



What is metabolism?

Metabolism is defined as the processes needed to maintain life. But when you hear [metabolism](#)  used today, it's usually used in terms of weight issues. You may hear someone say, "I can't lose weight because I have a slow metabolism."

While there's some truth to this, other factors – such as how much you eat and exercise – play a much bigger role in your weight than your metabolism does.

And while it's true that how much lean body mass you have can affect how many calories you burn at rest, its effect is limited – in part, because you can only build so much lean muscle by strength training.

Here are some other facts about metabolism.

What it is

Metabolism is how your body turns the food you eat into the energy it needs. It's a vital process for all living things, not just humans.

What can affect your metabolism

- Some medications can affect your weight. A balanced diet and regular physical activity can lessen this effect.
- Eating breakfast every day can get your metabolism off to a good start.
- Weight loss – especially when it's rapid – slows your metabolism. As you lose weight, you need to take in fewer calories or get more physical activity to burn more calories to keep losing weight.
- Age can slow your metabolism. In general, as you age, you gain fat and lose muscle. Some people also become less active. As you age, you need to do more to keep your metabolism up.

What can't affect your metabolism

- Any weight-loss supplement, regardless of its claims
- A diet of green tea and chili peppers
- Eating late at night



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Insist on a second opinion—**your own**

Why are patients in Casper, Wyo., nearly seven times more likely to undergo back surgery than patients in Honolulu, Hawaii?

Why are women over age 65 in Grand Forks, N.D., seven times more likely to have a mastectomy for early-stage breast cancer than women in San Francisco?

Why are men age 68 to 74 years old in Miami 15 times more likely to receive a PSA test than men living in Lebanon, N.H.?

Those are questions raised by the release of reports

compiled by researchers at the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy & Clinical Practice.

Comparing elective surgeries in nine regions across the country, they discovered remarkable variations in procedures, even though the patients had similar conditions.

Researchers concluded that the treatment a patient receives depends more on the physician's recommendations than the patient's preferences.

Patient preference is critical when facing a decision about a test or treatment involving more than one

medically reasonable option. Ideally, it's a shared decision.

According to Michael J. Barry, MD, co-author of the Dartmouth report, "When done right, shared decision-making results in a better decision: a personalized choice based on both the best scientific evidence and the patient's values."

Dr. Barry's statement came in a press release issued by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which funded the study as part of its ongoing mission to create positive change in the healthcare system.

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POPS**



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EXPERT INSIGHT

What is a cancer center?

By Ruben A. Mesa, M.D., Division of Hematology/Oncology, Mayo Clinic

Dr. Mesa is chair of the Division of Hematology/Oncology and deputy director of the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center at Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale, Ariz. The Mayo Clinic Cancer Center has been a designated National Cancer Institute cancer center since 1973.

Cancer. Everything related to it can seem overwhelming. With so many questions and options, it can be hard to know what steps to take.

A cancer center is one resource that can help.

Cancer centers are hospitals or hospital units that diagnose and treat cancer. A team of medical specialists provides care, using step-by-step guidelines for treatment. At the **Mayo Clinic Cancer Center**, for example, more than 1,000 doctors and scientists take part in all aspects of cancer care. The goal is to help people along their entire cancer journey.

Cancer centers offer the latest cancer treatments, as well as those that are experimental. They take part in research studies that help them come up with ways to treat cancer and address long-term cancer survival and quality of life. This research is helping treatments become more suited to each person – and more successful.

Many cancer centers are NCI-designated. This means that the **National Cancer Institute (NCI)** evaluates them every three to five years.



Talk to your doctor if you think a cancer center might be right for you. Your doctor

can refer you and help you find a cancer center that's a good fit for you. Find a list of NCI cancer centers at http://cancercenters.cancer.gov/cancer_centers/.

OR SCAN THIS WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE.

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Want access to the health experts at Mayo Clinic?

This newsletter provides it. Mayo Clinic's 3,700 physicians, scientists and researchers help develop and review articles in this publication. Our editorial board also reviews each article to ensure that we're offering accurate, action-oriented information.

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Caring for arthritic joints

Help manage pain in arthritic joints with these tips.



