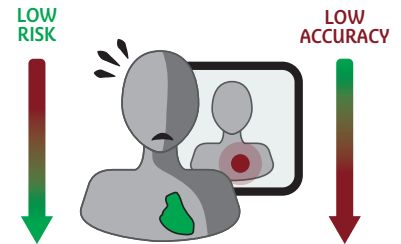


# We're rethinking the way we do the ANNUAL PHYSICAL

## Is more testing better?

The lower the patient's risk for a particular illness, the less precise the test results tend to be. For low-risk patients, **more testing often leads to more misdiagnosis and is not necessarily better for one's health.**



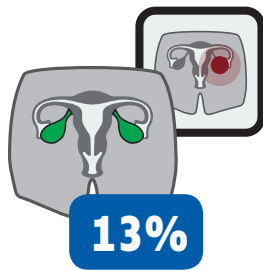
## Case Study: Ovarian Cancer Screening

*Where screening caused more harm than benefits*

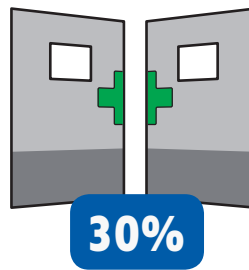
Ovarian cancer can be hard to detect, so screening all women might seem like it makes sense. Screening for ovarian cancer involves two tests: 1. ultrasound and 2. blood test.

A recent study looked at whether screening actually helped women **who didn't have symptoms or risk factors for ovarian cancer**. Although ovarian cancer was diagnosed more in the screening group, **this did not lead to more saved lives.**

In addition, when we followed the women who were screened:



*of screened patients  
had false alarms*



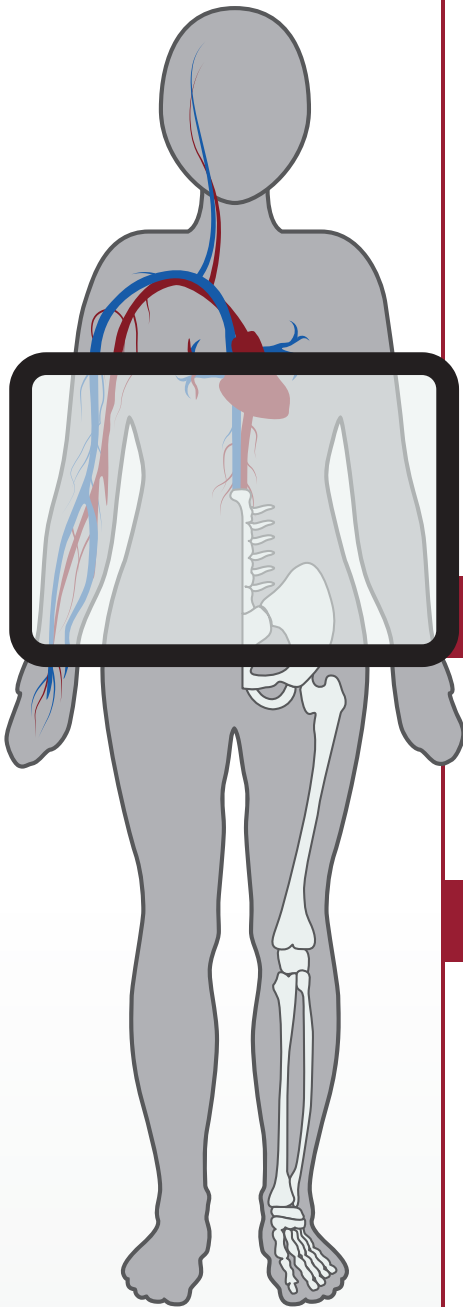
*of the false alarms  
led to surgeries*



*of those surgeries had  
serious complications*

So, you can see with this example that what seems like a simple test that makes sense can actually backfire and **cause more health problems than it prevents.**

# 6 Tests to Rethink\*



## Optimal timing

### 1. Cholesterol levels

- Low-risk people can be tested every 3-5 years
- High-risk people tested more frequently

### 2. Blood sugar levels

- Low-risk people can be tested every 3 years
- High-risk people tested more frequently

### 3. Bone densitometry

- Test people older than 65 years and those with risk factors
- Any changes between first and second test inform frequency for subsequent tests
- Low-risk people can be tested every 5-10 years
- High-risk people tested every 2 years

## Change in timing

### 4. Cervical cancer screening

- First Pap smear between 21-25 years
- Pap smears, can be done every three years (unless there is an abnormal test) until the age of 70 years.

## Only when prompted

### 5. Electrocardiogram (ECG)

- No ECG for low-risk people
- 30-50% of people with a healthy heart have ECG abnormalities

### 6. Thyroid function

- Test only when there are symptoms (e.g., sudden onset of fatigue that persists)

\*Please consult relevant provincial guidelines.

## Resources:

For more information, visit [www.cfpc.ca/ChoosingWisely](http://www.cfpc.ca/ChoosingWisely).

See advice for when you need a test and when you don't at [www.choosingwisely.ca](http://www.choosingwisely.ca).

Watch Dr. Mike's videos on smart testing and more at [www.YouTube.com/DocMikeEvans](http://www.YouTube.com/DocMikeEvans).