

*Choosing Wisely Canada is a campaign to help physicians and patients engage in conversations about unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures, and to help physicians and patients make smart and effective choices to ensure high-quality care.*

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## Lab tests before surgery

When you need them—and when you don't

If you're going to have surgery, you may have blood and urine tests first. These tests may be helpful if you have certain health conditions or diseases. For example, if you have a blood-clotting problem, a test can show if you're at risk of too much bleeding during surgery.

But most healthy people don't need the tests, especially before low-risk surgery. Here's why:

### **The tests usually aren't helpful for low-risk surgery.**

Many healthy people have routine lab tests before surgery. In these cases, test results rarely change their surgeon's decision to operate or make surgery safer.

The tests are especially unnecessary before low-risk surgery—such as eye, hernia, or skin surgery, or a breast biopsy. In these and many other surgeries, the risk of complications is very low.

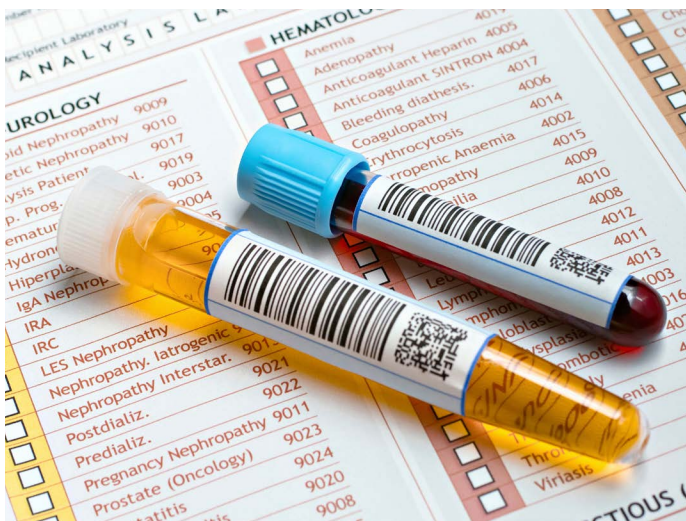


### **The lab tests can lead to more tests.**

Blood and urine tests are very safe, but they can cause false alarms. This can lead to anxiety and more tests. And it can needlessly delay your surgery. For example, one test may be followed up with a repeat test, an ultrasound, a biopsy, or a test that exposes you to radiation, such as an X-ray or CT scan.

If you have certain health conditions or diseases, or your medical history shows the need, the tests may give your doctor helpful information. For example:

- You may also need the tests before a major operation such as heart, lung, or brain surgery. Based on the test results, your doctor may watch your condition more closely during or after your surgery. You may need to delay the surgery until a problem is under control. Or your doctor may change the procedures and anesthesia.



Your doctor or the hospital's pre-surgery team will examine you and review your medical history.

- Provincial health card and hospital card.
- Storage containers for dentures, contact lenses, and eyeglasses.
- A few items for comfort, such as a music player and headphones, photos, and a robe or pillow.