Get regular, low-impact aerobic exercise. Walking, swimming, cycling and tai chi are examples. This type of exercise helps keep your joints flexible, the muscles around your joints strong, and the cartilage tissue strong and healthy. It can also help reduce pain.



Avoid physical activity that puts too much stress on your joints. High-impact aerobic dancing, running and playing competitive sports are a few examples.



Maintain a healthy weight. Carrying too much weight will put strain on the joints in your knees, hips and feet.



Consider acupuncture. Some research shows that it helps improve how your joint feels. It may also help you manage pain if you have osteoarthritis.



Try massage. In one study, people with osteoarthritis of the knee said they felt less pain and stiffness and had better physical function after eight weeks of massage therapy.

What about glucosamine and chondroitin?

Some research shows that glucosamine and chondroitin supplements can help reduce osteoarthritis pain. Most research shows no effect. A recent study found that these supplements may not be any more helpful than the prescription drug celecoxib (Celebrex) or a placebo. Talk to your doctor if you're interested in taking glucosamine and chondroitin.



Everyday spirituality

Your spirituality may be related to a belief in God. Or, you may see it in a more secular way. Either way, you probably practice spirituality every day without even realizing it, by:

- Connecting with others, such as friends, family or a group that gathers for a spiritual purpose
- Helping someone in need
- Being able to look at the bigger picture in life, especially during times of stress
- Spending time in nature

- Experiencing God or a higher power at work in your life
- Taking part in activities such as prayer, meditation, deep breathing, expressing gratitude, silent observation or experiencing art
- Looking for and doing things that give your life meaning and purpose, such as the work you do or something that helps you feel connected to something larger than yourself

 **Spirituality can help give you meaning and purpose, hope, inner peace, and ways to make a difference.**

MyStory

Dave and Kristine Rossman: 'Make the best of it'

Dave and Kristine Rossman have faced their share of challenges:

- Dave's dad died when Dave was a senior in high school.
- Kristine's brother was born with a disability. Dave and Kristine are his guardians.
- Dave and Kristine's son died at age 6 of aplastic anemia.
- On July 13, 2011, Dave learned he had a brain tumor.
- On June 28, 2012, Dave and Kristine met with a hospice nurse. Cancer treatment wasn't working.

"People could say, 'Oh, that poor family,'" Kristine says. "But I don't think of our life in those terms."

"We're surviving," Kristine says.

"Just barely," Dave says, and then smiles.

They look lovingly at each other as they hold hands on a couch in a waiting room.

"We've had a happy life," Kristine says. "We've had a lot of fun times."

The couple has two grown daughters, good relationships with family, a love of nature and a strong faith in God. All of this – plus a positive attitude – helps explain how the couple has made it through life's challenges together.

A saying Dave has often told Kristine and their daughters over the years sums up their outlook on life well. When they've faced an unexpected situation, Dave has been known to say, "We're not lost; we're having an adventure!"

Over the years, they've had many adventures, including vacations where

they could unplug from technology and spend time in nature, hiking and camping.

Daily rituals are important to them, too. Kristine finds comfort in daily prayer. Dave found peace while singing with their church choir. They both cherish their relationships with friends and family.

"When friends say, 'Call me if you need something,' they really mean that. So call them up and ask them," Kristine says. Friends play a major role in their day-to-day life these days. They take turns spending time with Dave at home so Kristine can work without leaving him alone.

Above all else, Kristine says how good your life will be largely comes down to how you choose to look at life. Take the Rossmans' 42nd wedding anniversary, for example.

Dave was scheduled for cancer treatment that day, which meant he wouldn't have the energy to go out to dinner to celebrate as they usually did. Instead of letting this get them down, they made other plans.

Kristine, in a vibrant, colorful dress, and Dave, dressed in a suit and tie, went to the hospital together for Dave's treatment. With every compliment they received, they proudly proclaimed that it was their anniversary. After Dave's appointment, they went out to lunch at a favorite restaurant and were seated at their favorite table.

"You choose to do what you can to make the best of it," Kristine says. "It's a prayerful choice."

Editor's note: Dave Rossman died Oct. 3, 2012, at home surrounded by his family.



