

# Make It Safe to Ask

PROMOTING PATIENT SAFETY THROUGH HEALTH LITERACY  
Health literacy = ability to access, understand, evaluate and communicate information needed to make healthcare decisions.

You can help by Making It Safe to Ask!

## What is the problem?

 60% of adult population in Manitoba has low health literacy

About 9 in 10 Canadian seniors have low health literacy **65+**

## Low health literacy =

 Increased preventable emergency dept. visits

 Decreased use of preventative measures

 Delayed diagnosis and treatment

## What can you do?

### Answer 3 Questions at each patient visit

**1** What is my health problem?

**2** What do I need to do?

**3** Why do I need to do this?

### Incorporate health literacy into your daily practice:

- ✓ Use plain language
- ✓ Use visual models
- ✓ Use 2-way communication -ask patients to "teach back" information and instructions

## Why is this important?

Better information to make healthcare decisions =

Increased understanding & knowledge about Medications



Long-term behaviour changes



Shorter + more focused visits



Improved patient safety

- ◆ in the hospital
- ◆ at home
- ◆ in community health settings

Please see [www.mnhs.gov/health-literacy](http://www.mnhs.gov/health-literacy) for your implementation checklist



For more information on how you can Make It Safe to Ask:  
Visit [safetoask.ca](http://safetoask.ca) or [mips.ca](http://mips.ca)