

Going to the Doctor



Literacy Partners of Manitoba
...your literacy link

You can do it!

Going to the Doctor

Written by Mitch Miyagawa

Illustrated and designed by Tanya Handley

*Adapted from a publication by Yukon Learn
with additional content from
the Manitoba Institute of Patient Safety*

Edited by Charles Moody



*Literacy Partners of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
2010*

*Produced by Literacy Partners of Manitoba
with funding from
The Winnipeg Foundation
and
The Manitoba Institute of Patient Safety*



*Literacy Partners of Manitoba
Website: www.mb.literacy.ca
Email: literacy@mb.literacy.ca
Phone: 947-5757 or 1-866-947-5757
Fax: (204) 956-9315*

ISBN: 0-9733974-2-X

I don't like going to the doctor.

I feel shy.

The doctor is very busy.

I don't understand.

I never answer the doctor's questions right.

I'm scared.

I have a problem remembering my appointment.

I can't read the papers they give me.

What if I'm really sick?

I can't remember to take my medicine.

I don't like going to the doctor!

1. Going to the doctor

I don't like going to the Doctor. It can be scary.

It's hard to talk about being sick.

I'm scared the doctor will say something is wrong with me.

I may have to have tests. It may be hard to read the instructions.

I may have to get some medicine. It may be hard to read the labels.

It can be hard.





Lots of people don't like going to the doctor.

But you can do it.

Doctors and nurses and people at the drug store want to help you.

If you ask, they will help you.

Other people you know can help you.

And this book will help you **go to the doctor**.



There are lots of things you can do.

The main things are...

- **Tell** people when you don't understand
- **Ask** lots of questions
- **Talk** to someone you know
- **Find** a doctor, a nurse, or someone at the drug store to help you

2. Find people who can help you

I have a heart problem. So I go to the doctor a lot.

I have a really good nurse.

I have a really nice doctor.

I always go to the same person at the drug store to buy my medicine. She is called a pharmacist.

All the medical people know me. They know my medical problems. It's easy to talk to them.

They are my medical team.





It is good to have a medical team.

Different people can work together to help you.

When people know you, they can help you better.

To get a team, you can...

- **Learn** the names of your doctor, nurse, and pharmacist

You can do it!

Write down the names and phone numbers of your doctor, nurse and pharmacist.

Put the list near the phone.



3. When to go to the doctor

I had a cough for a long time.

My friend told me to go to the doctor.

"I'm fine," I said.

I didn't think I was sick enough to go to the doctor.

Two weeks later, my cough got really bad. I got scared.

So I went to the doctor.

"Why didn't you come sooner?" she asked me.





You should go to the doctor when you are very sick.

But sometimes you don't know if you are sick enough.

When you aren't sure if you should go to the doctor, you can...

- **Ask** someone you know for advice
- **Phone** your clinic and ask for advice
- **Phone** Health Links at 788-8200 (1-888-315-9257)

At night or on the weekend, you can...

- **Go** to the drugstore and ask for help
- **Go** to a walk-in clinic
- **Call** or go to Emergency at the hospital
- **Phone** Health Links at 788-8200 (1-888-315-9257)
(Health Links includes language access services in 22 languages.)

You can do it!

Write down the phone numbers of your doctor, drug store and emergency.

Doctor _____
Drugstore _____
Emergency _____
Health Links _____

4. Appointments

Sometimes it is hard to keep an appointment.

My son Eric had a very sore throat. I phoned the clinic.

"Come on Wednesday at 10," the receptionist told me.

Eric was crying. I didn't hear the receptionist. I thought she said 2.

I went to the clinic at 2. The receptionist said my appointment was at 10. I was wrong.

I missed the appointment. I felt very stupid.



Lots of people miss appointments.

If you don't know when your appointment is, you can...

- **Phone** the receptionist and ask again

To help you remember your appointment, you can...

- **Ask** the receptionist to phone you and remind you
- **Ask** the receptionist for an appointment card
- **Ask** someone you know to write down the time for you



You can do it!

Take a calendar to your next appointment.

Circle the day of your next appointment.



5. Getting ready for the doctor

I go to the doctor every year for a check-up.

I take lots of things with me.

I take a book to practise reading while I wait.

If I take my children, I take some toys for them.



Sometimes I take someone with me to help me.

The receptionist always asks me lots of questions. I take my address, phone number, and health care number.





