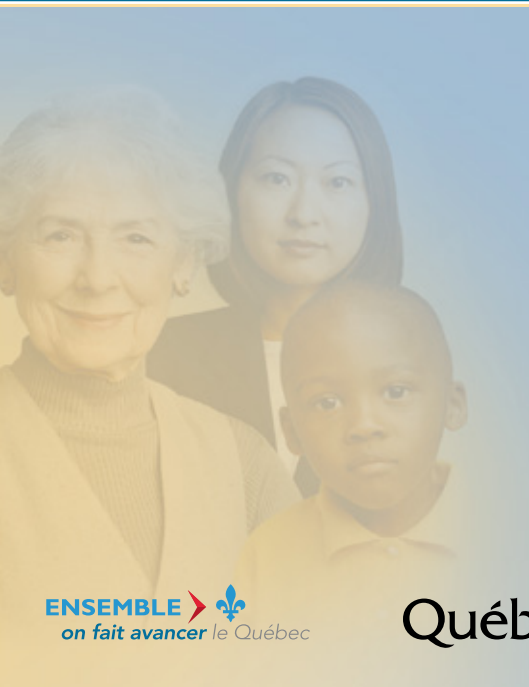


Quick Reference

I'm taking care of my Health



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I'm taking care of my Health

Did you know that good communication between you and your healthcare professional is one of the keys to receiving safe care?

When you have a health problem and you consult a healthcare professional, you must make sure that you give him as much information as possible and thoroughly understand what he tells you.

To make your visits to a medical clinic, pharmacy or hospital easier, you should create a list containing:

- Your medical history with dates of illnesses, hospitalizations, surgery and allergies.
- The drugs prescribed by your doctor, over-the-counter drugs (such as aspirin or antacids) and the natural products that you take.
- The vaccinations you have had.
- Recent tests (e.g. blood tests) and x-rays.

This document will provide you with a few tips for preparing for appointments with healthcare professionals.

At the *doctor's*



- I remember to cancel my appointment if I cannot go.
- I prepare a list of questions to ask the doctor.
- I take notes.
- I notice whether the doctor has washed his hands before examining me.
- I make sure that the doctor clearly writes out the prescription he gives me.

To ensure good communication, repeat back to your doctor in your own words what you have understood.





At the *pharmacy*

- I ask the pharmacist to print an up-to-date list of my medication.
- I know about the side effects of the drugs that I take.
- I ask the pharmacist about the information written on my medication.
- I check the medication name and all other information on the label of the container given to me by the pharmacist.
- I find out about when and how to take the medication.
- I consult a healthcare professional before stopping or changing how I take a drug.
- I bring back any expired medication or drugs I no longer need to the pharmacist instead of throwing them out.

Certain medication and products, when taken together, may be dangerous. Ask your pharmacist.

At the *hospital*



- I ask a parent, friend or volunteer to come with me to an important appointment.
- If I am on a diet, I make sure that the meal respects the restrictions.
- I tell the hospital employees about my allergies and ask that they be clearly listed on my hospital bracelet and at the head of my bed.
- I present an up-to-date list of my medication.
- I never take any medication I have from home because serious reactions may occur with medication I am taking in the hospital.
- I find out about any new medication or treatment being offered to me and I make sure that it is really for me.
- I find out what time the saline bag (serum) must be changed.

Wash your hands regularly and make sure that your visitors, doctor and staff do the same. This is the best way to prevent spreading germs.



For *surgery*

- I ask what the surgery involves and what other options exist in order to make the right choice.
- I find out about the possible risks and complications of the surgery.
- Before the operation, I ask that the area for the operation is clearly marked on the skin.
- I ask a parent, friend or volunteer to be there after the operation to help me if necessary.

Ask the surgeon to only give you the results when you are in a state in which you can understand them.

Leaving the *hospital*

- I ask how long I have to avoid certain food, activities and/or medication.
- I find out about any signs or pain that would be considered abnormal.

- I ask the information on what I must do or watch for be written out.
- I know who to call in case of an emergency.

Hospitals have liability insurance. They have a Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner to answer any questions about the care you received. Find out who this is from the staff at the hospital where you were treated.



At home

- I keep a first-aid kit handy.
- I keep a list near the telephone of numbers for Info-Santé, Quebec's Poison Control Centre (1-800-463-5060) and the CLSC.

My upcoming appointments:

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Masculine pronouns are used generically in this document.
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