

Taking the Test

Diagnostic tests are an important resource that doctors use to make decisions about your care. Doctors order blood tests, x-rays, and other kinds of tests to diagnose medical problems. You may not know why you need a test, or you may not understand how it will help you. For tests that are sent to laboratories, ask your doctor what lab is used and why. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality suggests some additional questions to ask your doctor:

- How is the test done?
- What kind of information will the test provide?
- What are the benefits and risks of having this test?
- How accurate is the test?
- What do I need to do to prepare for the test (such as no eating, drinking)?
- How long will it take to get the results, and how will I get them?
- What's the next step after the tests?

For the test results, don't assume no news is good news. If you do not hear from your doctor, call to get your test results. If you and your doctor think the test results may not be right, have the test done again