testing leads to needless concern when a test returns outside of a “normal” range. Diagnosis of any metal poisoning requires an appropriate exposure history and clinical findings consistent with poisoning by that metal. A patient should only undergo specific metal testing if there is concern for a specific poisoning based on history and physical examination findings.

### 4 Don't recommend chelation except for documented metal intoxication which has been diagnosed using validated tests in appropriate biological samples.

Chelation does not improve objective outcomes in autism, cardiovascular disease or neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease. Edetate disodium is not FDA-approved for any condition. Even when used for appropriately diagnosed metal intoxication, chelating drugs may have significant side effects, including dehydration, hypocalcemia, kidney injury, liver enzyme elevations, hypotension, allergic reactions and essential mineral deficiencies. Inappropriate chelation, which may cost hundreds to thousands of dollars, risks these harms, as well as neurodevelopmental toxicity, teratogenicity and death.

### 5 Don't remove mercury-containing dental amalgams.

Mercury-containing dental amalgams release small amounts of mercury. Randomized clinical trials demonstrate that the mercury present in amalgams does not produce illness. Removal of such amalgams is unnecessary, expensive and subjects the individual to absorption of greater doses of mercury than if left in place.

## How This List Was Created

The American College of Medical Toxicology's (ACMT's) Board of Directors established a *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> work group to develop a list of items for the *Choosing Wisely* campaign. Members of the work group were chosen to represent various practice settings within the field of medical toxicology, including ambulatory, acute and population-based practice. Work group members included the President of the College, the Chair of the Practice Committee, the Chair of the Positions and Guidelines committee and other academic leaders within the medical toxicology community. All work group members also represented the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology (AACT). The work group developed a preliminary list of items that was disseminated to all members of ACMT and AACT for review, commentary and potential additions. Additional feedback was solicited from leaders within the field of medical toxicology, including several past-presidents of ACMT and credible, leading subject matter experts in those areas identified. The work group reviewed all responses, and narrowed the list to the final five items based on a review of scientific evidence, relevance to the specialty and greatest opportunity to improve care, reduce cost, and reduce harm to patients. The final list was approved by the ACMT Board of Directors and the AACT Board of Trustees.

The ACMT and AACT disclosure and conflict of interest policies can be found at [www.acmt.net](http://www.acmt.net) and [www.clintox.org](http://www.clintox.org) respectively.

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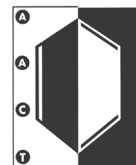


### About the American College of Medical Toxicology and the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology

The American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) is an association of physicians with recognized expertise in the diagnosis, management and prevention of human poisoning and other adverse health effects due to medications, occupational and environmental toxins and biological agents. ACMT's mission is to advance quality care of poisoned patients and public health through physicians who specialize in consultative, emergency, environmental, forensic and occupational toxicology. ACMT values the importance of research and evidence based practice in combating human poisoning.



The American Academy of Clinical Toxicology (AACT) is a multidisciplinary organization uniting scientists and clinicians in the advancement of research, education, prevention and treatment of diseases caused by chemicals, drugs and toxins. AACT's mission is to promote the study of health effects of poisons, encourage the development of new therapies and treatment in clinical toxicology, and define the position of clinical toxicologists on toxicology-related issues.



For more information visit [www.acmt.net](http://www.acmt.net) and [www.clintox.org](http://www.clintox.org).



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't schedule elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor or Cesarean deliveries before 39 weeks 0 days gestational age.

Delivery prior to 39 weeks 0 days has been shown to be associated with an increased risk of learning disabilities and a potential increase in morbidity and mortality. There are clear medical indications for delivery prior to 39 weeks 0 days based on maternal and/or fetal conditions. A mature fetal lung test, in the absence of appropriate clinical criteria, is not an indication for delivery.

2

### Don't schedule elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor between 39 weeks 0 days and 41 weeks 0 days unless the cervix is deemed favorable.

Ideally, labor should start on its own initiative whenever possible. Higher Cesarean delivery rates result from inductions of labor when the cervix is unfavorable. Health care practitioners should discuss the risks and benefits with their patients before considering inductions of labor without medical indications.

3

### Don't perform routine annual cervical cytology screening (Pap tests) in women 30–65 years of age.

In average risk women, annual cervical cytology screening has been shown to offer no advantage over screening performed at 3-year intervals. However, a well-woman visit should occur annually for patients with their health care practitioner to discuss concerns and problems, and have appropriate screening with consideration of a pelvic examination.

4

### Don't treat patients who have mild dysplasia of less than two years in duration.

Mild dysplasia (Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia [CIN 1]) is associated with the presence of the human papillomavirus (HPV), which does not require treatment in average risk women. Most women with CIN 1 on biopsy have a transient HPV infection that will usually clear in less than 12 months and, therefore, does not require treatment.

5

### Don't screen for ovarian cancer in asymptomatic women at average risk.

In population studies, there is only fair evidence that screening of asymptomatic women with serum CA-125 level and/or transvaginal ultrasound can detect ovarian cancer at an earlier stage than it can be detected in the absence of screening. Because of the low prevalence of ovarian cancer and the invasive nature of the interventions required after a positive screening test, the potential harms of screening outweigh the potential benefits.



## How This List Was Created

As a national medical specialty society, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists relies on the input of any number of its committees in the development of various documents. In the case of the items submitted for the *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> campaign, input from the following committees was solicited: the Committees on Patient Safety and Quality Improvement; Obstetric Practice; and Gynecologic Practice. A literature search was conducted related to the initial list of approximately ten items. We then sent this list to the College's Executive Board and asked them to select five of the items based on their potential to improve quality and reduce cost. We explained to them that the items were written to avoid complex or clinical terminology, but not at the risk of reducing the value and credibility of the recommendations made. In the case of the first two items on our list – “Don't schedule elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor or Cesarean deliveries before 39 weeks 0 days gestational age” and “Don't schedule elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor between 39 weeks 0 days and 41 weeks 0 days unless the cervix is deemed favorable” – we collaborated with the American Academy of Family Physicians in developing the final language.

The College's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org).

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### About the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College), a 501 (c) (3) organization, is the nation's leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of approximately 56,000 members, The College strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women's health care. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a 501 (c) (6) organization, is its companion organization.



The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

For more information, visit [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org).

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# American College of Physicians Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

ACP AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS®  
INTERNAL MEDICINE | Doctors for Adults

1

## Don't obtain screening exercise electrocardiogram testing in individuals who are asymptomatic and at low risk for coronary heart disease.

In asymptomatic individuals at low risk for coronary heart disease (10-year risk <10%) screening for coronary heart disease with exercise electrocardiography does not improve patient outcomes.

2

## Don't obtain imaging studies in patients with non-specific low back pain.

In patients with back pain that cannot be attributed to a specific disease or spinal abnormality following a history and physical examination (e.g., non-specific low back pain), imaging with plain radiography, computed tomography (CT) scan, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) does not improve patient outcomes.

3

## In the evaluation of simple syncope and a normal neurological examination, don't obtain brain imaging studies (CT or MRI).

In patients with witnessed syncope but with no suggestion of seizure and no report of other neurologic symptoms or signs, the likelihood of a central nervous system (CNS) cause of the event is extremely low and patient outcomes are not improved with brain imaging studies.

4

## In patients with low pretest probability of venous thromboembolism (VTE), obtain a high-sensitive D-dimer measurement as the initial diagnostic test; don't obtain imaging studies as the initial diagnostic test.

In patients with low pretest probability of VTE as defined by the Wells prediction rules, a negative high-sensitivity D-dimer measurement effectively excludes VTE and the need for further imaging studies.

5

## Don't obtain preoperative chest radiography in the absence of a clinical suspicion for intrathoracic pathology.

In the absence of cardiopulmonary symptoms, preoperative chest radiography rarely provides any meaningful changes in management or improved patient outcomes.

## How This List Was Created

The American College of Physicians (ACP) formed a workgroup of eleven experienced internal medicine physicians with specific skills in the assessment of evidence. Members of this workgroup included physicians who were current members of the ACP Clinical Guidelines Committee, the Education and Publication Committee, the Board of Governors and the Board of Regents, as well as three ACP staff physicians. The group collaboratively identified and narrowed down screening or diagnostic tests commonly used in clinical situations where they are unlikely to provide high value or improve patient outcomes. The results were further reviewed and narrowed by clinically active ACP staff physicians before being placed for review into a randomly selected internal medicine research panel. Representing 1 percent of ACP members, the panel selected five scenarios that represented the greatest potential for overuse or misuse of a diagnostic test leading to low value care. Based upon this process, the final top five scenarios were identified. ACP's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.acponline.org](http://www.acponline.org).

## Sources

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- 3 2010 ACR-ASNR CT of the brain guideline; 2010 NICE transient loss of consciousness guideline; 2000 ECS syncope guideline.
- 4 2011 ACEP pulmonary embolism guideline; 2008 ESC pulmonary embolism guideline; 2007 AAFP/ACP venous thromboembolism guideline; 2010 SIGN venous thromboembolism guideline.
- 5 2008 ACR Appropriateness Criteria® for preoperative chest radiography guideline; ASPC patient safety advisory for pulmonary complications of surgery.

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### *About the American College of Physicians:*

The American College of Physicians (ACP) is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician group in the U.S. ACP's 132,000 members include internal medicine physicians (internists), subspecialists, and medical students. Internists specialize in the prevention, detection, and treatment of illness in adults. ACP's mission is to enhance the quality of health care by fostering excellence and professionalism in medicine. ACP provides information and advocacy for its members in internal medicine and related subspecialties.



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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't do imaging for uncomplicated headache.

Imaging headache patients absent specific risk factors for structural disease is not likely to change management or improve outcome. Those patients with a significant likelihood of structural disease requiring immediate attention are detected by clinical screens that have been validated in many settings. Many studies and clinical practice guidelines concur. Also, incidental findings lead to additional medical procedures and expense that do not improve patient well-being.

2

### Don't image for suspected pulmonary embolism (PE) without moderate or high pre-test probability of PE.

While deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and PE are relatively common clinically, they are rare in the absence of elevated blood d-Dimer levels and certain specific risk factors. Imaging, particularly computed tomography (CT) pulmonary angiography, is a rapid, accurate and widely available test, but has limited value in patients who are very unlikely, based on serum and clinical criteria, to have significant value. Imaging is helpful to confirm or exclude PE only for such patients, not for patients with low pre-test probability of PE.

3

### Avoid admission or preoperative chest x-rays for ambulatory patients with unremarkable history and physical exam.

Performing routine admission or preoperative chest x-rays is not recommended for ambulatory patients without specific reasons suggested by the history and/or physical examination findings. Only 2 percent of such images lead to a change in management. Obtaining a chest radiograph is reasonable if acute cardiopulmonary disease is suspected or there is a history of chronic stable cardiopulmonary disease in a patient older than age 70 who has not had chest radiography within six months.

4

### Don't do computed tomography (CT) for the evaluation of suspected appendicitis in children until after ultrasound has been considered as an option.

Although CT is accurate in the evaluation of suspected appendicitis in the pediatric population, ultrasound is nearly as good in experienced hands. Since ultrasound will reduce radiation exposure, ultrasound is the preferred initial consideration for imaging examination in children. If the results of the ultrasound exam are equivocal, it may be followed by CT. This approach is cost-effective, reduces potential radiation risks and has excellent accuracy, with reported sensitivity and specificity of 94 percent.

5

### Don't recommend follow-up imaging for clinically inconsequential adnexal cysts.

Simple cysts and hemorrhagic cysts in women of reproductive age are almost always physiologic. Small simple cysts in postmenopausal women are common, and clinically inconsequential. Ovarian cancer, while typically cystic, does not arise from these benign-appearing cysts. After a good quality ultrasound in women of reproductive age, don't recommend follow-up for a classic corpus luteum or simple cyst <5 cm in greatest diameter. Use 1 cm as a threshold for simple cysts in postmenopausal women.

# How This List Was Created

The American College of Radiology (ACR) initially solicited expert opinion from physician leaders with its Board of Chancellors. A working group was then formed to further identify common clinical scenarios in which imaging may be misused and should be reconsidered. Members of the group included the physician chairs or vice chairs of seven ACR commissions such as Quality and Safety, Appropriateness Criteria and Metrics. An initial list of topics was narrowed down based on the highest potential for improvement, representing a broad range of tests and the availability of strong guidelines. Members then researched specific recommendations and evidentiary statements based on their expertise. Recommendations that were too general or were well covered by other existing measures and initiatives were eliminated to identify the final five things list. ACR's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.acr.org](http://www.acr.org).

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### About the American College of Radiology:

The mission of the American College of Radiology (ACR) is to serve its 34,000 members in advancing the quality, safety, and science of radiology and radiation oncology. The ACR conducts cutting-edge clinical and socioeconomic research, establishes quality and safety standards and provides continuing education and advocacy for radiologists, radiation oncologists and medical physicists. Since 1923, the ACR has worked to keep medical imaging and radiation oncology safe, effective and accessible for all.



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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't test ANA sub-serologies without a positive ANA and clinical suspicion of immune-mediated disease.

Tests for anti-nuclear antibody (ANA) sub-serologies (including antibodies to double-stranded DNA, Smith, RNP, SSA, SSB, Scl-70, centromere) are usually negative if the ANA is negative. Exceptions include anti-Jo1, which can be positive in some forms of myositis, or occasionally, anti-SSA, in the setting of lupus or Sjögren's syndrome. Broad testing of autoantibodies should be avoided; instead the choice of autoantibodies should be guided by the specific disease under consideration.

