

Spinecare Introduction

Evaluating Your Doctor

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During the course of being evaluated, your physician may recommend additional diagnostic testing. You should feel comfortable asking questions about any tests that are recommended. The physician's response to your questions will help you determine whether or not you want to proceed with the test. Some questions you may wish to ask are listed below:

- Do you have any brochures or information about the recommended testing procedure?
- Is there a website I can go to for more information?
- What information do you expect to get from the test?
- Will the diagnostic information likely change the course of care?
- Why do you want me to have this test?
- What do you expect to learn from this test and how it will impact my care?
- What can I expect before, during, and after the procedure?
- What does the test involve?
- Are there any special preparations required?
- How long the test will take?
- Will any medications or drugs administered?
- Will the test be uncomfortable or painful?
- What does the test mean if it is positive or negative?
- If the test shows some abnormalities, would it potentially change the course of my care at this time?
- Is this the type of test that could be repeated in the future to see if I am getting better?
- Can this type of test be used to evaluate my response to treatment?
- Are there any other alternative tests, which would provide the same information and which may be less costly and less invasive?
- Are there any alternative tests that would provide more information about my problem?
- Is the test that you are ordering being performed on the latest technology available in this area? (Newer technology may offer more accurate information).
- How far do I have to go to get the test done?
- Where is the nearest facility that can perform the test?

Asking the Right Questions

One of the challenges of getting efficient care and relief for your back pain and spine disorder is choosing the right physician. There are few general questions, which you should ask in order to evaluate a physician you are considering using. It does not matter whether the physician is primary care, a specialist, or a sub-specialist. You need to be comfortable with your physician, their philosophy and their background as it relates to your condition. You may wish to ask some of the following questions when considering a physician.

What is your degree?

Many healthcare professionals go by the term doctor. Doctorate degrees are provided in many different fields and you should immediately learn what type of Doctor you're talking to. This becomes very important in integrated practice settings. Healthcare professionals who are referred to as doctors, include medical doctors, chiropractic physicians, osteopaths, podiatrists, individuals with Ph.D.'s, and dentists. It is important that you know what type of evaluation and treatment the doctor is qualified to provide.

2. Where did you receive your education and training?

You may want to inquire about where your doctor did his/her training in terms of education, internship, residency, and any specialty or sub-specialty training.

3. Are you a board certified specialist?

This question will help you to determine the physician's area of chosen expertise and interest and whether they committed to obtaining additional formal training and education in this area. Board certification usually requires a significant commitment including a multi-year residency and passing some type of board certification examination. Distinguish between the terms board-eligible and board-certified. The term board-eligible means that your doctor has completed the required training, but has not yet passed the examination. The term board-certified means your doctor has completed the certification process including successful passing of a rigorous board examination. Board certification is available to physicians of various disciplines in a variety of different specialties. Most healthcare professions have a certification process. For example, osteopaths, psychologist, physical therapist, chiropractors, and medical physicians all have specialty board certified programs. All healthcare practitioners have an opportunity to become a specialist in an area outside general practice.

In areas other than medicine board certification may have various levels of requirement. Some credentials may be misleading because you may assume that the board certification actually infers that there was a considerable amount of formalized and specialized training. Be wise to ask what was required to become board certified in a particular specialty.