"You choose to do what you can to make the best of it. It's a prayerful choice."

- Kristine Rossman



Have a personal health success story to share?

Email *EmbodHealthnewsletter* @*mayo.edu* or write to *Mayo Clinic EmbodHealth* newsletter, 200 First St. SW, Rochester, MN 55905. All correspondence becomes the property of Mayo Clinic, which reserves the right to edit material.

What are nurse practitioners and physician assistants?

If you've visited a doctor's office recently, you may have been seen by a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant. According to a national survey, nearly half of office-based physicians were in practices that used nurse practitioners (NPs) or physician assistants (PAs). Here's what you should know about them.

Nurse practitioners

Education: A master's or doctorate degree, plus advanced clinical training

Certification: National certification

What they can do: Order and interpret tests, diagnose and treat medical conditions, prescribe medications and other treatments

Physician assistants

Education: Master's degree for most; at least two years of college courses in basic science and behavioral science, plus completion of a roughly 27-monthslong program

Certification: National certification

What they can do: Order and interpret tests, diagnose and treat illnesses, prescribe medications

QUICK QUIZ: TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1 HOW MANY DOCTOR'S OFFICES USE NURSE PRACTITIONERS OR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS?

- A None B A quarter C Nearly half D All

2 BEING AN NP OR PA DOESN'T REQUIRE ADVANCED EDUCATION.

- True False

3 BOTH NPs AND PAs UNDERGO A NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS.

- True False

4 NPs AND PAs CAN DIAGNOSE AND TREAT ILLNESS AND CAN PRESCRIBE MEDICATIONS.

- True False

TAKE THE QUIZ, ENTER TO WIN!

ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN ONE OF MAYO CLINIC'S AWARD-WINNING BOOKS!

Contact information will be used for the purposes of this contest only.

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email (optional): _____

MAIL Clip out your quiz and mail it to Stephanie Vaughan, *Mayo Clinic EmbodyHealth* newsletter, 200 First St. SW, Rochester, MN 55905.

OR EMAIL your answers and contact information to EmbodyHealthnewsletter@mayo.edu. Include "Healthy You drawing" in the subject line.

WINNERS Contest entries must be received by June 17, 2013. One winner will be chosen to receive a Mayo Clinic book of the winner's choice. Winners will be notified by phone or by email if no phone number is given.

ALLERGIES AND AIR QUALITY: IS THERE A CONNECTION?

Allergies are nothing to sneeze at. Neither is the connection between allergy symptoms and the quality of air you breathe.

Here's what you should know about air quality and its effect on allergy symptoms.

OUTDOOR AIR

ALLERGY SYMPTOM TRIGGERS

Vehicle exhaust

Pollens

Molds

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Reduce your exposure as much as possible

Remove moldy firewood, piles of leaves and weeds

INDOOR AIR

ALLERGY SYMPTOM TRIGGERS

Tobacco smoke

Pet dander

Dust mites

Cockroach droppings

Mold

Dampness

Too much humidity

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Remove the source of as many allergy symptom triggers as you can

Don't allow smoking in your home

Use a dehumidifier

Vacuum once or twice a week

Wear a dust mask while doing housework

Leave the house for several hours after cleaning it

Fix all leaky pipes and windows and other causes of dampness

A lot of outdoor air makes its way indoors. That means outdoor pollutants, such as molds and pollens, can end up in your home. Keep your windows closed and run a central air conditioner in warm weather. This will help reduce the humidity and outdoor allergens in your indoor air. Free-standing indoor air cleaners are another option, but research on how well they work is limited.

Women's Health

Best exercises for women

Some types of exercise are especially good for women. Here are four of the best choices.

WEIGHT-BEARING EXERCISE

What it does: Helps build and maintain healthy bones, which is especially important after menopause.

What you can do: Brisk walking, pushing a lawn mower, team sports, dancing, tennis and bowling are some examples.

STRENGTH TRAINING

What it does: Helps with maintaining weight, muscle strength, posture and bone mass.