2

### Don't test for Lyme disease as a cause of musculoskeletal symptoms without an exposure history and appropriate exam findings.

The musculoskeletal manifestations of Lyme disease include brief attacks of arthralgia or intermittent or persistent episodes of arthritis in one or a few large joints at a time, especially the knee. Lyme testing in the absence of these features increases the likelihood of false positive results and may lead to unnecessary follow-up and therapy. Diffuse arthralgias, myalgias or fibromyalgia alone are not criteria for musculoskeletal Lyme disease.

3

### Don't perform MRI of the peripheral joints to routinely monitor inflammatory arthritis.

Data evaluating MRI for the diagnosis and prognosis of rheumatoid arthritis are currently inadequate to justify widespread use of this technology for these purposes in clinical practice. Although bone edema assessed by MRI on a single occasion may be predictive of progression in certain RA populations, using MRI routinely is not cost-effective compared with the current standard of care, which includes clinical disease activity assessments and plain film radiography.

4

### Don't prescribe biologics for rheumatoid arthritis before a trial of methotrexate (or other conventional non-biologic DMARDs).

High quality evidence suggests that methotrexate and other conventional non-biologic disease modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARD) are effective in many patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Initial therapy for RA should be a conventional non-biologic DMARDs unless these are contraindicated. If a patient has had an inadequate response to methotrexate with or without other non-biologic DMARDs during an initial 3-month trial, then biologic therapy can be considered. Exceptions include patients with high disease activity and poor prognostic features (functional limitations, disease outside the joints, seropositivity or bony damage), where biologic therapy may be appropriate first-line treatment.

5

### Don't routinely repeat DXA scans more often than once every two years.

Initial screening for osteoporosis should be performed according to National Osteoporosis Foundation recommendations. The optimal interval for repeating Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DXA) scans is uncertain, but because changes in bone density over short intervals are often smaller than the measurement error of most DXA scanners, frequent testing (e.g., <2 years) is unnecessary in most patients. Even in high-risk patients receiving drug therapy for osteoporosis, DXA changes do not always correlate with probability of fracture. Therefore, DXAs should only be repeated if the result will influence clinical management or if rapid changes in bone density are expected. Recent evidence also suggests that healthy women age 67 and older with normal bone mass may not need additional DXA testing for up to ten years provided osteoporosis risk factors do not significantly change.

## How This List Was Created

The American College of Rheumatology (ACR) established a Top 5 Task Force to oversee the creation of its recommendations. As part of this group's work, a multi-stage process combining consensus methodology and literature reviews was used to arrive at the final recommendations. Items were generated by a group of practicing rheumatologists in diverse clinical settings using the Delphi method. Recommendations with high content agreement and perceived prevalence advanced to a survey of ACR members, who comprise more than 90% of the U.S. rheumatology workforce. Based on member input related to content agreement, impact and item ranking, candidate items advanced to literature review. The Top 5 Task Force discussed the items in light of their relevance to rheumatology, level of evidence to support their inclusion, and the member survey results, and drafted the final rheumatology Top 5 list. The list was reviewed by a sample of patients with rheumatic disease and approved by the ACR Board of Directors. For further details regarding these methods, please see the manuscript published in *Arthritis Care & Research* at [www.rheumatology.org/FiveThings](http://www.rheumatology.org/FiveThings).

ACR's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.rheumatology.org](http://www.rheumatology.org).

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### About the American College of Rheumatology

More than 50 million Americans, including 300,000 children, suffer from arthritis and rheumatic diseases, and rheumatologists are the specialists in the treatment of those diseases. The American College of Rheumatology represents over 8,500 rheumatologists and rheumatology health professionals around the world. The ACR offers its members the support needed to ensure they are able to continue their innovative research and quality patient care.



To find a rheumatologist in your area, or to learn about the ACR, visit [www.rheumatology.org](http://www.rheumatology.org).

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't perform axillary lymph node dissection for clinical stages I and II breast cancer with clinically negative lymph nodes without attempting sentinel node biopsy.

Sentinel node biopsy is proven effective at staging the axilla for positive lymph nodes and is proven to have fewer short and long term side effects, and in particular is associated with a markedly lower risk of lymphedema (permanent arm swelling).

When the sentinel lymph node(s) are negative for cancer, no axillary dissection should be performed.

When one or two sentinel nodes are involved with cancer that is not extensive in the node, the patient received breast conserving surgery and is planning to receive whole breast radiation and stage appropriate systemic therapy, axillary node dissection should not be performed.

2

### Avoid the routine use of "whole-body" diagnostic computed tomography (CT) scanning in patients with minor or single system trauma.

Aggressive use of "whole-body" CT scanning improves early diagnosis of injury and may even positively impact survival in polytrauma patients. However, the significance of radiation exposure as well as costs associated with these studies must be considered, especially in patients with low energy mechanisms of injury and absent physical examination findings consistent with major trauma.

3

### Avoid colorectal cancer screening tests on asymptomatic patients with a life expectancy of less than 10 years and no family or personal history of colorectal neoplasia.

Screening for colorectal cancer has been shown to reduce the mortality associated with this common disease; colonoscopy provides the opportunity to detect and remove adenomatous polyps, the precursor lesion to many cancers, thereby reducing the incidence of the disease later in life.

However, screening and surveillance modalities are inappropriate when the risks exceed the benefit.

The risk of colonoscopy increases with increasing age and comorbidities.

The risk/benefit ratio of colorectal cancer screening or surveillance for any patient should be individualized based on the results of previous screening examinations, family history, predicted risk of the intervention, life expectancy and patient preference.

4

### Avoid admission or preoperative chest X rays for ambulatory patients with unremarkable history and physical exam.

Performing routine admission or preoperative chest X rays is not recommended for ambulatory patients without specific reasons suggested by the history and/or physical examination findings. Only 2 percent of such images lead to a change in management. Obtaining a chest radiograph is reasonable if acute cardiopulmonary disease is suspected or there is a history of chronic stable cardiopulmonary diseases in patients older than age 70 who have not had chest radiography within six months.

5

### Don't do computed tomography (CT) for the evaluation of suspected appendicitis in children until after ultrasound has been considered as an option.

Although CT is accurate in the evaluation of suspected appendicitis in the pediatric population, ultrasound is the preferred initial consideration for imaging examination in children. If the results of the ultrasound exam are equivocal, it may be followed by CT. This approach is cost-effective, reduces potential radiation risks and has excellent accuracy, with reported sensitivity and specificity of 94 percent in experienced hands. Recognizing that expertise may vary, strategies including improving diagnostic expertise in community based ultrasound and the development of evidence-based clinical decision rules are realistic goals in improving diagnosis without the use of CT scan.



# How This List Was Created

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) solicited recommendations for the ABIM Foundation's *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> campaign from the Commission on Cancer, Committee on Trauma and the Advisory Councils for Colon and Rectal Surgery, General Surgery and Pediatric Surgery. The committees were provided with a description of the campaign's initiative, a link to the *Choosing Wisely* website and published recommendations from organizations already participating in the campaign were referenced and reviewed during discussions. All of the recommendations collected from the ACS committees were reviewed, and five items were identified. The ACS' disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.facs.org](http://www.facs.org).

## Participating ACS Committees:

Advisory Council for Colon and Rectal Surgery  
Chair: Thomas E. Read, MD, FACS, Burlington, MA

Advisory Council for General Surgery  
Chair: E. Christopher Ellison, MD, FACS, Columbus, OH

Advisory Council for Pediatric Surgery  
Chair: Mary E. Fallat, MD, FACS, Louisville, KY  
Immediate Past Chair: Thomas F. Tracy Jr., MD, FACS, Providence, RI

Commission on Cancer  
Chair: Daniel P. McKellar, MD, FACS, Greenville, OH

Committee on Trauma  
Chair: Michael F. Rotondo, MD, FACS, Greenville, NC

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### About the American College of Surgeons

The American College of Surgeons is a scientific and educational organization of surgeons that was founded in 1913 to raise the standards of surgical practice and to improve the quality of care for surgical patients. The College is dedicated to the ethical and competent practice of surgery. Its achievements have significantly influenced the course of scientific surgery in America and have established it as an important advocate for all surgical patients. The College has more than 79,000 members and is the largest organization of surgeons in the world.

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

**For pharmacological treatment of patients with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), long-term acid suppression therapy (proton pump inhibitors or histamine<sub>2</sub> receptor antagonists) should be titrated to the lowest effective dose needed to achieve therapeutic goals.**

The main identifiable risk associated with reducing or discontinuing acid suppression therapy is an increased symptom burden. It follows that the decision regarding the need for (and dosage of) maintenance therapy is driven by the impact of those residual symptoms on the patient's quality of life rather than as a disease control measure.

2

**Do not repeat colorectal cancer screening (by any method) for 10 years after a high-quality colonoscopy is negative in average-risk individuals.**

A screening colonoscopy every 10 years is the recommended interval for adults without increased risk for colorectal cancer, beginning at age 50 years. Published studies indicate the risk of cancer is low for 10 years after a high-quality colonoscopy fails to detect neoplasia in this population. Therefore, following a high-quality colonoscopy with normal results the next interval for any colorectal screening should be 10 years following that normal colonoscopy.

3

**Do not repeat colonoscopy for at least five years for patients who have one or two small (< 1 cm) adenomatous polyps, without high-grade dysplasia, completely removed via a high-quality colonoscopy.**

The timing of a follow-up surveillance colonoscopy should be determined based on the results of a previous high-quality colonoscopy. Evidence-based (published) guidelines provide recommendations that patients with one or two small tubular adenomas with low grade dysplasia have surveillance colonoscopy five to 10 years after initial polypectomy. "The precise timing within this interval should be based on other clinical factors (such as prior colonoscopy findings, family history, and the preferences of the patient and judgment of the physician)."

4

**For a patient who is diagnosed with Barrett's esophagus, who has undergone a second endoscopy that confirms the absence of dysplasia on biopsy, a follow-up surveillance examination should not be performed in less than three years as per published guidelines.**

In patients with Barrett's esophagus without dysplasia (cellular changes) the risk of cancer is very low. In these patients, it is appropriate and safe to exam the esophagus and check for dysplasia no more often than every three years because if these cellular changes occur, they do so very slowly.

5

**For a patient with functional abdominal pain syndrome (as per ROME III criteria) computed tomography (CT) scans should not be repeated unless there is a major change in clinical findings or symptoms.**

There is a small, but measurable increase in one's cancer risk from x-ray exposure. An abdominal CT scan is one of the higher radiation exposure x-rays — equivalent to three years of natural background radiation. Due to this risk and the high costs of this procedure, CT scans should be performed only when they are likely to provide useful information that changes patient management.

## How This List Was Created

The American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) convened a work group that included members from the Clinical Practice and Quality Management Committee (CPQMC), chair of the Practice Management and Economics Committee (PMEC), the chief medical officer for the AGA Digestive Health Outcomes Registry® and members of the AGA Institute Governing Board. Ideas for the “five things” were solicited from the workgroup for review by the CPQMC, which developed additional topics, resulting in six draft items. The workgroup continued to pare down and refine the list, before submitting a final draft to both the CPQMC and the PMEC for approval. After final refinements were made to simplify language and avoid complex clinical terminology, the final list was submitted to and approved by the AGA Institute Governing Board. AGA’s disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.gastro.org](http://www.gastro.org).

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Image Wisely and US Food and Drug Administration. My Medical Imaging History. Access at [http://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/safety/ImageWisely/7678\\_Medical%20Imaging%20History.pdf](http://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/safety/ImageWisely/7678_Medical%20Imaging%20History.pdf).

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### About the American Gastroenterological Association:

The American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) is the trusted voice of the GI community. Founded in 1897, AGA has grown to include 16,000 members from around the globe who are involved in all aspects of the science, practice and advancement of gastroenterology. The AGA Institute administers the practice, research and educational programs of the organization. Become an [AGA fan on Facebook](#). [Join our LinkedIn group](#). Follow us on Twitter [@AmerGastroAssn](#).



For more information or questions, please visit [www.gastro.org](http://www.gastro.org).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't recommend percutaneous feeding tubes in patients with advanced dementia; instead offer oral assisted feeding.

Careful hand-feeding for patients with severe dementia is at least as good as tube-feeding for the outcomes of death, aspiration pneumonia, functional status and patient comfort. Food is the preferred nutrient. Tube-feeding is associated with agitation, increased use of physical and chemical restraints and worsening pressure ulcers.

2

### Don't use antipsychotics as first choice to treat behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia.

People with dementia often exhibit aggression, resistance to care and other challenging or disruptive behaviors. In such instances, antipsychotic medicines are often prescribed, but they provide limited benefit and can cause serious harm, including stroke and premature death. Use of these drugs should be limited to cases where non-pharmacologic measures have failed and patients pose an imminent threat to themselves or others. Identifying and addressing causes of behavior change can make drug treatment unnecessary.

3

### Avoid using medications to achieve hemoglobin A1c <7.5% in most adults age 65 and older; moderate control is generally better.

There is no evidence that using medications to achieve tight glycemic control in older adults with type 2 diabetes is beneficial. Among non-older adults, except for long-term reductions in myocardial infarction and mortality with metformin, using medications to achieve glycated hemoglobin levels less than 7% is associated with harms, including higher mortality rates. Tight control has been consistently shown to produce higher rates of hypoglycemia in older adults. Given the long timeframe to achieve theorized microvascular benefits of tight control, glycemic targets should reflect patient goals, health status, and life expectancy. Reasonable glycemic targets would be 7.0 – 7.5% in healthy older adults with long life expectancy, 7.5 – 8.0% in those with moderate comorbidity and a life expectancy < 10 years, and 8.0 – 9.0% in those with multiple morbidities and shorter life expectancy.

