



**Choosing Wisely
Australia**

An initiative of NPS MedicineWise



Consumers Health
Forum **OF** Australia

Conversation Starter Kit

**Promoting better
conversations about
the appropriate use of
medical tests, treatments
and procedures**



**NPS
MEDICINEWISE**

Introduction

Important healthcare conversations

As consumer advocates we are committed to improving the healthcare of individuals and the broader community.

The Choosing Wisely Australia initiative, run by NPS MedicineWise, is helping the healthcare community and consumers to start important conversations about unnecessary and sometimes harmful tests, treatments and procedures. It supports consumers to make informed decisions in partnership with their healthcare professionals in ways that suit their own preferences and personal circumstances.

We invite you to use this Choosing Wisely Australia Conversation Starter Kit, developed in collaboration with the Consumers Health Forum of Australia, to raise greater awareness about the importance of good conversations between consumers and healthcare providers.

The kit is designed to help you present to your networks of consumer advocates and other key stakeholders. It includes a range of information and resources available for you as a consumer advocate to learn more about the initiative and share with your networks.

We encourage you to present to your peers, within your organisation, at committee meetings – wherever you can engage other consumer advocates in Choosing Wisely and encourage them to become involved.

Good conversations can lead to better quality care, improved outcomes and better use of health resources.



Promoting wise healthcare choices

Choosing Wisely Australia offers you an avenue for helping to drive patient-centred care and for helping others understand the value of making wise healthcare choices.

As a consumer health advocate, you are well placed to raise awareness about Choosing Wisely Australia. We invite you to share and discuss the Choosing Wisely messages within your networks and encourage conversations between consumers and healthcare professionals.

By promoting the messages and resources of the Choosing Wisely initiative to your peers and networks, you are playing an important role in helping grow the reach of Choosing Wisely in the Australian community. The more people understand and promote Choosing Wisely, the bigger impact we can potentially make in improving their health outcomes.

What is a health consumer?

Health consumers are people who use health services, as well as their family and carers. This includes people who have used a health service in the past or who could potentially use the service in the future.

What is a health consumer representative?

A consumer representative is a member of a government, professional body, industry or non-governmental organisation committee who voices consumer perspectives and takes part in the decision-making process on behalf of consumers. This person is nominated by, and is accountable to, an organisation of consumers.



About the global Choosing Wisely movement

Choosing Wisely is a global initiative that aims to improve the safety and quality of healthcare by promoting conversations between consumers and healthcare providers about what care is truly necessary. Beginning in the United States in 2012 (created by the ABIM Foundation), NPS MedicineWise launched Choosing Wisely Australia in 2015. More than 20 countries are now implementing the initiative.

Choosing Wisely is challenging the notion that 'more is always better'. As part of the initiative, health professional bodies release lists of recommendations about healthcare practices that should be questioned. Key to the initiative are these guiding principles:

- 🟡 clear **emphasis on improving quality of care** and on harm prevention
- 🟡 **patient-focused** communication between clinicians and patients
- 🟡 **evidence-based** information
- 🟡 **multidisciplinary** – encouraging doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals to participate

Choosing Wisely is creating a cultural shift toward health professionals and consumers engaging in conversations about what care is truly needed – what is helpful and what is not. The right choice should be based on the best available evidence and discussion between consumers and clinicians.

About NPS MedicineWise

NPS MedicineWise is an independent, not-for-profit and evidence-based organisation that works to improve the way health technologies, medicines and medical tests are prescribed and used. Established in 1998 with the primary aim of promoting quality use of medicines, today we have grown to connect with health consumers and health professionals nationwide, changing attitudes and behaviours, and empowering all Australians to make the best possible healthcare decisions when they count.

Good conversations support shared decision making between healthcare providers and consumers.

What is shared decision making?

In partnership with their clinician, patients are encouraged to consider available screening, treatment, or management options and the likely benefits and harms of each, to communicate their preferences, and help select the course of action that best fits these.

Challenging 'more is always better'

The number of available tests, treatments and procedures in modern medicine is large and growing. Many of these are only useful under specific situations.

However, people are often unaware that not all healthcare options are in their best interest. On the other hand, health professionals sometimes feel the need to recommend a test, treatment or procedure to satisfy their patients — or might not realise that some healthcare interventions are no longer recommended.

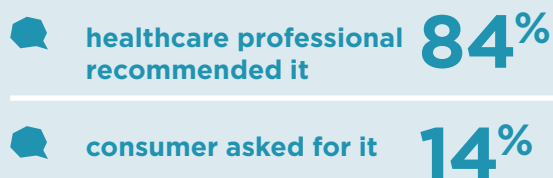
By encouraging people to use the Choosing Wisely Australia 5 Questions resource to guide a conversation with their health professionals, they will be more informed about their options. Choosing Wisely reinforces that it's okay to ask questions of their doctor or other healthcare provider. At the same time, the initiative is encouraging the health profession to create environments where people feel comfortable asking questions.