What you can do: Everyone should strength train all major muscle groups at least twice a week. For women, it's especially helpful to strengthen core muscles to help reduce the risk of back pain and to strengthen upper back muscles, which help women hold their posture, prevent stooping and maintain bone mass in the middle of the spine.

STABILITY AND BALANCE EXERCISES SEE PAGE 8

What they do: Help reduce the risk of falling.

What you can do: Walking heel to toe and standing on one foot are two simple balance exercises. Tai chi also has been shown to help.

KEGEL EXERCISE

What it does: Strengthens your pelvic muscles so you can hold urine in your bladder longer; this becomes more important with age.

What you can do: Pretend to stop urinating by squeezing and holding your pelvic muscles. Hold your muscles for three seconds. Then relax for three seconds. Work toward doing a set of 10 exercises.

Get to the **core** of your core

Any way you slice it, there's almost as much fitness advice related to strengthening your core as there are apples in an orchard these days.

Learn more about your core with this short primer.

Q What is your core?

A The group of muscles around your trunk – in your abdomen, lower back and pelvis – is known as your core. Your core is where your center of gravity is located. It provides the foundation for many movements.

Q Why is core strength important?

A Developing strength and power in your core muscles leads to better balance, posture and stability. With a strong core, you can lower your risk of injury and have less low back pain. Your athletic performance also may improve. For example, strong core muscles can make it easier for you to swing a golf club. Your core is also important in your everyday life, such as when you bend down to pick up a child. In addition, core exercises can help you strengthen and tone your abdominal muscles.

Q How can you strengthen your core?

A Try any exercise that uses the trunk of your body without support, such as pushups, planks and bridges. Exercising with a fitness ball will also strengthen your core. Popular fitness programs such as yoga, Pilates and tai chi also are good for core strengthening.

MAKE A SPLASH WITH WATER FITNESS

Exercising in the water is a great way to stay fit. Research shows that it's especially good for people with osteoarthritis and chronic low back pain. It's also a good choice if you have osteoporosis because it can help improve your balance and poses no risk of falling. Similar to other forms of exercise, some studies suggest that water exercise, such as swimming, can even improve your mood.

Ready to take the plunge? Here are some options and advice.

SWIMMING IS A GOOD WAY TO GET REGULAR AEROBIC PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Before swimming for fitness, warm up properly. Do jumping jacks, ride a stationary cycle, or run or walk in place for three to five minutes. Then slowly and gently stretch, holding each stretch for 30 seconds.

WATER AEROBICS CLASSES ARE AVAILABLE AT MOST FITNESS CENTERS WITH A POOL.

A water aerobics class should start with a warm-up period. It should include aerobic and muscle conditioning and end with a cool-down.

WATER WALKING INVOLVES WALKING IN A POOL WITH YOUR FEET TOUCHING THE POOL'S BOTTOM.

For best results, stand in chest-deep water and start walking. Add variety and tone other muscles by walking backward and sideways and lifting your knees higher.

Men'sHealth

Strengthening the father-adult child relationship

Knowing how to be a father when your child is all grown up can be challenging at times. Sure, you're no longer changing diapers or checking homework. But now you're faced with figuring out how to maintain your bond – while accepting the fact that your child is now an adult.



Work toward strengthening your relationship with your adult child with this advice:

Avoid rescuing. It can be hard to watch your adult child make poor choices. Help your child hone his or her problem-solving and recovery skills by listening. Offer advice only if you're asked for it. Respect your child's right to make his or her own decisions.

Don't avoid talking about your problems. If there's tension between you and your adult child, talk about it. Try to come up with a solution. Or, try to at least understand each other's points of view. Research shows that tackling a problem – rather than simply not talking about it – is better for your relationship.

Plan one-on-one time. Think of something you both enjoy, such as a sporting event, a new restaurant, a movie or hiking. Set a date to get together.

Keep the faith. If distance develops between you and your adult child, be patient and continue to communicate your love for your child.

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Getting older adults outdoors

Here are some benefits of getting older adults outdoors, and tips for how to do it safely.

Spending time outdoors is important for everyone's well-being – including your elderly loved ones. Making an effort to encourage and facilitate your loved ones' time outside is a gift you can give them.