4

### Don't use benzodiazepines or other sedative-hypnotics in older adults as first choice for insomnia, agitation or delirium.

Large scale studies consistently show that the risk of motor vehicle accidents, falls and hip fractures leading to hospitalization and death can more than double in older adults taking benzodiazepines and other sedative-hypnotics. Older patients, their caregivers and their providers should recognize these potential harms when considering treatment strategies for insomnia, agitation or delirium. Use of benzodiazepines should be reserved for alcohol withdrawal symptoms/delirium tremens or severe generalized anxiety disorder unresponsive to other therapies.

5

### Don't use antimicrobials to treat bacteriuria in older adults unless specific urinary tract symptoms are present.

Cohort studies have found no adverse outcomes for older men or women associated with asymptomatic bacteriuria. Antimicrobial treatment studies for asymptomatic bacteriuria in older adults demonstrate no benefits and show increased adverse antimicrobial effects. Consensus criteria has been developed to characterize the specific clinical symptoms that, when associated with bacteriuria, define urinary tract infection. Screening for and treatment of asymptomatic bacteriuria is recommended before urologic procedures for which mucosal bleeding is anticipated.

# How This List Was Created

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) established a work group chaired by the Vice Chair of Clinical Practice and Models of Care Committee (CPMC). Work group members were drawn from that committee, as well as the Ethics, Ethnogeriatrics and Quality and Performance Measurement (QPMC) committees. AGS members were invited to submit feedback and recommendations as to what they thought should be included in the list via an electronic survey. The workgroup first narrowed the list down to the top 10 potential tests or procedures. The workgroup then reviewed the evidence and sought expert advice to further refine the list to five recommendations, which were then reviewed and approved by the AGS Executive Committee and the Chairs/Vice Chairs of CPMC, Ethics and QPMC.

AGS' disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.americangeriatrics.org](http://www.americangeriatrics.org).

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### About the American Geriatrics Society

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) works to improve the health, independence and quality of life of all older people. Our geriatrics health professional members work together to provide interdisciplinary, patient- and family-centered team care to older adults. The society also works to bring the knowledge and expertise of geriatrics health professionals to the public via [www.healthinaging.org](http://www.healthinaging.org).



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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't insert percutaneous feeding tubes in individuals with advanced dementia. Instead, offer oral assisted feedings.

Strong evidence exists that artificial nutrition does not prolong life or improve quality of life in patients with advanced dementia. Substantial functional decline and recurrent or progressive medical illnesses may indicate that a patient who is not eating is unlikely to obtain any significant or long-term benefit from artificial nutrition. Feeding tubes are often placed after hospitalization, frequently with concerns for aspirations, and for those who are not eating. Contrary to what many people think, tube feeding does not ensure the patient's comfort or reduce suffering; it may cause fluid overload, diarrhea, abdominal pain, local complications, less human interaction and may increase the risk of aspiration. Assistance with oral feeding is an evidence-based approach to provide nutrition for patients with advanced dementia and feeding problems.

### 2 Don't use sliding scale insulin (SSI) for long-term diabetes management for individuals residing in the nursing home.

SSI is a reactive way of treating hyperglycemia after it has occurred rather than preventing it. Good evidence exists that SSI is neither effective in meeting the body's insulin needs nor is it efficient in the long-term care (LTC) setting. Use of SSI leads to greater patient discomfort and increased nursing time because patients' blood glucose levels are usually monitored more frequently than may be necessary and more insulin injections may be given. With SSI regimens, patients may be at risk from prolonged periods of hyperglycemia. In addition, the risk of hypoglycemia is a significant concern because insulin may be administered without regard to meal intake. Basal insulin, or basal plus rapid-acting insulin with one or more meals (often called basal/bolus insulin therapy) most closely mimics normal physiologic insulin production and controls blood glucose more effectively.

### 3 Don't obtain a urine culture unless there are clear signs and symptoms that localize to the urinary tract.

Chronic asymptomatic bacteriuria is frequent in the LTC setting, with prevalence as high as 50%. A positive urine culture in the absence of localized urinary tract infection (UTI) symptoms (i.e., dysuria, frequency, urgency) is of limited value in identifying whether a patient's symptoms are caused by a UTI. Colonization (a positive bacterial culture without signs or symptoms of a localized UTI) is a common problem in LTC facilities that contributes to the over-use of antibiotic therapy in this setting, leading to an increased risk of diarrhea, resistant organisms and infection due to *Clostridium difficile*. An additional concern is that the finding of asymptomatic bacteriuria may lead to an erroneous assumption that a UTI is the cause of an acute change of status, hence failing to detect or delaying the more timely detection of the patient's more serious underlying problem. A patient with advanced dementia may be unable to report urinary symptoms. In this situation, it is reasonable to obtain a urine culture if there are signs of systemic infection such as fever (increase in temperature of equal to or greater than 2°F [1.1°C] from baseline) leukocytosis, or a left shift or chills in the absence of additional symptoms (e.g., new cough) to suggest an alternative source of infection.

4

## **Don't prescribe antipsychotic medications for behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) in individuals with dementia without an assessment for an underlying cause of the behavior.**

Careful differentiation of cause of the symptoms (physical or neurological versus psychiatric, psychological) may help better define appropriate treatment options. The therapeutic goal of the use of antipsychotic medications is to treat patients who present an imminent threat of harm to self or others, or are in extreme distress – not to treat nonspecific agitation or other forms of lesser distress. Treatment of BPSD in association with the likelihood of imminent harm to self or others includes assessing for and identifying and treating underlying causes (including pain; constipation; and environmental factors such as noise, being too cold or warm, etc.), ensuring safety, reducing distress and supporting the patient's functioning. If treatment of other potential causes of the BPSD is unsuccessful, antipsychotic medications can be considered, taking into account their significant risks compared to potential benefits. When an antipsychotic is used for BPSD, it is advisable to obtain informed consent.

5

## **Don't routinely prescribe lipid-lowering medications in individuals with a limited life expectancy.**

There is no evidence that hypercholesterolemia, or low HDL-C, is an important risk factor for all-cause mortality, coronary heart disease mortality, hospitalization for myocardial infarction or unstable angina in persons older than 70 years. In fact, studies show that elderly patients with the lowest cholesterol have the highest mortality after adjusting other risk factors. In addition, a less favorable risk-benefit ratio may be seen for patients older than 85, where benefits may be more diminished and risks from statin drugs more increased (cognitive impairment, falls, neuropathy and muscle damage).



# How This List Was Created

AMDA – Dedicated to Long Term Medicine convened a work group made up of members from the Clinical Practice Committee (CPC). Members of the CPC include board certified geriatricians, certified medical directors, multi-facility medical directors, attending practitioners, physicians practicing in both office-based and nursing facility practice, physicians in rural, suburban and academic settings, those with university appointments, and more. It was important to AMDA that the workgroup chosen represent the core base of the AMDA membership. Ideas for the “five things” were solicited from the workgroup. Suggested elements were considered for appropriateness, relevance to the core of the specialty and opportunities to improve patient care. They were further refined to maximize impact and eliminate overlap, and then ranked in order of potential importance both for the specialty and for the public. A literature search was conducted to provide supporting evidence or refute the activities. The list was modified and a second round of selection of the refined list was sent to the workgroup for paring down to the final “top five” list. Finally, the work group chose its top five recommendations before submitting a final draft to the AMDA Executive Committee, which were then approved. AMDA’s disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.amda.com](http://www.amda.com).

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### About the ABIM Foundation

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### About the AMDA

AMDA – Dedicated to Long Term Care Medicine is the only professional association representing medical directors, attending physicians and others practicing in the long term care continuum. AMDA is dedicated to excellence in patient care and provides education, advocacy, information and professional development to promote the delivery of quality long term care medicine. AMDA strives to provide cutting edge education, information and tools on clinical, management and technology topics that are specific to the evolving long term care setting. AMDA offers opportunities to learn about best practices and activities that can maximize the quality of care and quality of life for patients.



For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't prescribe antipsychotic medications to patients for any indication without appropriate initial evaluation and appropriate ongoing monitoring.

Metabolic, neuromuscular and cardiovascular side effects are common in patients receiving antipsychotic medications for any indication, so thorough initial evaluation to ensure that their use is clinically warranted, and ongoing monitoring to ensure that side effects are identified, are essential. "Appropriate initial evaluation" includes the following: (a) thorough assessment of possible underlying causes of target symptoms including general medical, psychiatric, environmental or psychosocial problems; (b) consideration of general medical conditions; and (c) assessment of family history of general medical conditions, especially of metabolic and cardiovascular disorders. "Appropriate ongoing monitoring" includes re-evaluation and documentation of dose, efficacy and adverse effects; and targeted assessment, including assessment of movement disorder or neurological symptoms; weight, waist circumference and/or BMI; blood pressure; heart rate; blood glucose level; and lipid profile at periodic intervals.

### 2 Don't routinely prescribe two or more antipsychotic medications concurrently.

Research shows that use of two or more antipsychotic medications occurs in 4 to 35% of outpatients and 30 to 50% of inpatients. However, evidence for the efficacy and safety of using multiple antipsychotic medications is limited, and risk for drug interactions, noncompliance and medication errors is increased. Generally, the use of two or more antipsychotic medications concurrently should be avoided except in cases of three failed trials of monotherapy, which included one failed trial of Clozapine where possible, or where a second antipsychotic medication is added with a plan to cross-taper to monotherapy.

### 3 Don't use antipsychotics as first choice to treat behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia.

Behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia are defined as the non-cognitive symptoms and behaviors, including agitation or aggression, anxiety, irritability, depression, apathy and psychosis. Evidence shows that risks (e.g., cerebrovascular effects, mortality, parkinsonism or extrapyramidal signs, sedation, confusion and other cognitive disturbances, and increased body weight) tend to outweigh the potential benefits of antipsychotic medications in this population. Clinicians should limit the use of antipsychotic medications to cases where non-pharmacologic measures have failed and the patients' symptoms may create a threat to themselves or others. This item is also included in the American Geriatric Society's list of recommendations for "Choosing Wisely."

### 4 Don't routinely prescribe antipsychotic medications as a first-line intervention for insomnia in adults.

There is inadequate evidence for the efficacy of antipsychotic medications to treat insomnia (primary or due to another psychiatric or medical condition), with the few studies that do exist showing mixed results.

### 5 Don't routinely prescribe antipsychotic medications as a first-line intervention for children and adolescents for any diagnosis other than psychotic disorders.

Recent research indicates that use of antipsychotic medication in children has nearly tripled in the past 10 to 15 years, and this increase appears to be disproportionate among children with low family income, minority children and children with externalizing behavior disorders (i.e., rather than schizophrenia, other psychotic disorders and severe tic disorders). Evidence for the efficacy and tolerability of antipsychotic medications in children and adolescents is inadequate and there are notable concerns about weight gain, metabolic side effects and a potentially greater tendency for cardiovascular changes in children than in adults.

# How This List Was Created

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) created a work group of members from the Council on Research and Quality Care (CRQC) to identify, refine and ascertain the degree of consensus for five proposed items. Two rounds of surveys were used to arrive at the final list: the first round narrowed the list from more than 20 potential items by inquiring about the extent of overuse, the impact on patients' health, the associated costs of care and the level of evidence for each treatment or procedure; and the second gauged membership support for the top five and asked for suggested revisions and comments. The surveys targeted the CRQC; the Council on Geriatric Psychiatry; the Council on Children, Adolescents, and Their Families; and the Assembly, which is the APA's governing body consisting of representative psychiatrists from around the country. After the work group incorporated feedback from the two large surveys, the APA's Board of Trustees Executive Committee reviewed and unanimously approved the final list.

For APA disclosure and conflict of interest policy please visit [www.psychiatry.org](http://www.psychiatry.org).

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### About the American Psychiatric Association

The American Psychiatric Association (APA), founded in 1844, is the world's largest psychiatric organization. It is a medical specialty society representing more than 33,000 psychiatric physicians from the United States and around the world. Its member physicians work together to ensure humane care and effective treatment for all persons with mental disorders, including intellectual disabilities and substance use disorders. APA is the voice and conscience of modern psychiatry. Participating in the *Choosing Wisely*® campaign furthers APA's mission to promote the highest quality care for individuals with mental disorders (including intellectual disabilities and substance use disorders) and their families.



For more information, visit [www.psychiatry.org](http://www.psychiatry.org).

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 **Don't obtain baseline laboratory studies in patients without significant systemic disease (ASA I or II) undergoing low-risk surgery – specifically complete blood count, basic or comprehensive metabolic panel, coagulation studies when blood loss (or fluid shifts) is/are expected to be minimal.**

Performing routine laboratory tests in patients who are otherwise healthy is of little value in detecting disease. Evidence suggests that a targeted history and physical exam should determine whether pre-procedure laboratory studies should be obtained. The current recommendation from the 2003 ASA amendment that all female patients of childbearing age be offered pregnancy testing rather than required to undergo testing has provided individual physicians and hospitals the opportunity to set their own practices and policies relating to preoperative pregnancy testing. Some institutions respect the right of a patient to refuse testing after a thorough explanation of the anesthetic risks during pregnancy and the required signing of a waiver. The avoidance of the routine administration of the pregnancy test was therefore excluded from our Top 5 preoperative recommendations.

The risk specifically related to the surgical procedure could however modify the above preoperative recommendation to obtain laboratory studies and when the need arises; the decision to implement should include a joint decision between the anesthesiologists and surgeons. This should be applicable to all outpatient surgery.

