



Do I Need a Test?

Lab tests can be helpful. Here are some questions you can answer to make sure that you need them.

- **What is the test for?** A test is meant to either help make a diagnosis (like checking a urine sample to see if you have an infection), or to screen whether you may be at risk for certain diseases now or in the future (like checking a cholesterol for the risk of heart disease).
- **How will this test change things?** Doing a test can help your doctor decide and guide your treatment. If a test isn't going to change things, then it's probably best to think again about whether or not it needs to be done.
- **What risks do I need to consider?** Usually, the test your doctor orders have little to no risk, but it's important to know if there are any.
- **Will I need follow up tests after this one?** Sometimes, tests like the ones your doctor may order are just a first step to further studies, so knowing what to expect can help.
- **What about tests and kids?** Unlike all the screening tests we do in adults, parents can rest easy that there are fewer ones for kids, so your pediatrician or family doctor isn't likely to recommend the kinds of tests adults need.

If you're looking for some information about a particular test, go to the **Health Encyclopedia** located on kp.org or your KP Provider's **Home Page**.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor.

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