RECOGNIZE THE ADVANTAGES

Light physical activity that's done outdoors in natural settings, such as walking, offers healing effects for older adults. Studies show that natural environments are therapeutic. Research also shows that it helps reduce mental fatigue. Even for older adults who aren't able to move, just sitting outside can be good for their well-being.

OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES

Whether your elderly loved one is able to move easily or not, choose short walking routes that offer plenty of places to rest. Avoid traffic, dangerous crossroads, and hilly or rough surfaces.

STAY SAFE

Make sure your elderly loved one uses sunscreen and wears sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat. Also, provide your loved one with well-fitting shoes. They should have flat, nonskid soles and provide proper support for their feet.

Help get your children the benefits of playing outside, safely, with this advice.

SAFE SUN FOR CHILDREN

Playing outdoors in the sun provides valuable vitamin D for children – and a good opportunity to be physically active. However, most sun damage to the skin takes place during childhood.



Try to keep children out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. This is when the sun's rays are strongest.



Apply a broad-spectrum [sunscreen](#) (SEE PAGE 8) with an SPF of at least 30 to all exposed areas of children's skin about 15 to 30 minutes before they go outside. Reapply every 1½ to two hours. Reapply more often if they spend a lot of time in the water.



Have children dress in sun-protective clothing or tightly woven, lightweight cotton clothing with long sleeves and long pant legs when possible. A hat with a wide brim and sunglasses also are a good idea.



Keep babies younger than 6 months old well covered and out of direct sunlight. If you don't have shade, use a small amount of sunscreen on small areas of your baby's body, such as the face and backs of the hands. Wash sunscreen off once your baby is indoors.



Sun protection is important when the sun reflects off pavement or water – and on cloudy or foggy days.



integrativeinsights

What is whey protein?

A good source of amino acids, [whey protein](#)  comes from milk. Many people use whey protein to improve their sports performance and overall health.

Research shows that whey protein may help:

- Reduce your risk of metabolic syndrome, a group of conditions that raises your risk of heart disease and diabetes
- Lower your blood sugar
- Satisfy your hunger when you eat, which can help you eat less
- Reduce age-related muscle loss

Researchers aren't sure if whey protein:

- Improves athletic performance
- Can help shrink tumors in people who have late-stage cancer
- Can help treat asthma and high cholesterol

Where is whey protein?

- In energy bars, drink mixes and some yogurts
- In powder form, which can be added to foods and beverages
- In baked goods, dressings, frozen desserts, cake and dessert mixes, and dairy products, as a replacement for fat

Is it safe?

Whey protein is generally safe for most adults when used appropriately. But too much can lead to unwanted side effects, such as nausea, bloating, cramps, reduced appetite, fatigue and headache. People who are allergic to cow's milk and women who are pregnant or breast-feeding should avoid whey protein. It may interact with some medications. How much whey protein you should take depends on how much protein you get in your diet overall.

 If you want to try whey protein, ask your doctor about its risks and benefits.

EAT YOUR WAY TO PREVENTING OSTEOPOROSIS

START HERE

As you age, bone health becomes more important. You can improve your bone health with the nutritional choices you make every day. Here's what can help.

NUTRIENT	HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED?	WHERE YOU CAN GET IT
VITAMIN D	Adults ages 19 to 70: 600 international units (IUs) of vitamin D a day Adults age 71 and older: 800 IUs a day	Egg yolks Saltwater fish Fortified milk
CALCIUM	Adults ages 19 to 50 and men ages 51 to 70: 1,000 milligrams (mg) a day Women age 51 and older, men age 71 and older: 1,200 mg a day	Low-fat and fat-free dairy products Fortified products, such as oatmeal and orange juice Sardines and canned salmon, with edible bones Fortified soy products, such as soy milk and tofu

One more note: If you drink alcohol, limit it to no more than one drink a day for women of all ages and men older than age 65, and no more than two drinks a day for men age 65 and younger. Drinking more can increase your risk of osteoporosis.