### 2 **Don't obtain baseline diagnostic cardiac testing (trans-thoracic/ esophageal echocardiography – TTE/TEE) or cardiac stress testing in asymptomatic stable patients with known cardiac disease (e.g., CAD, valvular disease) undergoing low or moderate risk non-cardiac surgery.**

Advances in cardiovascular medical management, particularly the introduction of perioperative beta-blockade and improvements in surgical and anesthetic techniques, have significantly decreased operative morbidity and mortality rates in noncardiac surgery. Surgical outcomes continue to improve causing the mortality rate of major surgeries to be low and the need for revascularization minimal. Consequently, the role of preoperative cardiac stress testing has been reduced to the identification of extremely high-risk patients, for instance, those with significant left main disease for which preoperative revascularization would be beneficial regardless of the impending procedure. In other words, testing may be appropriate if the results would change management prior to surgery, could change the decision of the patient to undergo surgery, or change the type of procedure that the surgeon will perform.

### 3 **Don't use pulmonary artery catheters (PACs) routinely for cardiac surgery in patients with a low risk of hemodynamic complications (especially with the concomitant use of alternative diagnostic tools (e.g., TEE).**

The increased risk of hemodynamic complications as indicated above is defined as a patient with clinical evidence of significant cardiovascular disease; pulmonary dysfunction, hypoxia, renal insufficiency or other conditions associated with hemodynamic instability (e.g., advanced age, endocrine disorders, sepsis, trauma, burns).

The use of a PAC during cardiac surgery has been associated with increased mortality and a higher risk of severe end-organ complications. There is clear consensus in the literature that the use of a PAC cannot be recommended as a matter of routine, but for a definite role in a very select group of patients undergoing cardiac surgery. According to a survey by practicing anesthesiologists, the use of PAC could be recommended for specific indications in cardiac surgery including coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) with poor left ventricular (LV) function, LV aneurysmectomy, recent myocardial infarction, pulmonary hypertension, diastolic dysfunction, acute ventricular septal rupture and insertion of left ventricular assist device. The appropriate indications remain debatable. However, although the PAC has no role in routine perioperative care, the existence of a specific subpopulation for which the use of this device may be beneficial cannot be excluded.

4

## **Don't administer packed red blood cells (PRBCs) in a young healthy patient without ongoing blood loss and hemoglobin of $\geq 6$ g/dL unless symptomatic or hemodynamically unstable.**

The hemoglobin transfusion threshold used in multiple studies has varied from 6.0 to 10.0 g/dL. The optimal hemoglobin/hematocrit criterion for transfusion remains controversial in several clinical settings. Nevertheless, compared with higher hemoglobin thresholds, a lower hemoglobin threshold is associated with fewer red blood cell units transfused without adverse associations with mortality, cardiac morbidity, functional recovery or length of hospital stay. Hospital mortality remains lower in patients randomized to a lower hemoglobin threshold for transfusion versus those randomized to a higher hemoglobin threshold.

The decision to transfuse should be based on a combination of both clinical and hemodynamic parameters.

5

## **Don't routinely administer colloid (dextrans, hydroxylethyl starches, albumin) for volume resuscitation without appropriate indications.**

There is no evidence from multiple randomized controlled trials and recent reviews/meta-analyses that resuscitation with colloids reduces the risk of death compared to crystalloids. Colloids offer no survival benefit and are considerably more expensive than crystalloids; their continued routine use in clinical practice should therefore be questioned. Recent perioperative data on the use of colloids in certain populations remain controversial; nevertheless, there is consensus on the avoidance of the routine use of colloids for volume resuscitation in the general surgical population given the overwhelming amount of evidence in the literature of possible harm when used in un-indicated patients. Health care providers should refer to the current evolving literature when faced with specific conditions like sepsis, traumatic brain injury, acute renal injury and burns thereby creating a forum for discussion among the care providers of the efficacy of such a treatment in that individual patient.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the endpoint in most studies is mortality and morbidity. There is insufficient data to adequately address the need of colloids over crystalloids for other endpoints of interest like hypotension, need for blood transfusion, length of hospital stay, etc. Further research may be required to delineate the existence of any particular benefits of colloids over crystalloids.

## How This List Was Created

The list started as an academic project of Onyi C. Onuoha, M.D., M.P.H. A review of the literature and practice guidelines as approved by the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) was performed to identify an evidence-based list of activities to question within the field of anesthesiology. A multi-step survey of anesthesiologists in both the academic and private sector and ASA Committees of Jurisdiction was performed to generate a “Top 5 List” list of preoperative and intraoperative activities. The final list was endorsed by the ASA and accepted for the *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> campaign. We believe that developing strategies whereby all stakeholders in the perioperative team are involved in the implementation is a means in which anesthesiologists could be engaged in the efforts to reduce over-utilization of low value, non-indicated medical services evident in the U.S. health system today.

ASA's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.asahq.org](http://www.asahq.org).

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### About the ABIM Foundation

The mission of the ABIM Foundation is to advance medical professionalism to improve the health care system. We achieve this by collaborating with physicians and physician leaders, medical trainees, health care delivery systems, payers, policymakers, consumer organizations and patients to foster a shared understanding of professionalism and how they can adopt the tenets of professionalism in practice.

To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).



### About the American Society of Anesthesiologists

The American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) is an educational research and scientific association of physicians organized to raise and maintain the standards of the medical practice of anesthesiology and improves the care of the patient. Since its founding in 1905, the Society's achievements have made it an important voice in American medicine and the foremost advocate for all patients who require anesthesia or relief from pain. As physicians, anesthesiologists are responsible for administering anesthesia to relieve pain and for managing vital life functions, including breathing, heart rhythm and blood pressure, during surgery. After surgery, they maintain the patient in a comfortable state during the recovery and are involved in the provision of critical care medicine in the intensive care unit.

For more information about ASA, visit [www.asahq.org](http://www.asahq.org).





## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is a medical professional oncology society committed to conquering cancer through research, education, prevention, and delivery of high-quality patient care. ASCO recognizes the importance of evidence-based cancer care and making wise choices in the diagnosis and management of patients with cancer. After careful consideration by experienced oncologists, ASCO highlights five categories of tests, procedures and/or treatments whose common use and clinical value are not supported by available evidence. These test and treatment options should not be administered unless the physician and patient have carefully considered if their use is appropriate in the individual case. As an example, when a patient is enrolled in a clinical trial, these tests, treatments, and procedures may be part of the trial protocol and therefore deemed necessary for the patient's participation in the trial.

### 1 **Don't use cancer-directed therapy for solid tumor patients with the following characteristics: low performance status (3 or 4), no benefit from prior evidence-based interventions, not eligible for a clinical trial, and no strong evidence supporting the clinical value of further anti-cancer treatment.**

- Studies show that cancer directed treatments are likely to be ineffective for solid tumor patients who meet the above stated criteria.
- Exceptions include patients with functional limitations due to other conditions resulting in a low performance status or those with disease characteristics (e.g., mutations) that suggest a high likelihood of response to therapy.
- Implementation of this approach should be accompanied with appropriate palliative and supportive care.

### 2 **Don't perform PET, CT, and radionuclide bone scans in the staging of early prostate cancer at low risk for metastasis.**

- Imaging with PET, CT, or radionuclide bone scans can be useful in the staging of specific cancer types. However, these tests are often used in the staging evaluation of low-risk cancers, despite a lack of evidence suggesting they improve detection of metastatic disease or survival.
- Evidence does not support the use of these scans for staging of newly diagnosed low grade carcinoma of the prostate (Stage T1c/T2a, prostate-specific antigen (PSA) <10 ng/ml, Gleason score less than or equal to 6) with low risk of distant metastasis.
- Unnecessary imaging can lead to harm through unnecessary invasive procedures, over-treatment, unnecessary radiation exposure, and misdiagnosis.

### 3 **Don't perform PET, CT, and radionuclide bone scans in the staging of early breast cancer at low risk for metastasis.**

- Imaging with PET, CT, or radionuclide bone scans can be useful in the staging of specific cancer types. However, these tests are often used in the staging evaluation of low-risk cancers, despite a lack of evidence suggesting they improve detection of metastatic disease or survival.
- In breast cancer, for example, there is a lack of evidence demonstrating a benefit for the use of PET, CT, or radionuclide bone scans in asymptomatic individuals with newly identified ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), or clinical stage I or II disease.
- Unnecessary imaging can lead to harm through unnecessary invasive procedures, over-treatment, unnecessary radiation exposure, and misdiagnosis.

### 4 **Don't perform surveillance testing (biomarkers) or imaging (PET, CT, and radionuclide bone scans) for asymptomatic individuals who have been treated for breast cancer with curative intent.**

- Surveillance testing with serum tumor markers or imaging has been shown to have clinical value for certain cancers (e.g., colorectal). However for breast cancer that has been treated with curative intent, several studies have shown there is no benefit from routine imaging or serial measurement of serum tumor markers in asymptomatic patients.
- False-positive tests can lead to harm through unnecessary invasive procedures, over-treatment, unnecessary radiation exposure, and misdiagnosis.

### 5 **Don't use white cell stimulating factors for primary prevention of febrile neutropenia for patients with less than 20 percent risk for this complication.**

- ASCO guidelines recommend using white cell stimulating factors when the risk of febrile neutropenia, secondary to a recommended chemotherapy regimen, is approximately 20 percent and equally effective treatment programs that do not require white cell stimulating factors are unavailable.
- Exceptions should be made when using regimens that have a lower chance of causing febrile neutropenia if it is determined that the patient is at high risk for this complication (due to age, medical history, or disease characteristics).

## Abbreviations

CT, computed tomography; DCIS, ductal carcinoma in situ; PET, positron emission tomography; PSA, prostate-specific antigen.

## How This List Was Created

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) has had a standing Cost of Cancer Care Task Force since 2007. The role of the Task Force is to assess the magnitude of rising costs of cancer care and develop strategies to address these challenges. In response to the 2010 New England Journal of Medicine article by Howard Brody, MD, "Medicine's Ethical Responsibility for Health Care Reform – the Top Five List," a subcommittee of the Cost of Cancer Care Task Force began work to identify common practices in oncology that were both common as well as lacking sufficient evidence for widespread use. Upon joining the *Choosing Wisely* campaign, the members of the subcommittee conducted a literature search to ensure the proposed list of items were supported by available evidence in oncology; ultimately the proposed Top Five list was approved by the full Task Force. The initial draft list was then presented to the ASCO Clinical Practice Committee, a group composed of community-based oncologists as well as the presidents of the 48 state/regional oncology societies in the United States. Advocacy groups were also asked to weigh in to ensure the recommendations would achieve the dual purpose of increasing physician-patient communication and changing practice patterns. A plurality of more than 200 clinical oncologists reviewed, provided input and supported the list. The final Top Five list in oncology was then presented to, discussed and approved by the Executive Committee of the ASCO Board of Directors and published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology. ASCO's disclosure and conflict of interest policies can be found at [www.asco.org](http://www.asco.org).

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### *About the ABIM Foundation:*

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To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).

### *About the American Society of Clinical Oncology:*

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is the world's leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With more than 30,000 members, ASCO is committed to improving cancer care through scientific meetings, educational programs and peer-reviewed journals. ASCO is supported by its affiliate organization, the Conquer Cancer Foundation, which funds ground-breaking research and programs that make a tangible difference in the lives of people with cancer. ASCO's membership is comprised of clinical oncologists from all oncology disciplines and sub-specialties including medical oncology, therapeutic radiology, surgical oncology, pediatric oncology, gynecologic oncology, urologic oncology, and hematology; physicians and health care professionals participating in approved oncology training programs; oncology nurses; and other health care practitioners with a predominant interest in oncology.

For more information, please visit [www.asco.org](http://www.asco.org).



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't perform population based screening for 25-OH-Vitamin D deficiency.

Vitamin D deficiency is common in many populations, particularly in patients at higher latitudes, during winter months and in those with limited sun exposure. Over the counter Vitamin D supplements and increased summer sun exposure are sufficient for most otherwise healthy patients. Laboratory testing is appropriate in higher risk patients when results will be used to institute more aggressive therapy (e.g., osteoporosis, chronic kidney disease, malabsorption, some infections, obese individuals).

2

### Don't perform low risk HPV testing.

National guidelines provide for HPV testing in patients with certain abnormal Pap smears and in other select clinical indications. The presence of high risk HPV leads to more frequent examination or more aggressive investigation (e.g., colposcopy and biopsy). There is no medical indication for low risk HPV testing (HPV types that cause genital warts or very minor cell changes on the cervix) because the infection is not associated with disease progression and there is no treatment or therapy change indicated when low risk HPV is identified.

3

### Avoid routine preoperative testing for low risk surgeries without a clinical indication.

Most preoperative tests (typically a complete blood count, Prothrombin Time and Partial Prothomboplastin Time, basic metabolic panel and urinalysis) performed on elective surgical patients are normal. Findings influence management in under 3% of patients tested. In almost all cases, no adverse outcomes are observed when clinically stable patients undergo elective surgery, irrespective of whether an abnormal test is identified. Preoperative testing is appropriate in symptomatic patients and those with risks factors for which diagnostic testing can provide clarification of patient surgical risk.

4

### Only order Methylated Septin 9 (SEPT9) to screen for colon cancer on patients for whom conventional diagnostics are not possible.

Methylated Septin 9 (SEPT9) is a plasma test to screen patients for colorectal cancer. Its sensitivity and specificity are similar to commonly ordered stool guaiac or fecal immune tests. It offers an advantage over no testing in patients that refuse these tests or who, despite aggressive counseling, decline to have recommended colonoscopy. The test should not be considered as an alternative to standard diagnostic procedures when those procedures are possible.