You can do it!

Use this checklist to get ready for the doctor.

- something to read
- toys for the children, small books
- my address
- my phone number
- my health care number
- my medicine
- a list of questions

6. Taking someone with you to see the doctor

Often I wish I had someone with me when I see the doctor. Someone I can trust.

I don't always understand what the doctor says.

I forget what the doctor tells me.

I am too nervous to ask the right questions.

I don't know what to do.

I don't understand how the health system works.

If someone came with me I would feel more confident.

I could ask for advice.



Domestic Violence Crisis Line 1-877-977-0007



Lots of people take someone with them when they go to the doctor.

That person can be your **patient advocate**.

A patient advocate is someone who helps you with your health care. A patient advocate may be a friend, a family member, or anyone else you trust.

Your patient advocate can...

- **Help** you talk to the doctor
- **Ask** questions for you
- **Take** notes
- **Help** you to decide what to do
- **Find out** more about your medical problem

You can do it!

Get yourself a patient advocate.

1. Ask someone you trust to be your patient advocate.
2. Go to www.safetoask.ca
3. Print and fill out a patient advocate form.
4. Go to the doctor with your patient advocate.
5. Give a copy of the form to your doctor.
6. Take it with you to the hospital.

7. Telling your doctor what's wrong with you

Sometimes it is hard to tell a doctor what's wrong with me.

I had really long nose bleeds. But I also had a sore ankle.

I went to the doctor, but I was scared.

I didn't want to tell her about my nose bleeds. Maybe I had something wrong with me. Like cancer.

So I only told her I had a sore ankle.

I went home. I still have nose bleeds.

I'm still scared.





Lots of people are scared to say what's wrong with them.

But your doctor can't help you if she doesn't know what's wrong with you.

If it is hard to tell your doctor what's wrong with you, you can...

- **Think** of what to tell the doctor before you go
- **Talk** to the nurse about your problem and ask her to tell the doctor
- **Bring** your patient advocate with you to help you talk to the doctor

You can do it!

Pretend you are going to the doctor.
Write down what you will say.
Practise with your patient advocate.

8. Answering the Doctor's questions

Sometimes I feel shy at the doctor's office.

My doctor asks me personal questions.

She asks me questions about private things.

She asks me questions about my body.





Lots of people find it hard to answer the doctor's questions.

Doctors ask everybody personal questions. They ask questions about your body. That is how they find out what is wrong with you. That is their job.

If you find it hard to answer questions, you can...

- **Talk** to the nurse first and ask her to tell the doctor
- **Ask** the nurse to stay in the room with you
- **Ask** your patient advocate to come with you and talk to the doctor

You can do it!

Practise answering these questions:



9. No Time

Sometimes the doctor doesn't have time to talk.



Tic!
Tic!
Tic!

My auntie had problems with her ears. I went to the doctor with her.

We waited. And waited. And waited.

One hour later, the nurse put us in the doctor's room.

And we waited. And waited. And waited.

Finally the doctor came.

He talked to us for five minutes. He was in a big rush.

My auntie felt bad. She wanted to ask more questions, but the doctor left.





Doctors are often in a big rush.

To make sure you find out what you need to know, you can...

- **Ask** the nurse to make sure you have enough time (The nurse may give you more time if you have a big problem)
- **Make** a list of the questions you want to ask
- **Bring** your patient advocate to help you



You can do it!

Make a practice list of the questions you will ask.

10. Understanding your doctor

Sometimes it is hard to understand my doctor.

I had a pain in my stomach. The doctor did some tests.

He said I had a *blgrkrdmr*.

I didn't understand the word he used.

I asked him, "What is a *blgrkrdmr*?"

He said it was a *grtiytuhr* of the *ptorjfbmtgbbba*.

I still didn't understand.

He asked me, "Do you understand?"

I said yes. I didn't want him to think I was stupid.





Lots of people have a problem understanding their doctor.

If you don't understand your doctor, you can...

- **Tell** the doctor you don't understand. You don't have to pretend
- **Ask** more questions
- **Ask** the doctor to draw a picture of the medical problem
- **Ask** the doctor to write things down

If you still don't understand, you can...

- **Ask** your patient advocate to help you with what you don't understand.

You can do it!

Ask three questions:

1. What is my health problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why do I need to do this?

11. Understanding instructions

I had a pain in my stomach.