Choosing Wisely Australia works with its members and supporters to raise awareness of why unnecessary healthcare occurs so we can overcome barriers to change.

Why is there unnecessary healthcare?

NPS MedicineWise survey results* highlight a disconnect between consumers and their GPs and specialists about why unnecessary healthcare is being requested. While health professionals have indicated patient expectations, fear of litigation and uncertainty of diagnoses as key drivers, consumers said that they had unnecessary tests because their GPs recommended them.

Why consumers have tests



Why health professionals order tests

Patient expectations are cited as a driver by:



What's in the Conversation Starter Kit?

The Conversation Starter Kit brings together Choosing Wisely information and resources into one place. It has been co-designed with Consumers Health Forum of Australia and a working group of consumer advocates, health professionals and representatives of Primary Health Networks.

The kit contains the following resources:

Information sheets (as handouts):

- ✧ [About Choosing Wisely Australia flyer](#)
- ✧ [5 Questions to ask your doctor or other healthcare provider](#) (printable resource)
- ✧ [Communicating with your healthcare provider – tips for your appointment](#)

For the leader (not as handouts):

- ✧ [How to talk about Choosing Wisely](#)
- ✧ [An easy to use PowerPoint presentation](#) – with narrative provided
- ✧ New Choosing Wisely Australia video – [It's OK to ask questions](#)
- ✧ Links to other [video content](#) through the [Choosing Wisely Australia website](#)
- ✧ [Social media guide](#) and links to social media:

Facebook:

@choosingwiselyaustralia

Twitter:

@ChooseWiselyAU

LinkedIn:

Choosing Wisely Australia

- ✧ Other useful links to [consumer healthcare information](#) on the [NPS MedicineWise website](#)
- ✧ [Evaluation consent form](#)

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5 QUESTIONS
TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROVIDER BEFORE YOU GET ANY TEST, TREATMENT OR PROCEDURE

Some tests, treatments and procedures provide little benefit. And in some cases, they may even cause harm. Use the 5 questions to make sure you end up with the right amount of care — not too much and not too little.

- DO I REALLY NEED THIS TEST, TREATMENT OR PROCEDURE?** Tests may help you and your doctor or other healthcare provider determine the problem. Treatments, such as medicines, and procedures may help to treat it.
- WHAT ARE THE RISKS?** Will there be side effects to the test or treatment? What are the chances of getting results that aren't accurate? Could that lead to more testing, additional treatments or another procedure?
- ARE THERE SIMPLER, SAFER OPTIONS?** Ask if there are alternative options to treatment that could work. Lifestyle changes, such as eating healthier foods or exercising more, can be safe and effective options.
- WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING?** Ask if your condition might get worse — or better — if you don't have the test, treatment or procedure right away.
- WHAT ARE THE COSTS?** Costs can be financial, emotional or a cost of your time. Where there is a cost to the community, is the cost reasonable or is there a cheaper alternative?

Before your appointment
Make a longer appointment if the problem you want to discuss is complex, or you need to discuss several issues. Prepare a summary of your health problems and the issues you want to discuss, and make questions as you think of them. Let your healthcare provider know if you need an interpreter or other assistance with communication.

During your appointment
You should expect to be listened to. You should be given clear and adequate explanations of your condition, any recommended tests, treatments and the expected results. When you describe your problems, be complete and honest as possible. If your healthcare provider recommends a test, treatment or procedure and you are not clear on the purpose or benefits, you may want to discuss it.

For more information visit the website www.choosingwisely.org.au/#cc

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Adapted from material developed by Consumer Reports. Choosing Wisely Australia is an initiative enabling clinicians, consumers and healthcare stakeholders to start important conversations about unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures. With a focus on high quality care, Choosing Wisely Australia is led by Australia's medical colleges, societies and associations, and facilitated by NPS MedicineWise. NPS MedicineWise is a not-for-profit organisation. NPS MedicineWise does not provide any financial or other support to any individual or organisation. NPS MedicineWise is not a substitute for medical advice and should not be used to replace or delay medical advice. NPS MedicineWise disclaims all liability (including without limitation for negligence) for any loss, damage or injury resulting from reliance on or use of this information. Read the full disclaimer at choosingwisely.org.au.

How to use the Conversation Starter Kit

Here are some ways you can use this kit to engage other consumer health advocates:

- 1** Show the new introductory **video** (3 minutes).
- 2** Deliver the Conversation Starter Kit **presentation** (10 minutes including video, see presentation run sheet).
- 3** Print or share electronically any of the Choosing Wisely Australia **printable resources**.
- 4** **Encourage peers** to deliver their own presentation using the Conversation Starter Kit.
- 5** Encourage the sharing of the **5 Questions** and *Communicating with your healthcare provider*.
- 6** **Actively promote** Choosing Wisely Australia messaging and resources through your organisation's communications channels.
- 7** Encourage your organisation to **become an official supporter** of Choosing Wisely Australia.
- 8** Join in the conversation on **Facebook, Twitter** and **LinkedIn**.

Find our resources at
choosingwisely.org.au





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