5

### Don't use bleeding time test to guide patient care.

The bleeding time test is an older assay that has been replaced by alternative coagulation tests. The relationship between the bleeding time test and the risk of a patient's actually bleeding has not been established. Further, the test leaves a scar on the forearm. There are other reliable tests of coagulation available to evaluate the risks of bleeding in appropriate patient populations.

## How This List Was Created

The American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) list was developed under the leadership of the chair of ASCP's Institute Advisory Committee and Past President of ASCP. Subject matter and test utilization experts across the fields of pathology and laboratory medicine were included in this process for their expertise and guidance. The review panel examined hundreds of options based on both the practice of pathology and evidence available through an extensive review of the literature. The laboratory tests targeted in our recommendations were selected because they are tests that are performed frequently; there is evidence that the test either offers no benefit or is harmful; use of the test is costly and it does not provide higher quality care; and, eliminating it or changing to another test is within the control of the clinician. The final list is not exhaustive (many other tests/procedures were also identified and were also worthy of consideration), but the recommendations, if instituted, would result in higher quality care, lower costs, and more effective use of our laboratory resources and personnel.

ASCPs' disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.ascp.org](http://www.ascp.org).

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To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).

### About the American Society for Clinical Pathology

Founded in 1922 in Chicago, the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) is a medical professional society with more than 100,000 member board-certified anatomic and clinical pathologists, residents and fellows, laboratory professionals, and students. ASCP provides excellence in education, certification, and advocacy on behalf of patients, pathologists, and laboratory professionals.



American Society for  
Clinical Pathology

For more information, visit [www.ascp.org](http://www.ascp.org).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### **Don't order follow up or serial echocardiograms for surveillance after a finding of trace valvular regurgitation on an initial echocardiogram.**

Trace mitral, tricuspid and pulmonic regurgitation can be detected in 70% to 90% of normal individuals and has no adverse clinical implications. The clinical significance of a small amount of aortic regurgitation with an otherwise normal echocardiographic study is unknown.

2

### **Don't repeat echocardiograms in stable, asymptomatic patients with a murmur/click, where a previous exam revealed no significant pathology.**

Repeat imaging to address the same question, when no pathology has been previously found and there has been no clinical change in the patient's condition, is not indicated.

3

### **Avoid echocardiograms for preoperative/perioperative assessment of patients with no history or symptoms of heart disease.**

Perioperative echocardiography is used to clarify signs or symptoms of cardiovascular disease, or to investigate abnormal heart tests. Resting left ventricular (LV) function is not a consistent predictor of perioperative ischemic events; even reduced LV systolic function has poor predictive value for perioperative cardiac events.

4

### **Avoid using stress echocardiograms on asymptomatic patients who meet "low risk" scoring criteria for coronary disease.**

Stress echocardiography is mostly used in symptomatic patients to assist in the diagnosis of obstructive coronary artery disease. There is very little information on using stress echocardiography in asymptomatic individuals for the purposes of cardiovascular risk assessment, as a stand-alone test or in addition to conventional risk factors.

5

### **Avoid transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) to detect cardiac sources of embolization if a source has been identified and patient management will not change.**

Tests whose results will not alter management should not be ordered. Protocol-driven testing can be useful if it serves as a reminder not to omit a test or procedure, but should always be individualized to the particular patient. While TEE is safe, even the small degree of risk associated with a procedure is not justified if there is no expected clinical benefit.

# How This List Was Created

The American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) identified these interventions after careful review of evidence and clinical guidelines. In particular, ASE's cardiovascular care experts reviewed the ACCF/ASE/AHA/ASNC/HFSA/HRS/SCAI/SCCM/SCCT/SCMR 2011 Appropriateness Use Criteria for Echocardiography (AUC), which was published in March 2011. ASE's cardiovascular care scenarios were chosen based on the highest likelihood of improving patient care and reducing inappropriate test use. Leaders in the organization transformed the scenarios into plain language and produced the clinical explanations for each procedure.

ASE's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.asecho.org](http://www.asecho.org).

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### About the American Society of Echocardiography

As the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging, the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) is the leader and advocate, setting clinical standards and guidelines with a commitment to improving the practice for better patient outcomes. ASE is devoted to ensuring patient access to excellence in the practice of Echocardiography around the world. Echocardiography provides an exceptional view of the cardiovascular system to safely and cost-effectively enhance patient care. Full text of ASE's guidelines is available at [www.asecho.org/guidelines](http://www.asecho.org/guidelines).



For more information about ASE, visit [www.asecho.org](http://www.asecho.org). For patient-specific information on the practice of echocardiography, visit [www.seemyheart.org](http://www.seemyheart.org).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't perform routine cancer screening for dialysis patients with limited life expectancies without signs or symptoms.

Due to high mortality among end-stage renal disease (ESRD) patients, routine cancer screening—including mammography, colonoscopy, prostate-specific antigen (PSA) and Pap smears—in dialysis patients with limited life expectancy, such as those who are not transplant candidates, is not cost effective and does not improve survival. False-positive tests can cause harm: unnecessary procedures, overtreatment, misdiagnosis and increased stress. An individualized approach to cancer screening incorporating patients' cancer risk factors, expected survival and transplant status is required.

### 2 Don't administer erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (ESAs) to chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients with hemoglobin levels greater than or equal to 10 g/dL without symptoms of anemia.

Administering ESAs to CKD patients with the goal of normalizing hemoglobin levels has no demonstrated survival or cardiovascular disease benefit, and may be harmful in comparison to a treatment regimen that delays ESA administration or sets relatively conservative targets (9–11 g/dL). ESAs should be prescribed to maintain hemoglobin at the lowest level that both minimizes transfusions and best meets individual patient needs.

### 3 Avoid nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in individuals with hypertension or heart failure or CKD of all causes, including diabetes.

The use of NSAIDs, including cyclo-oxygenase type 2 (COX-2) inhibitors, for the pharmacological treatment of musculoskeletal pain can elevate blood pressure, make antihypertensive drugs less effective, cause fluid retention and worsen kidney function in these individuals. Other agents such as acetaminophen, tramadol or short-term use of narcotic analgesics may be safer than and as effective as NSAIDs.

### 4 Don't place peripherally inserted central catheters (PICC) in stage III–V CKD patients without consulting nephrology.

Venous preservation is critical for stage III–V CKD patients. Arteriovenous fistulas (AVF) are the best hemodialysis access, with fewer complications and lower patient mortality, versus grafts or catheters. Excessive venous puncture damages veins, destroying potential AVF sites. PICC lines and subclavian vein puncture can cause venous thrombosis and central vein stenosis. Early nephrology consultation increases AVF use at hemodialysis initiation and may avoid unnecessary PICC lines or central/peripheral vein puncture.

### 5 Don't initiate chronic dialysis without ensuring a shared decision-making process between patients, their families, and their physicians.

The decision to initiate chronic dialysis should be part of an individualized, shared decision-making process between patients, their families, and their physicians. This process includes eliciting individual patient goals and preferences and providing information on prognosis and expected benefits and harms of dialysis within the context of these goals and preferences. Limited observational data suggest that survival may not differ substantially for older adults with a high burden of comorbidity who initiate chronic dialysis versus those managed conservatively.

## How This List Was Created

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) maintains a Quality and Patient Safety (QPS) Task Force that advances ASN's commitment to providing high-quality care to patients and to raising awareness of patient safety issues for all professionals administering care to kidney patients. Each of ASN's 10 advisory groups contributes expertise to the task force to ensure it addresses all areas of nephrology practice, and the society's president, public policy board and council also provide insights. The QPS task force centered its focus on five items most likely to positively impact and influence optimal patient care. The final list of five items was unanimously approved by the ASN public policy board and council. ASN's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.asn-online.org](http://www.asn-online.org).

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### About the American Society of Nephrology:

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) represents nearly 14,000 professionals committed to curing kidney disease. The *Choosing Wisely* campaign reflects ASN's commitment to the highest quality care for the millions of kidney patients worldwide. ASN provides the most highly regarded education in kidney medicine, supports key kidney research, and advocates daily for policies that improve patients' lives and equip professionals to help those with kidney disease achieve the highest quality of life.



For more information or questions, please visit [www.asn-online.org](http://www.asn-online.org).

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't perform stress cardiac imaging or coronary angiography in patients without cardiac symptoms unless high-risk markers are present.

Asymptomatic, low-risk patients account for up to 45 percent of inappropriate stress testing. Testing should be performed only when the following findings are present: diabetes in patients older than 40 years old, peripheral arterial disease, and greater than 2 percent yearly coronary heart disease event rate.

2

### Don't perform cardiac imaging for patients who are at low risk.

Chest pain patients at low risk of cardiac death and myocardial infarction (based on history, physical exam, electrocardiograms and cardiac biomarkers) do not merit stress radionuclide myocardial perfusion imaging or stress echocardiography as an initial testing strategy if they have a normal electrocardiogram (without baseline ST-abnormalities, left ventricular hypertrophy, pre-excitation, bundle branch block, intra-ventricular conduction delay, paced rhythm or on digoxin therapy) and are able to exercise.

3

### Don't perform radionuclide imaging as part of routine follow-up in asymptomatic patients.

Performing stress radionuclide imaging in patients without symptoms on a serial or scheduled pattern (e.g., every one to two years or at a heart procedure anniversary) rarely results in any meaningful change in patient management. This practice may lead to unnecessary invasive procedures and excess radiation exposure without any proven impact on patients' outcomes. An exception to this rule would be for patients more than five years after a bypass operation.

4

### Don't perform cardiac imaging as a pre-operative assessment in patients scheduled to undergo low- or intermediate-risk non-cardiac surgery.

Non-invasive testing is not useful for patients undergoing low-risk non-cardiac surgery or with no cardiac symptoms or clinical risk factors undergoing intermediate-risk non-cardiac surgery. These types of testing do not change the patient's clinical management or outcomes and will result in increased costs. Therefore, it is not appropriate to perform cardiac imaging procedures for non-cardiac surgery risk assessment in patients with no cardiac symptoms, clinical risk factors or who have moderate to good functional capacity.

5

### Use methods to reduce radiation exposure in cardiac imaging, whenever possible, including not performing such tests when limited benefits are likely.

The key step to reduce or eliminate radiation exposure is appropriate selection of any test or procedure for a specific person, in keeping with medical society recommendations, such as appropriate use criteria. Health care providers should incorporate new methodologies in cardiac imaging to reduce patient exposure to radiation while maintaining high-quality test results.

# How This List Was Created

The American Society of Nuclear Cardiology (ASNC) appointed a writing group of content experts to identify five areas in which to make recommendations. Areas were selected for the evidence-based data available to direct provider decision-making and the potential for improving patient selection and care by eliminating inappropriate testing. Specific recommendations were drafted for each subject area, accompanied by peer-reviewed literature citations. These recommendations were reviewed by the ASNC Quality Assurance Committee and Board of Directors prior to submission to the *Choosing Wisely* campaign. ASNC's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.asnc.org](http://www.asnc.org).

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### About the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology:

The American Society of Nuclear Cardiology (ASNC) is the voice of more than 4,500 physicians, technologists and scientists dedicated to the science and practice of nuclear cardiology. Since 1993, ASNC has been establishing the standard for excellence in cardiovascular imaging through the development of clinical guidelines, professional education and research development.



For more information or questions, please visit [www.asnc.org](http://www.asnc.org).

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't initiate whole breast radiotherapy as a part of breast conservation therapy in women age $\geq 50$ with early stage invasive breast cancer without considering shorter treatment schedules.

- Whole breast radiotherapy decreases local recurrence and improves survival of women with invasive breast cancer treated with breast conservation therapy. Most studies have utilized “conventionally fractionated” schedules that deliver therapy over 5–6 weeks, often followed by 1–2 weeks of boost therapy.
- Recent studies, however, have demonstrated equivalent tumor control and cosmetic outcome in specific patient populations with shorter courses of therapy (approximately 4 weeks). Patients and their physicians should review these options to determine the most appropriate course of therapy.

### 2 Don't initiate management of low-risk prostate cancer without discussing active surveillance.

- Patients with prostate cancer have a number of reasonable management options. These include surgery and radiation, as well as conservative monitoring without therapy in appropriate patients.
- Shared decision-making between the patient and the physician can lead to better alignment of patient goals with treatment and more efficient care delivery.
- ASTRO has published patient-directed written decision aids concerning prostate cancer and numerous other types of cancer. These types of instruments can give patients confidence about their choices, improving compliance with therapy.

### 3 Don't routinely use extended fractionation schemes ( $>10$ fractions) for palliation of bone metastases.

- Studies suggest equivalent pain relief following 30 Gy in 10 fractions, 20 Gy in 5 fractions, or a single 8 Gy fraction.
- A single treatment is more convenient but may be associated with a slightly higher rate of retreatment to the same site.
- Strong consideration should be given to a single 8 Gy fraction for patients with a limited prognosis or with transportation difficulties.

### 4 Don't routinely recommend proton beam therapy for prostate cancer outside of a prospective clinical trial or registry.

- There is no clear evidence that proton beam therapy for prostate cancer offers any clinical advantage over other forms of definitive radiation therapy. Clinical trials are necessary to establish a possible advantage of this expensive therapy.

### 5 Don't routinely use intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) to deliver whole breast radiotherapy as part of breast conservation therapy.

