Community Health Literacy Information Sheet

How and when to make an appointment:

If you or someone you care about seems unwell, here are some options:

- If they are unresponsive, their breathing isn't normal, they have chest pain, are choking, have sudden weakness or difficulty talking, are unconscious, have severe pain or bleeding that won't stop, ring for an ambulance on **111.**
- If it's not an emergency ring your GP, or the afterhours GP, for an appointment.
- If you are unsure what to do, ring **Healthline on 0800 611 116** – this is a free 24 hour service.
- If you're concerned about a baby or pre-school child, and it is not urgent, you can ring Plunket Line's 24 hour service on 0800 933 922.

Information for your health care professional:

If you have ongoing health issues write a half page outline of how and when it started, current medications, allergies and anything else that's important to you about your health. Keep a copy in your wallet or bag.

> **Check out our "Let's PLAN For Better Care" leaflet and fill it in before you go to your GP or other healthcare provider.**

Let your healthcare professional know:

- How you have been since your last visit – "Since my last visit …"
- Any lifestyle changes since the last visit – "I have been going swimming 4 times a week and …"
- Any issues you think might be related to your medications – "I've been really good about taking my meds, but I notice I get a dry mouth …"
- Let them know if you are taking any over the counter pain killers, vitamins or other medications as these can affect blood tests and may not work well with your prescription drugs.
- List any changes you've noticed in your body, or that have worried you.

Feel confident asking questions to clarify what is wrong and what needs to be done:

This is about YOU, or someone you care about. We cannot stress enough that you have every right to understand fully what is going on for you and your loved ones.

- PLEASE **DO** ASK QUESTIONS – there is no question you shouldn't ask.
- Take a friend or whānau member with you for support.
- Ask if there is a support group or organisation available and enquire about reputable websites for further information.

Following your healthcare professional's directions:

- If the directions seem confusing ask them to write them down – this is especially helpful if you have others who assist with your care
- If you feel that the directions given are difficult to follow, such as stopping smoking or eating healthier food, ask for help to do what's been asked of you.

Understanding and following medication instructions:

- Talk to your pharmacist about your medications when you collect them. If you are not sure you are taking them correctly either talk to the pharmacist or ring and speak to your practice nurse.
- Take your medications as prescribed – if you think the dose is too high or too low, talk to your doctor.

Understanding healthcare information:

- If you're given an information sheet or brochure and it looks complicated, ask if there is someone who could go over it with you. Many brochures are also available in other languages or can be translated for you – should you need this.
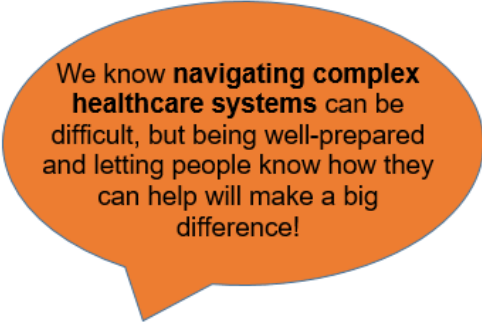
Understanding informed consent:

Informed consent is the process of talking and asking questions until you have enough information to make a decision about your healthcare options. This includes the option of saying 'no' to having a treatment (such as medicine) or a procedure (such as an operation).

https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/i/informed-consent

Accessing accurate appropriate health information:

- Ask your healthcare provider who they recommend for health information.
- www.healthnavigator.org.nz – endorsed by the Royal NZ College of General Practitioners
- www.health.govt.nz – another good place to start
- Follow SCHDB on Facebook for the latest Te Whatu Ora South Canterbury news and information.

We know **navigating complex healthcare systems** can be difficult, but being well-prepared and letting people know how they can help will make a big difference!