

# Are you HEALTH literate?

Did you know that  
being healthy is more  
than just eating well?

It also takes health literacy.

Health literacy means that you can  
understand information about your  
health. That way, you know how to  
take care of yourself and make good  
decisions about your health.



**It's important for both kids and adults to be health literate. If someone gets health information or instructions from their doctor that they don't understand, it could be a serious problem. Because they didn't understand, they may not know how much medicine to take or how to best take care of their illness.**



**To be health literate, you should:**

- Know where to get good health information
- Understand the health information given
- Apply the information to make the best health decisions

## **Where do you get health information?**

**You may turn to trusted people when you have important health questions. You may use the internet or your favorite magazine? Remember that these sources may not always give you correct health information.**

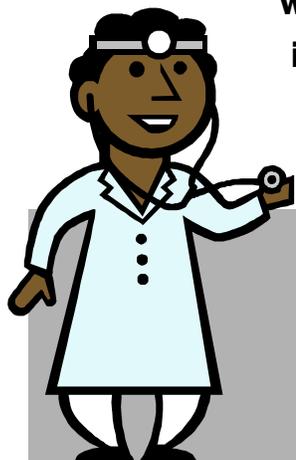


**A good source for health information is a person, book, or internet site that is reliable and likely to give you correct information. A question you may ask is: What does this person know about health? If someone at the grocery store tells you the best thing for a cold is chewing gum, you need to determine if this is a trusted source. This time, it doesn't seem like this individual went to medical school and you probably know they are just being silly!**

**But if your doctor or nurse tells you that rest and drinking fluids are good for a cold, you can believe it is true. They went to school to learn about health and it is their job to keep you and your family healthy.**

# How do you make sure you understand the health information given?

In addition to having a good source for correct information, you need to understand what that source is saying. If you don't understand what was said or written, you won't know what to do. You are not alone if you sometimes find health information confusing. By asking questions, you can better understand how to stay well or get better. Every time you talk with a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist it is helpful to ask three questions:



1. What is the main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

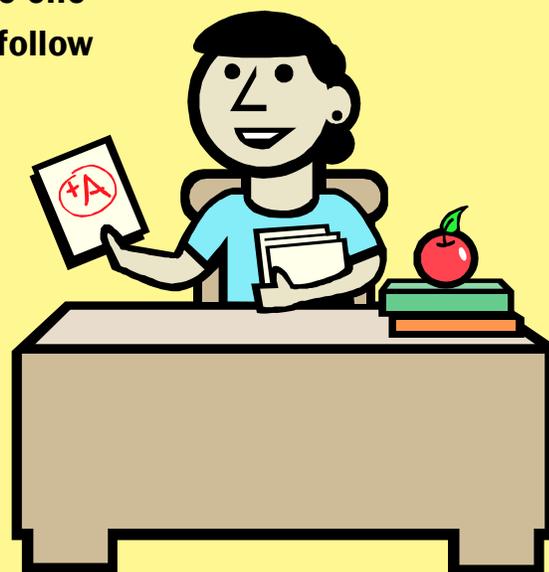


Sometime you may still not understand. Let your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist know if you still don't understand what you need to do. You could say, "This is something new to me. Will you please explain that to me one more time?" No need to be embarrassed about asking questions, your health care team wants you to understand.

## How to make better health decisions.

Once you have found trustworthy health information and understand what to do, you need to do it. When your doctor tells you to take one pill in the morning and one pill at night, you should follow those directions.

Some health advice seems difficult to follow. It may be tough to exercise after a long day at work or get your children to eat their fruits and vegetables. But once you learn how to be healthier and start to take small steps towards following those directions, you will start to get healthier. Plus, children learn by example—so as their caregivers get healthier, so do they.



# What YOU need to know about Doctor visits.

## making an appointment

When making an appointment you will be asked questions to direct your call. These questions may include the reason for your call, your name, you or your child's date of birth, and a phone number to reach you. They may ask for your insurance information so have your insurance card with you when you make the call.

## preparing for an appointment

Before you go to the doctor, prepare a list of all your or your child's

- ➔ Current medications and vitamins
- ➔ Allergies
- ➔ Questions you want to ask the health care provider



## at the Doctor's office

Try to arrive early or at least on time, because if you are late you may end up waiting longer. When you see the doctor or nurse, do not be afraid to ask questions or ask for more information so that you understand what you need to do. You can take notes so you can remember if needed.

## after the appointment

Follow through with what your doctor and health care team told you.



# What YOU need at the Pharmacy.

At the pharmacy, like at the doctor's office, you should ask the pharmacist questions about

- ➔ How you should store the medication
- ➔ How you should take the medication
- ➔ What an allergic reaction looks like

If you would like more information on health literacy please contact:

**Florida Department of Health - Hillsborough County**

**813-307-8071**