- Clinical trials have suggested lower rates of skin toxicity after using modern 3-D conformal techniques relative to older methods of 2-D planning.
- In these trials, the term “IMRT” has generally been applied to describe methods that are more accurately defined as field-in-field 3-D conformal radiotherapy.
- While IMRT may be of benefit in select cases where the anatomy is unusual, its routine use has not been demonstrated to provide significant clinical advantage.

## How This List Was Created

Following approval of the participation of the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) in the *Choosing Wisely* campaign, a survey was sent to ASTRO committees and panels related to health policy, government relations, and clinical affairs and quality in order to identify potential items for inclusion in the list. A work group, comprised of seven physicians drawn from these three areas, was also selected and convened. The work group members were asked to pick their top eight items from the total of 34 topics that had been suggested in the initial survey. The results were tabulated and a list of the highest scoring items generated, creating a short list of 13 draft items.

Three conference calls were subsequently held to further refine the list and finalize the wording of the items based on input from ASTRO's Board of Directors. A literature review was conducted for each topic by ASTRO staff and each work group member took the lead on writing text and selecting references for one or more draft items. The final items for submission were selected by ASTRO's Board of Directors. ASTRO's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at: [www.astro.org](http://www.astro.org).

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### About the ABIM Foundation

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To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).

### About the American Society for Radiation Oncology

ASTRO is the premier radiation oncology society in the world, with more than 10,000 members who are physicians, nurses, biologists, physicists, radiation therapists, dosimetrists and other health care professionals that specialize in treating patients with radiation therapies. As the leading organization in radiation oncology, the Society is dedicated to improving patient care through professional education and training, support for clinical practice and health policy standards, advancement of science and research, and advocacy. To learn more about ASTRO, visit [www.astro.org](http://www.astro.org).



For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### A routine bone scan is unnecessary in men with low-risk prostate cancer.

Low-risk patients (defined by using commonly accepted categories such as American Urological Association and National Comprehensive Cancer Network guidelines) are unlikely to have disease identified by bone scan. Accordingly, bone scans are generally unnecessary in patients with newly diagnosed prostate cancer who have a PSA <20.0 ng/mL and a Gleason score 6 or less unless the patient's history or clinical examination suggests bony involvement. Progression to the bone is much more common in advanced local disease or in high-grade disease that is characterized by fast and aggressive growth into surrounding areas such as bones or lymph nodes.

2

### Don't prescribe testosterone to men with erectile dysfunction who have normal testosterone levels.

While testosterone treatment is shown to increase sexual interest, there appears to be no significant influence on erectile function, at least not in men with normal testosterone levels. The information available in studies to date is insufficient to fully evaluate testosterone's efficacy in the treatment of men with erectile dysfunction who have normal testosterone levels.

3

### Don't order creatinine or upper-tract imaging for patients with benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

When an initial evaluation shows only the presence of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS), if the symptoms are not significantly bothersome to the patient or if the patient doesn't desire treatment, no further evaluation is recommended. Such patients are unlikely to experience significant health problems in the future due to their condition and can be seen again if necessary. [While the patient can often tell the provider if the symptoms are bothersome enough that he desires additional therapy, another possible option is to use a validated questionnaire to assess symptoms. For example, if the patient completes the International Prostate Symptom Scale (IPSS) and has a symptom score of 8 or greater, this is considered to be "clinically" bothersome.]

4

### Don't treat an elevated PSA with antibiotics for patients not experiencing other symptoms.

It had previously been suggested that a course of antibiotics might lead to a decrease in an initially raised PSA and reduce the need for prostate biopsy; however, there is a lack of clinical studies to show that antibiotics actually decrease PSA levels. It should also be noted that a decrease in PSA does not indicate an absence of prostate cancer. There is no information available on the implications of deferring a biopsy following a decrease in PSA.

5

### Don't perform ultrasound on boys with cryptorchidism.

Ultrasound has been found to have poor diagnostic performance in the localization of testes that cannot be felt through physical examination. Studies have shown that the probability of locating testes was small when using ultrasound, and there was still a significant chance that testes were present even after a negative ultrasound result. Additionally, ultrasound results are complicated by the presence of surrounding tissue and bowel gas present in the abdomen.

## How This List Was Created

The American Urological Association (AUA) established a committee to review evidence from the association's guidelines and identify potential topics for nomination to the AUA's *Choosing Wisely* list. The committee reviewed a number of recommendations and through a consensus process identified the five tests or procedures that should be questioned. These recommendations were reviewed and approved by the AUA Board of Directors.

AUA's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.auanet.org](http://www.auanet.org).

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### About the American Urological Association

Founded in 1902 and headquartered near Baltimore, Maryland, the American Urological Association is a leading advocate for the specialty of urology, and has more than 18,000 members throughout the world. The AUA is a premier urologic association, providing invaluable support to the urologic community as it fosters the highest standards of urologic care through education, research and formulation of health policy.



For information, visit [www.auanet.org](http://www.auanet.org).

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For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't perform surgery to remove a breast lump for suspicious findings unless needle biopsy cannot be done.

- Needle biopsy is large bore core biopsy or vacuum-assisted large bore needle for histology or fine needle aspiration for cytology.
- Needle biopsy may be directed by breast imaging (ultrasound, mammographic, magnetic resonance imaging) or by direct palpation.
- Studies show that confirmation of breast cancer diagnosis prior to any surgery allows for complete multidisciplinary treatment counseling, reduces the overall number of surgical procedures needed for treatment, improves the cosmetic results of surgery and avoids mastectomy resulting from multiple surgical procedures.
- Use of needle biopsy also makes surgery altogether unnecessary for the majority of image-detected breast lesions that require biopsy but prove to be benign.
- Needle biopsy is generally less costly than open surgical biopsy.
- Some breast lesions require surgical biopsy because of a location in the breast that precludes image localization. This may apply to 10–15% of breast lesions. Surgeons performing surgical breast biopsy without preceding needle biopsy should document the reason for no needle biopsy.

### 2 Don't initiate surveillance testing after cancer treatment without providing the patient a survivorship care plan.

- Inappropriate or overused testing after cancer treatment is common, but provides no value in surveillance for recurrence and often leads to other unnecessary tests, potential morbidity, anxiety, uncertainty and higher cost.
- A survivorship care plan provides the patient and their primary providers an evidence-based road map for surveillance testing and supportive care.
- The Institute of Medicine identified the need for a survivorship care plan as a key factor to help cancer patients transition to long-term surveillance care, avoid unnecessary services and seek appropriate rehabilitative care and emotional support.
- A survivorship care plan includes a summary of the type and stage of the cancer, treatment received, the plan for type and frequency of surveillance testing and information on resources for rehabilitative and supportive care.
- Templates for survivorship care plans are available from organizations including the Livestrong Foundation, the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship and the American Society of Clinical Oncology.
  - LiveStrong Care Plan: [www.livestrongcareplan.org](http://www.livestrongcareplan.org)
  - JourneyForward: [www.journeyforward.org](http://www.journeyforward.org)
  - American Society of Clinical Oncology: [www.cancer.net/survivorship/asco-cancer-treatment-summaries](http://www.cancer.net/survivorship/asco-cancer-treatment-summaries)

## Don't use surgery as the initial treatment without considering presurgical (neoadjuvant) systemic and/or radiation for cancer types and stage where it is effective at improving local cancer control, quality of life or survival.

- In many cancer types, presurgical chemotherapy, hormone/endocrine therapy and/or radiation therapy followed by surgery is better than surgery as the first treatment. This often shrinks the cancer, allowing more limited surgery that maintains organ function, reduces the chances of cancer recurrence and spread and improves the quality of life.
- For example, presurgical therapy may make mastectomy unnecessary with breast cancer, a colostomy unnecessary with rectal cancer, voice-sparing surgery possible with laryngeal cancer and amputation unnecessary with extremity soft tissue sarcoma.
- When used appropriately, there is no evidence that the cancer spreads during presurgical therapy and that cancer survival is the same or better as with initial surgery.
- Despite its known advantages, many people are not provided the advantages of presurgical therapy.
- Disease sites where this should be considered include:
  - Clinical Stage IIB and IIIA Non Small Cell Lung Cancer
  - Clinical T2-4a; Any N positive esophageal cancer
  - Clinical T3 and T4 rectal cancer
  - Clinical T2, T3 or Stage III breast cancer
  - Head and Neck cancer
  - Resectable pancreas cancer
  - Extremity soft tissue sarcomas where resection may affect functional outcomes

## Don't perform major abdominal surgery or thoracic surgery without a pathway or standard protocol for postoperative pain control and pneumonia prevention.

- Uncontrolled pain and pneumonia after major abdominal and thoracic surgery are factors that lead to other serious complications and prolonged hospitalization.
- Coordinated care efforts and established care pathways to control pain and prevent pneumonia reduce the frequency of complications and reduce length of hospital stay and should be in place.
- Fewer pulmonary complications occur when adequate analgesia is provided making postoperative pain protocol and pulmonary plan as essential elements of care.
  - Facilities that conduct flow analyses in patients with lung cancer have improved quality care.
- Institutions or hospitals in collaboration with the surgeons and other medical staff should develop these pathways, standard protocol or procedures and assure their implementation.
  - Improvement efforts need to address documentation and standardization of process of care.

## Don't initiate cancer treatment without defining the extent of the cancer (through clinical staging) and discussing with the patient the intent of treatment.

- Treatment intent may be diagnostic, curative, maintenance or palliative.
- Many patients, especially those with advanced or metastatic cancer, do not have a full understanding of the intent of cancer treatment – they identify that treatment may be curative when in fact it is given only with palliative intent. They often do not understand the costs, risks and potential side effects of the treatment.
- Palliative therapy may provide relief of symptoms or short-term prolongation of survival, but often can cause substantial toxic effects and can interfere with the patient's quality of life.
- This directive should be applied to all phases of cancer treatment from initial therapy to treatment for recurrent and metastatic cancer.
- Clinical staging should be performed and documented using information from history and physical examination, relevant biopsy and appropriate imaging based on the type and stage (extent) of the cancer.



## How This List Was Created

The American College of Surgeons concluded in its review of this opportunity that it was optimal to submit a separate list of interventions related to cancer from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. The Commission on Cancer appointed a multidisciplinary task force that met in person in September 2012 and subsequently by conference call and electronic communications.

Recommendations for candidate interventions were solicited from panel members and other leaders from the Commission on Cancer. These panel members were provided a written charge to identify measures that would support the Commission's standards for accreditation in use in more than 1,500 cancer programs across the U.S. In addition, panel members were provided with a full description of the *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> campaign and the interventions previously recommended by other organizations both for cancer and all other disorders.

Following initial submission of the candidate interventions, the panel discussed each intervention specifically evaluating the significance of the intervention, the potential scope of variation in care affected by the intervention, and the potential numbers of persons affected by this. The group also discussed the impact on short-term and long-term cost to be gained by implementation of each intervention. The panel voted on each intervention to select the final list of recommended interventions. The panel members then reviewed and refined the wording of each intervention and completed the bulleted supporting documentation and literature citations. The final list of interventions was then approved by the panel and submitted to the leadership of the American College of Surgeons for final approval. The Commission on Cancer's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.facs.org](http://www.facs.org).

### Commission on Cancer Panel Members

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David Bentrem, MD, FACS, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Chicago, IL  
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#### About the Commission on Cancer

The Commission on Cancer (CoC) is a consortium of 50 professional organizations dedicated to improving survival and quality of life for cancer patients through standard-setting, prevention, research, education and the monitoring of comprehensive quality care.



Established by the American College of Surgeons in 1922, the multidisciplinary CoC establishes standards to ensure quality, multidisciplinary and comprehensive cancer care delivery in health care settings; conducts surveys in health care settings to assess compliance with those standards; collects standardized data from CoC-accredited health care settings to measure cancer care quality; uses data to monitor treatment patterns and outcomes and enhance cancer control and clinical surveillance activities, and develops effective educational interventions to improve cancer prevention, early detection, cancer care delivery and outcomes in health care settings. For more information, visit [www.facs.org](http://www.facs.org).

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### **Don't recommend advanced imaging (e.g., MRI) of the spine within the first six weeks in patients with non-specific acute low back pain in the absence of red flags.**

In the absence of red flags, advanced imaging within the first six weeks has not been found to improve outcomes, but does increase costs. Red flags include, but are not limited to: trauma history, unintentional weight loss, immunosuppression, history of cancer, intravenous drug use, steroid use, osteoporosis, age > 50, focal neurologic deficit and progression of symptoms.

2

### **Don't perform elective spinal injections without imaging guidance, unless contraindicated.**

Elective spinal injections, such as epidural steroid injections, should be performed under imaging guidance using fluoroscopy or CT with contrast enhancement (unless contraindicated) to ensure correct placement of the needle and to maximize diagnostic accuracy and therapeutic efficacy. Failure to use appropriate imaging may result in inappropriate placement of the medication, thereby decreasing the efficacy of the procedure and increasing the need for additional care.

3

### **Don't use Bone Morphogenetic Protein (rhBMP) for routine anterior cervical spine fusion surgery.**

Bone Morphogenetic Protein is a compound which stimulates bone formation and healing. Life-threatening complications have been reported in the routine use of recombinant human rhBMP in anterior cervical spine fusion surgery, due to swelling of the soft tissues. This may lead to difficulty swallowing or pressure on the airway.

4

### **Don't use electromyography (EMG) and nerve conduction studies (NCS) to determine the cause of axial lumbar, thoracic or cervical spine pain.**

Electromyography and nerve conduction studies are measures of nerve and muscle function. They may be indicated when there is concern for a neurologic injury or disorder, such as the presence of leg or arm pain, numbness or weakness associated with compression of a spinal nerve. As spinal nerve injury is not a cause of neck, mid back or low back pain, EMG/NCS have not been found to be helpful in diagnosing the underlying causes of axial lumbar, thoracic and cervical spine pain.