Frozen berry banana cream pops

Total prep and cooking time: 15 minutes, plus 3-4 hours for freezing | Serves: 6 (1 cream pop each)

- 1½ cups plain, fat-free yogurt
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen berries (blueberries, raspberries and sliced strawberries)
- 1 large banana, sliced
- 6 paper cups, 5-oz. to 9-oz. size
- Aluminum foil
- Wooden Popsicle sticks

- Place yogurt, fruit (slightly thaw frozen fruit first) and banana in a blender. Blend until smooth.
- Divide mixture evenly into paper cups.
- Cover each paper cup with foil. Make a slit in the center of the foil covers and insert one Popsicle stick in each cup.
- Place in freezer for 3 to 4 hours or until frozen solid.
- Peel off paper cup and serve.

Nutrition analysis per serving: 60 calories, 0 g total fat (0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 g monounsaturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 35 mg sodium, 14 g total carbohydrate (2 g dietary fiber, 8 g sugars), 3 g protein





Try other flavor combinations! Instead of berries and a banana, try:

- Coconut and pineapple
- Lemon zest and pitted cherries
- Peaches and orange zest

(Nutrition analysis may vary.)



WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Visit www.CarpentersHealth.org

For more on:

Metabolism
Balance exercises
Using sunscreen
Whey protein

Search on:

[metabolism](#)
[balance exercises](#)
[sunscreen](#)
[whey protein](#)

HealthQuestions

Can you eat too much fruit?

Experts say it's possible to eat too much fruit. However, it's not very common. In fact, most of the time, high fruit consumption has health benefits. Studies have linked it to a lower risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and reduced risk of hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) in people with type 2 diabetes. In general, the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** recommends eating 2 cups of fruit a day on a 2,000-calorie diet.

There's been some talk that eating a lot of fruit can cause weight gain. However, studies that have looked at this have found that eating a lot of fruit promotes weight loss, not weight gain.

Two cautions: If you're eating a lot of fruit and excluding other foods from your diet, you may not be getting all your necessary nutrients. And if you have diabetes, eating a lot of fruit may raise your blood sugar. Talk with your doctor about how much fruit is best for you.

One last note: Although 100 percent fruit juice can account for some of the fruit in your diet, most should come from whole fruits rather than juice. Stick to no more than 4 ounces of fruit juice a day.

HAVE A STORY IDEA OR HEALTH TOPIC YOU'D LIKE TO READ ABOUT?

Email it to us at EmbodyHealthnewsletter@mayo.edu or write to us at Mayo Clinic EmbodyHealth newsletter, 200 First St. SW, Rochester, MN 55905.

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Insist on a second opinion—your own continued from page 1

Traditionally, patients rely on physicians to make health care recommendations in their best interest. But as the Dartmouth report suggests, physicians do not always get it right.

Part of the problem is consolidation of the healthcare system. Investment-minded hospitals are buying up medical practices, and displaced physicians are becoming hospital employees with economic incentives based on performance and efficiency.

Last December, the American Medical Association responded to this consolidation with a newly adopted policy statement addressing what it called the "divided loyalty" of physicians.

"A physician's paramount responsibility is to his or her patients," the policy statement declared. On the other hand, a doctor "owes a duty of loyalty to his or her employer." "This divided loyalty can create conflicts of interest, such as financial incentives to over- or under-treat patients."

It would be unfair to say all doctors are bound to their personal economic interests. At the same time, it would be unwise to ignore the fact that these types of incentives exist and that they run contrary to these fundamental principles for high-quality medical care:

1. Avoid underuse
2. Avoid overuse
3. Eliminate misuse

A physician is just one member of your health care team. Now, more than ever, it's important to insist on a second opinion—your own—as well as input from other trustworthy sources

5 ways to get the right amount of care

How can you know whether you are getting the right amount of care – not too much and not too little? Here are some tips from Own Your Health, a campaign to empower individuals to make healthcare decisions that offer the best outcomes and best value for their healthcare dollars. Learn more at www.wacommunitycheckup.org/ownyourhealth

1. Talk to your primary care doctor.
2. Call the **Ask Mayo Clinic nurse line (800-903-1836)** for information and advice*
3. Ask questions.
4. Look for more information on your own.
5. If needed, get a second opinion from another doctor.

*Not available for Medicare-eligible carpenters, spouses, and dependents.