The nurse told me I had to get a sample.

She told me to go to the bathroom.



She gave me a sheet of paper. It told me how to get the sample. It had instructions.

She told me to read them.

It was too hard. I couldn't read the instructions.



Lots of people find it hard to read instructions.

If you can't read the instructions, you can...

- **Ask** a nurse to read them for you
- **Ask** your patient advocate to read them for you
- **Draw** a picture to help you remember



You can do it!

Practise reading some instructions with someone you know.

Hint: you can use something in your house, like a bottle of medicine, a game, or a recipe book.

12. A new doctor

I have diabetes.

I have to go to the doctor a lot.

My doctor is too busy all the time.

Sometimes I don't understand him.

I'm not sure he knows how to help me.

And I think I would feel better with a female doctor.

I want to change doctors.





Everybody has the right to change doctors. But sometimes it's not easy.

If you want to change your doctor, you can...

- **Decide** what you want from a new doctor
- **Ask** your friends about their doctors
- **Ask** a nurse for help
- **Look** in the Yellow pages under "Physicians"
- **Phone** (204) 786-7111 to find out what doctors are taking new patients



When you pick a new doctor you can...

- **Meet** him or her before you have an appointment

You can do it!

Write what you want from a new doctor.
Example: I want a female doctor.

13. Taking medicine

I have lots of different medical problems. So I have to take lots of different pills.

I remember the first time I went to buy medicine.

The pharmacist gave me three different kinds of pills.

One was blue. One was white. One was green.

She told me how and when to take each pill. Then she gave me a paper with the instructions.

But when I got home, I couldn't remember.

Was the blue pill two times a day or three?

Was the green one before meals or after?

I couldn't read the instructions.

I couldn't remember.



Lots of people can't remember how to take their medicine.



If you can't remember how to take your medicine, you can...

- **Ask** a patient advocate to help you read the instructions
- **Tell** the doctor or pharmacist you find it hard to read
- **Ask** the doctor to write it down clearly
- **Phone** the pharmacist if you have questions. He wants to help you
- **Use** a daily pill holder. This is also called a dosette

You can do it!

- Know your medicines.
- Fill out a medication card that lists all the medicines you take. Get a free card at www.safetoask.ca
- Show your medication card to your doctor.

14. You can do it



You can do it!

You can do lots of things before you go to the doctor.

You can do lots of things when you are with the doctor.

You can do lots of things when you come home.

You can:

- Find a medical team.
- Tell the doctor you don't understand.
- Talk to someone you know.
- Ask for help. The doctor, the nurse, and the pharmacist want to help you.
- Ask for help. Don't be scared.
- Ask for help. Get yourself a patient advocate.



15. Important Telephone Numbers

Emergency

Ambulance	911
Poison Helpline	787-2591
Mental Health Crisis (Health Sciences Centre)	940-1781
Suicide or Mental Crisis (Klinik)	786-8686
Sexual Assault (Klinik)	786-8631

Health Links 788-8200 (1-888-315-9257)

Phone Health Links when you:

- are not sure if you need to see a doctor
- are not sure if you need to go to Emergency
- want to talk to a nurse
- want information about a health problem, such as the flu, cancer, or HIV.
- want health information or help in your first language

Manitoba Institute for	927-6477
Patient Safety	1-866-927-6477

MIPS provides tips and tools on patient safety.

Cancer Care Manitoba

Patient and Family Support Services	787-2109
Multicultural Project	1-866-561-1026

Women's Health Clinic	947-2109
Deaf Access Line	956-0385

Klinik 786-8686
Deaf Access Line 784-4097
Crisis Line 786-8686 (1-888-322-3019)
Sexual Assault Crisis Line
786-8631 (1-888-292-7565)
Community Health Centre 784-4090

Phone KLINIC when you want:

- counselling, support and information if you are in crisis or distress
- counselling, information, support and advocacy concerning a sexual assault.
- information about any of their other services

**Osborne House Crisis Line
And Shelter for Abused Women** 942-3052

**Aboriginal Health and
Wellness Centre** 925-3700

The Centre provides

- health education and health care from nurses, doctors, and community health workers
- access to traditional healers
- children's health services

Family Doctor Connection 786-7111

- Phone the Family Doctor Connection to find a family doctor or to find a doctor when you want a "second opinion".

Domestic Violence Crisis Line
1-877-977-0007