5

### **Don't recommend bed rest for more than 48 hours when treating low back pain.**

In patients with low back pain, bed rest exceeding 48 hours in duration has not been shown to be of benefit.

## How This List Was Created

The North American Spine Society (NASS) appointed a multidisciplinary task force to identify five areas in which to make recommendations. Based on the scientific evidence, existing clinical practice recommendations and expert opinion, the task force collaboratively identified a draft list of nine recommendations that was subsequently submitted to the NASS Board of Directors for review and ranking. After further refinement, the final list was reviewed and approved by the NASS Board of Directors.

NASS' disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at: [www.spine.org/Pages/PracticePolicy/EthicsProfConduct/NASSDisclosurePolicy.aspx](http://www.spine.org/Pages/PracticePolicy/EthicsProfConduct/NASSDisclosurePolicy.aspx).

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*THIS CHOOSING WISELY DOCUMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT A "STANDARD OF CARE," nor is it intended as a fixed treatment protocol. It is anticipated that there will be patients who will require less or more treatment than the average. It is also acknowledged that in atypical cases, treatment falling outside this recommendation list will sometimes be necessary. This document should not be seen as prescribing the type, frequency or duration of intervention. Treatment should be based on the individual patient's need and physician's professional judgment. This document is designed to function as a guide and should not be used as the sole reason for denial of treatment and services. This document is not intended to expand or restrict a health care provider's scope of practice or to supersede applicable ethical standards or provisions of law, but to encourage discussion of these issues between physician and patient, encourage active patient participation in health care decision-making, and foster greater mutual understanding.*

### About the ABIM Foundation

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### About the North American Spine Society

NASS is a multidisciplinary medical organization dedicated to fostering the highest quality, evidence-based and ethical spine care by promoting education, research and advocacy. NASS is comprised of more than 7,500 members from several disciplines including orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, physiatry, neurology, radiology, anesthesiology, research, physical therapy and other spine care professionals.

For more information, visit [www.spine.org](http://www.spine.org) and find NASS on: Facebook [www.facebook.com/NASS.Spine](https://www.facebook.com/NASS.Spine) and Twitter [www.twitter.com/NASSspine](https://www.twitter.com/NASSspine).



For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### **Don't use coronary artery calcium scoring for patients with known coronary artery disease (including stents and bypass grafts).**

Coronary artery calcium scoring is used for evaluation of individuals without known coronary artery disease and offers limited incremental prognostic value for individuals with known coronary artery disease, such as those with stents and bypass grafts.

2

### **Don't order coronary artery calcium scoring for preoperative evaluation for any surgery, irrespective of patient risk.**

No evidence exists to support the diagnostic or prognostic potential of coronary artery calcium scoring in individuals in the preoperative setting. This practice may add costs and confound professional guideline-based evaluations.

3

### **Don't order coronary artery calcium scoring for screening purposes on low risk asymptomatic individuals except for those with a family history of premature coronary artery disease.**

Net reclassification of risk by coronary artery calcium scoring, when added to clinical risk scoring, is least effective in low risk individuals.

4

### **Don't routinely order coronary computed tomography angiography for screening asymptomatic individuals.**

Coronary computed tomography angiography findings of coronary artery disease stenosis severity rarely offer incremental discrimination over coronary artery calcium scoring in asymptomatic individuals.

5

### **Don't use coronary computed tomography angiography in high risk\* emergency department patients presenting with acute chest pain.**

To date, randomized controlled trials evaluating use of coronary computed tomography angiography for individuals presenting with acute chest pain in the emergency department have been limited to low or low-intermediate risk individuals.

\* Risk defined by the Thrombolysis In Myocardial Infarction (TIMI) risk score for unstable angina/acute coronary syndromes.

# How This List Was Created

The Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography (SCCT) formed a committee panel made up of expert members of its existing Guidelines Committee and Publications and Statements Committee that would be dedicated to recommending between five and 10 questions that should be considered when ordering Coronary CT angiography and coronary artery calcium scoring. The panel reviewed and referred to SCCT's existing and published guidelines, appropriate use criteria and support statements. Once questions were chosen, the list was referred to the SCCT Board of Directors, which then reviewed the draft list, offered feedback and narrowed the questions down to the five most important consideration points through online voting. The draft was returned to the working group panel, which fleshed out the chosen recommendations and cited its supporting evidence from currently published literature. The SCCT's Board of Directors and Executive Board each then reviewed the final five items and implemented another round of edits before voting for final review and approval.

SCCT's bylaws and its disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.scct.org](http://www.scct.org).

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### About the Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography

The Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography (SCCT) is the professional society devoted exclusively to cardiovascular computed tomography (CCT), representing physicians, scientists and technologists advocating for research, education and clinical excellence in the use of CCT. With an expanding global membership, it is acknowledged and recognized as the representative and advocate for research, education, and clinical excellence in the use of cardiovascular computed tomography. SCCT's mission includes fostering optimal clinical effectiveness of CCT through professional education, establishment of standards for quality assurance and professional training, and development of evidence-based guidelines for its use to enhance patient care and improve the quality of cardiovascular medical practice. SCCT also serves as an advocate for cardiovascular CT in all interactions with the health care industry, medical policy development and reimbursement organizations.



SOCIETY OF  
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Learn more at: [www.SCCT.org](http://www.SCCT.org).

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't recommend daily home finger glucose testing in patients with Type 2 diabetes mellitus not using insulin.

Self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG) is an integral part of patient self-management in maintaining safe and target-driven glucose control in type 1 diabetes. However, there is no benefit to daily finger glucose testing in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus who are not on insulin or medications associated with hypoglycemia, and there is negative economic impact and potential negative clinical impact of daily glucose testing. SMBG should be reserved for patients during the titration of their medication doses or during periods of changes in patients' diet and exercise routines.

2

### Don't perform routine general health checks for asymptomatic adults.

Routine general health checks are office visits between a health professional and a patient exclusively for preventive counseling and screening tests. In contrast to office visits for acute illness, specific evidence-based preventive strategies, or chronic care management such as treatment of high blood pressure, regularly scheduled general health checks without a specific cause including the "health maintenance" annual visit, have not shown to be effective in reducing morbidity, mortality or hospitalization, while creating a potential for harm from unnecessary testing.

3

### Don't perform routine pre-operative testing before low-risk surgical procedures.

Pre-operative assessment is expected before all surgical procedures. This assessment includes an appropriately directed and sufficiently comprehensive history and physical examination, and, in some cases, properly includes laboratory and other testing to help direct management and assess surgical risk. However, pre-operative testing for low-risk surgical procedures (such as cataract extraction) results in unnecessary delays and adds to significant avoidable costs and should be eliminated.

4

### Don't recommend cancer screening in adults with life expectancy of less than 10 years.

Screening for cancer can be lifesaving in otherwise healthy at-risk patients. While screening tests lead to a mortality benefit, which emerges years after the test is performed, they expose patients to immediate potential harms. Patients with life expectancies of less than 10 years are unlikely to live long enough to derive the distant benefit from screening. However, these patients are in fact more likely to experience the harms since patients with limited life expectancy are more likely to be frail and more susceptible to complications of testing and treatments. Therefore the balance of potential benefits and harms does not favor recommending cancer screening in patients with life expectancies of less than 10 years.

5

### Don't place, or leave in place, peripherally inserted central catheters for patient or provider convenience.

Peripherally inserted central catheters (or "PICCs") are commonly used devices in contemporary medical practice that are associated with two costly and potentially lethal health care-acquired complications: central-line associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI) and venous thromboembolism (VTE). Given the clinical and economic consequences of these complications, placement of PICCs should be limited to acceptable indications (long-term intravenous antibiotics, total parenteral nutrition, chemotherapy and frequent blood draws). PICCs should be promptly removed when acceptable indications for their use ends.

# How This List Was Created

An ad hoc committee of the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) was impaneled, taking advantage of the clinical expertise of members from the existing Clinical Practice and the Evidence-Based Medicine Committees within the Society. Members of the ad hoc committee were then solicited to determine possible topics for consideration. The topics chosen were selected to meet the goals of the *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> campaign, utilizing the unique clinical perspective of members of the Society in ambulatory General Medicine as well as hospital-based practice. The final topics were selected by a vote of committee members based on the strength of the existing evidence, the unique standing members of the Society have in addressing the clinical topics selected, as well as contributions the recommendations would make in terms of patient safety, quality and economic impact. The final recommendations were approved by the governing Council of SGIM.

For SGIM's disclosure and conflict of interest policy, please visit [www.sgim.org](http://www.sgim.org).

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### About the Society of General Internal Medicine

The membership of the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) consists of academic general internal medicine faculty practicing, teaching and conducting research in outpatient settings as well as in our nation's teaching hospitals. As leading teachers of the next generation of physicians, we are committed to moving the practice of medicine to a more evidence-based approach. We are deeply committed to using science to improve our knowledge-base so that our patients can receive the best treatments, the optimal prevention care and the highest quality of life. We believe that the *Choosing Wisely* campaign mirrors these same commitments to the evidence-based practice of medicine for the benefit of our patients.



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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 **Don't place, or leave in place, urinary catheters for incontinence or convenience or monitoring of output for non-critically ill patients (acceptable indications: critical illness, obstruction, hospice, perioperatively for <2 days for urologic procedures; use weights instead to monitor diuresis).**

Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTIs) are the most frequently occurring health care acquired infection (HAI). Use of urinary catheters for incontinence or convenience without proper indication or specified optimal duration of use increases the likelihood of infection and is commonly associated with greater morbidity, mortality and health care costs. Published guidelines suggest that hospitals and long-term care facilities should develop, maintain and promulgate policies and procedures for recommended catheter insertion indications, insertion and maintenance techniques, discontinuation strategies and replacement indications.

### 2 **Don't prescribe medications for stress ulcer prophylaxis to medical inpatients unless at high risk for GI complications.**

According to published guidelines, medications for stress ulcer prophylaxis are not recommended for adult patients in non-ICU settings. Histamine-2 receptor antagonists (H2RAs) and proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs), commonly used to treat stress ulcers, are associated with adverse drug events and increased medication costs, and commonly enhance susceptibility to community-acquired nosocomial pneumonia and Clostridium difficile. Adherence to therapeutic guidelines will aid health care providers in reducing treatment of patients without clinically important risk factors for gastrointestinal bleeding.

### 3 **Avoid transfusions of red blood cells for arbitrary hemoglobin or hematocrit thresholds and in the absence of symptoms of active coronary disease, heart failure or stroke.**

The AABB recommends adhering to a restrictive transfusion strategy (7 to 8 g/dL) in hospitalized, stable patients. The AABB suggests that transfusion decisions be influenced by symptoms as well as hemoglobin concentration. According to a National Institutes of Health Consensus Conference, no single criterion should be used as an indication for red cell component therapy. Instead, multiple factors related to the patient's clinical status and oxygen delivery should be considered.

### 4 **Don't order continuous telemetry monitoring outside of the ICU without using a protocol that governs continuation.**

Telemetric monitoring is of limited utility or measurable benefit in low risk cardiac chest pain patients with normal electrocardiogram. Published guidelines provide clear indications for the use of telemetric monitoring in patients which are contingent upon frequency, severity, duration and conditions under which the symptoms occur. Inappropriate use of telemetric monitoring is likely to increase cost of care and produce false positives potentially resulting in errors in patient management.

### 5 **Don't perform repetitive CBC and chemistry testing in the face of clinical and lab stability.**

Hospitalized patients frequently have considerable volumes of blood drawn (phlebotomy) for diagnostic testing during short periods of time. Phlebotomy is highly associated with changes in hemoglobin and hematocrit levels for patients and can contribute to anemia. This anemia, in turn, may have significant consequences, especially for patients with cardiorespiratory diseases. Additionally, reducing the frequency of daily unnecessary phlebotomy can result in significant cost savings for hospitals.

## How This List Was Created

The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) created a *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> subcommittee comprised of representatives of the Hospital Quality and Patient Safety committee and included diverse representation of academic, community and adult hospitalists. SHM committee members submitted 150 recommendations for consideration, which were discussed for frequency of occurrence, the uniqueness of the tests and treatments and whether the cost burden for a specific test or treatment proved to be significant, narrowing the list to 65 items. The *Choosing Wisely* subcommittee ranked these items and a survey was sent to all SHM members to arrive at 11 recommendations, of which the final five were determined utilizing the Delphi method. SHM's Board approved the final recommendations.

SHM's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.hospitalmedicine.org/industry](http://www.hospitalmedicine.org/industry).

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### About the Society of Hospital Medicine

Representing the fastest growing specialty in modern healthcare, the Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) is the leading medical society for more than 34,000 hospitalists and their patients. SHM is dedicated

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For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't order chest radiographs in children with uncomplicated asthma or bronchiolitis.

National guidelines articulate a reliance on physical examination and patient history for diagnosis of asthma and bronchiolitis in the pediatric population. Multiple studies have established limited clinical utility of chest radiographs for patients with asthma or bronchiolitis. Omission of the use of chest radiography will reduce costs, but not compromise diagnostic accuracy and care.

2

### Don't routinely use bronchodilators in children with bronchiolitis.

Published guidelines do not advocate the routine use of bronchodilators in patients with bronchiolitis. Comprehensive reviews of the literature have demonstrated that the use of bronchodilators in children admitted to the hospital with bronchiolitis has no effect on any important outcomes. There is limited demonstration of clear impact of bronchodilator therapy upon the course of disease. Additionally, providers should consider the potential impact of adverse events upon the patient.

