

# Having a heart test?

## Know what to ask

Has your primary care provider referred you to a cardiologist? A cardiologist is a doctor who specializes in conditions related to the heart. Thinking you might be at risk for or have heart problems can be frightening. Knowing what questions to ask ahead of time can help relieve some of your fears and make you an active participant in your care.

### General

- What will this test tell you about my heart?
- Will ordering this test help you treat my problem?
- Is there radiation associated with this test?
- Is the test considered invasive (a procedure where instruments are inserted into the body)?
- What are the benefits and risks associated with having this test?
- What happens if I decide not to have the test?
- Are there safer alternatives that can provide the same information?
- Do I have options for where the test will be performed?
- Who will perform the test?
- Is the doctor specially trained to perform this test?
- What if the test reveals a problem?
- How much will the test cost?
- Will my insurance cover the cost of the test?

### Before, during and after the test

- What do I need to do to prepare for the test (e.g., fast, avoid caffeine)?
- What can I expect during the test?
- How long will the test last?
- What can I expect after the test? How will I feel?
- When will I find out about the results?
- May I get a paper copy of the results?
- What follow-up is needed after the test?
- What part of my regular routine can I do after the test?

### Other

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You may think of more questions during your discussion with the cardiologist. Ask them!  
They may help you decide if a test is right for you.