3

### Don't use systemic corticosteroids in children under 2 years of age with an uncomplicated lower respiratory tract infection.

Published guidelines recommend that corticosteroid medications not be used routinely in the management of bronchiolitis. Furthermore, additional studies in patients with other viral lower respiratory tract infections have failed to demonstrate any benefits.

4

### Don't treat gastroesophageal reflux in infants routinely with acid suppression therapy.

Antireflux therapy has been demonstrated to have no effect in reducing the symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) in children. Concerns regarding the use of proton-pump inhibitor therapy in infants include an inability to definitively diagnose pediatric patients according to the established criteria of GERD, lack of documented efficacy of acid suppression therapy in infants and the potential adverse effects associated with acid suppression therapy.

5

### Don't use continuous pulse oximetry routinely in children with acute respiratory illness unless they are on supplemental oxygen.

The utility of continuous pulse oximetry in pediatric patients with acute respiratory illness is not well established. Use of continuous pulse oximetry has been previously associated with increased admission rates and increased length of stay. The clinical benefit of pulse oximetry is not validated or well documented.

# How This List Was Created

A Delphi panel of pediatric hospital medicine physicians with wide geographic representation was convened by the Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM). The panel developed an initial list of 20 items with input from colleagues at each of the panelists' home institutions, which was then discussed and reduced to 11 items via consensus of the panel. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken for these 11 items, while they were concurrently circulated on the electronic listservs of SHM's Pediatric Committee and the American Academy of Pediatrics' Section on Hospital Medicine. The collated comments along with the results of the evidence review were then presented to the members of the panel.

Two rounds of Delphi voting took place via electronic submission of votes by the panel. Validity and feasibility of each item was assessed by the Delphi panel on a nine-point scale for each of the 11 items and the mean of each item was obtained. The aggregate score of the means of validity and feasibility decided the final five items. These recommendations were then submitted to the SHM Board for review and approval.

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### Don't use PET/CT for cancer screening in healthy individuals.

- The likelihood of finding cancer in healthy adults is extremely low (around 1%), based on studies using PET/CT for screening.
- Imaging without clear clinical indication is likely to identify harmless findings that lead to more tests, biopsy or unnecessary surgery.

2

### Don't perform routine annual stress testing after coronary artery revascularization.

- Routine annual stress testing in patients without symptoms does not usually change management.
- This practice may lead to unnecessary testing without any proven impact on patient management.

3

### Don't use nuclear medicine thyroid scans to evaluate thyroid nodules in patients with normal thyroid gland function.

- Nuclear medicine thyroid scanning does not conclusively determine whether thyroid nodules are benign or malignant.
- Cold nodules on thyroid scans will still require biopsy.
- Nuclear medicine thyroid scans are useful to evaluate the functional status of thyroid nodules in patients who are hyperthyroid.

4

### Avoid using a computed tomography angiogram to diagnose pulmonary embolism in young women with a normal chest radiograph; consider a radionuclide lung study ("V/Q study") instead.

- When the clinical question is whether or not pulmonary emboli are present, a V/Q study can provide the answer with lower overall radiation dose to the breast than can CTA, even when performed with a breast shield.

5

### Don't use PET imaging in the evaluation of patients with dementia unless the patient has been assessed by a specialist in this field.

- Without objective evidence of dementia, the potential benefit of PET is unlikely to justify the cost or radiation risk.
- Dementia subtypes have overlapping patterns in PET imaging. Clinical evaluation and imaging often provide additive information and should be assessed together to make a reliable diagnosis and to plan care.
- For  $\beta$ -amyloid PET imaging, it is not currently known what a positive PET result in a cognitively normal person means; this method is not established for an individual prediction.

## How This List Was Created

The president of the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI) appointed a Steering Committee, led by the president-elect, to develop the "Top 5" list. This committee solicited input from five SNMMI clinical specialty councils (cardiovascular, brain, nuclear oncology, general nuclear medicine, pediatric) and our PET Center of Excellence. A task force made up of the Steering Committee and specialty council/center leadership convened, and its members also provided recommendations. The Steering Committee reviewed and ranked the submissions and presented the five highest-ranked statements to the SNMMI Board of Directors and House of Delegates.

SNMMI's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be obtained by contacting the organization ([email@snmmi.org](mailto:email@snmmi.org)).

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### About the ABIM Foundation

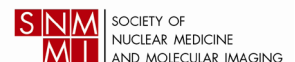
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### About the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging

The Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI) is a nonprofit scientific and professional organization dedicated to the science, technology and practical application of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, with the ultimate goal of improving human health. Founded in 1960, SNMMI represents more than 19,000 nuclear medicine and molecular imaging professionals worldwide.



For more information about nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, please visit SNMMI's consumer website, [www.discoverMI.org](http://www.discoverMI.org).

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## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Patients who have no cardiac history and good functional status do not require preoperative stress testing prior to non-cardiac thoracic surgery.

- Functional status has been shown to be reliable for prediction of perioperative and long-term cardiac events. In highly functional asymptomatic patients, management is rarely changed by preoperative stress testing. It is therefore appropriate to proceed with the planned surgery without it.

Unnecessary stress testing can be harmful because it increases the cost of care and delays treatment without altering surgical or perioperative management in a meaningful way. Furthermore, low-risk patients who undergo preoperative stress testing are more likely to obtain additional invasive testing with risks of complications.

Cardiac complications are significant contributors to morbidity and mortality after non-cardiac thoracic surgery, and it is important to identify patients preoperatively who are at risk for these complications. The most valuable tools in this endeavor include a thorough history, physical exam and resting EKG. Cardiac stress testing can be an important adjunct in this evaluation, but it should only be used when clinically indicated.

### 2 Don't initiate routine evaluation of carotid artery disease prior to cardiac surgery in the absence of symptoms or other high-risk criteria.

- Carotid stenosis with symptoms (stroke or transient ischemic attacks [TIA]) is a known risk for cardiovascular accident and appropriate for preoperative testing.
- The presence of a carotid bruit does not equate to an increased risk of stroke after cardiac surgery.
- Patients with carotid stenosis have a higher rate of cerebrovascular complications after cardiac surgery, but there is no evidence that prophylactic or concomitant carotid surgery decreases this rate of complications in asymptomatic patients.

ACC/AHA 2011 guidelines for coronary artery bypass graft surgery indicate carotid artery duplex scanning is reasonable in selected patients who are considered to have high-risk features. However, this was based on a consensus and a low level of evidence. In addition, a recent consensus report from the United Kingdom questioned whether neurologic sequelae developing in cardiac surgery patients with asymptomatic carotid disease are due to the carotid artery disease or rather act as a surrogate for an increased stroke risk from atherosclerotic issues with the aorta.

The Northern Manhattan Stroke Study concluded that carotid auscultation had poor sensitivity and positive predictive value for carotid stenosis and so decisions on obtaining carotid duplex studies should be considered based on symptoms or risk factors rather than findings on auscultation.

### 3 Don't perform a routine pre-discharge echocardiogram after cardiac valve replacement surgery.

- Pre-discharge cardiac echocardiography is useful after cardiac valve repair. It provides information regarding the integrity of the repair and allows the opportunity for early identification of problems that may need to be addressed surgically during the index hospitalization. Unlike valve repair, there is a lack of evidence that supports the routine use of cardiac echocardiography pre-discharge after cardiac valve replacement.
- Scenarios that would justify the use of pre-discharge cardiac echocardiography include: inability to perform intraoperative transesophageal echocardiography, clinical signs and symptoms worrisome for valvular malfunction or infection, or a large pericardial effusion.

## Patients with suspected or biopsy proven Stage I NSCLC do not require brain imaging prior to definitive care in the absence of neurologic symptoms.

- The incidence of occult brain metastasis in Stage I lung cancer is low (<3%) and so routine brain imaging results in increased costs, delays in therapy and rarely changes patient management.
- False-positive studies occur in up to 11% of patients resulting in further invasive testing or incorrect over staging, with potentially tragic effects on treatment decisions and outcomes.

Some clinicians perform routine screening by brain magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or computed tomography (CT) scans to rule out occult brain metastasis in asymptomatic patients prior to surgical resection of early stage lung cancer. This practice of routine screening for occult brain metastases has not been evaluated by a randomized clinical trial and may not be cost-effective or medically necessary.

Pooled data from retrospective studies that included a comprehensive clinical evaluation demonstrated that only 3% of patients who have a negative neurologic evaluation present with intracranial metastasis. One study, limited to Stage I patients, reported a prevalence of 1.3%. The joint statement of the American Thoracic Society and the European Respiratory Society did not advocate preoperative imaging of the brain in patients with NSCLC who present without neurologic symptoms, and the current National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) non-small cell lung cancer guidelines do not recommend preoperative brain imaging for asymptomatic patients with Stage IA non-small cell lung carcinoma.

## Prior to cardiac surgery, there is no need for pulmonary function testing in the absence of respiratory symptoms.

- PFTs can be helpful in determining risk in cardiac surgery, but patients with no pulmonary disease are unlikely to benefit and do not justify testing.
- Symptoms attributed to cardiac disease that are respiratory in nature should be better characterized with PFTs.

Risk models for cardiac surgery developed from review of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons Adult Cardiac Surgery Database incorporate a variable for chronic lung disease. Only recently have actual FEV1 and DLCO data been collected in the database. In the absence of respiratory symptoms or suggestive medical history, pulmonary function testing is quite unlikely to change patient management or assist in risk assessment. Although some data are beginning to emerge about preoperative pulmonary rehabilitation prior to cardiac surgery for patients with even mild to moderate obstructive disease, this does not directly extrapolate to asymptomatic patients.



# How This List Was Created

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) list development process was led by the First Vice-President, and involved input from multiple workforces, including the Workforce on Adult Cardiac and Vascular Surgery, Workforce on General Thoracic Surgery, and Workforce on Evidence Based Surgery, and was staffed by STS' Director of Quality. The initial 17 recommendations from these Workforces were narrowed down to eight based upon frequency, clinical guidelines and potential impact. STS leadership approved these eight recommendations for presentation to members in an online survey. The results of the survey, as well as research and systematic literature review by the Workforce on Evidence Based Surgery, were presented to the STS Executive Committee, which approved the five final recommendations.

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### About the ABIM Foundation

The mission of the ABIM Foundation is to advance medical professionalism to improve the health care system. We achieve this by collaborating with physicians and physician leaders, medical trainees, health care delivery systems, payers, policymakers, consumer organizations and patients to foster a shared understanding of professionalism and how they can adopt the tenets of professionalism in practice.



To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).

### About The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) is an international not-for-profit organization representing more than 6,500 cardiothoracic surgeons, researchers and other health care professionals who are part of the cardiothoracic surgery team. STS members are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lung and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest.



The Society  
of Thoracic  
Surgeons

For more information about cardiothoracic surgery procedures, visit [www.sts.org/patients](http://www.sts.org/patients).

For more information or to see other lists of Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question, visit [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org).

## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

1

### **Don't do work up for clotting disorder (order hypercoagulable testing) for patients who develop first episode of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in the setting of a known cause.**

Lab tests to look for a clotting disorder will not alter treatment of a venous blood clot, even if an abnormality is found. DVT is a very common disorder, and recent discoveries of clotting abnormalities have led to increased testing without proven benefit.

2

### **Don't reimaging DVT in the absence of a clinical change.**

Repeat ultrasound images to evaluate "response" of venous clot to therapy does not alter treatment.

3

### **Avoid cardiovascular testing for patients undergoing low-risk surgery.**

Pre-operative stress testing does not alter therapy or decision-making in patients facing low-risk surgery.

4

### **Refrain from percutaneous or surgical revascularization of peripheral artery stenosis in patients without claudication or critical limb ischemia.**

Patients without symptoms will not benefit from attempts to improve circulation. No evidence exists to support improving circulation to prevent progression of disease. There is no proven preventive benefit, only symptomatic benefit.

5

### **Don't screen for renal artery stenosis in patients without resistant hypertension and with normal renal function, even if known atherosclerosis is present.**

Performing surgery or angioplasty to improve circulation to the kidneys has no proven preventive benefit, and shouldn't be considered unless there is evidence of symptoms, such as elevated blood pressure or decreased renal function.

## How This List Was Created

The Society for Vascular Medicine (SVM) looked to the leadership of its Board of Trustees and input from its members to develop the list of five things physicians and patients should question. Suggestions from SVM members were solicited through an e-mail blast, and a second e-mail was sent to the SVM Board of Trustees seeking volunteers and suggestions.

A committee, consisting of four members of the Board of Trustees, narrowed an initial list down to seven recommendations. The full Board of Trustees voted on the recommendations using the Delphi method of choice, arriving at the five that became SVM's list as part of the *Choosing Wisely*<sup>®</sup> campaign.

SVM's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.vascularmed.org](http://www.vascularmed.org).

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### About the Society for Vascular Medicine

The Society for Vascular Medicine (SVM) is a nonprofit medical society comprised of physicians, surgeons, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and vascular interventionists. For nearly 25 years, one of the goals of the Society has been to maintain high standards of clinical vascular medicine. The Society believes that optimal vascular care is best accomplished by the collegial interaction of a community of vascular professionals working with the patient. The Society recognizes the importance of individuals with diverse backgrounds in achieving ideal standards of research and clinical practice. The society believes that partnerships between patients and health care providers are crucial to improving vascular health, achieving better outcomes and lowering health care costs.

For more information, visit [www.vascularmed.org](http://www.vascularmed.org).



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