ABC Health Matters

Map Out Your Health

ABC LifeLiteracyCanada

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ABC Health Matters

Welcome to *ABC Health Matters!*

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this new **health literacy** program. Our health is one of the most important things in our lives. So is the health of our family and friends. Are you looking to take more control of your health? We hope this workbook is the next step in your health literacy learning.

Tools you need to complete this workbook:

- a computer with internet access
- a smartphone with a data plan (or a wifi connection!)

What does health literacy mean?

- Being able to get the health **information** you need
- **understand** the information
- make **decisions** based on the information
- and put those decisions into **action**

Understanding health literacy is a shared responsibility between you and your health care provider. You are a partner in this learning journey. You decide what activities you want to do in this workbook. Choose those activities important to your life.

If your health is important to you, *ABC Health Matters* is for you. You will finish this program with a better understanding of health literacy than when you started! You will be more confident asking health care providers questions so you can take charge of your health.

Map out your health

Learning outcome:

You are able to find the health care providers and services near you.

What will you learn?

A map shows you how to get to places. It marks locations so you can find them more easily.

In this workbook, you make your own health care map. You'll look at your community and find health care services near you. You'll learn how to access or use these services.

Not all health care providers do the same things. Some help with life-and-death situations, such as car accidents and heart attacks. Some help with illnesses, such as colds.

Some give you flu shots or advice about your medications and health. Some take X-rays or blood tests. Some diagnose health problems and plan treatments.

You'll learn what health care services to use in different situations. You'll learn who to contact or call, and where to go.

You'll learn how to get a health card for yourself or a family member. You'll learn about 811 Healthline and other free health services.

Activity 1

Where do you go?

Check the statement that best applies to you. Think about your health and your experiences—where do you go to take care of your health?

- ☐ I usually go to a **walk-in clinic** or the **emergency room** (ER).
- ☐ I see my health care provider for checkups and when I'm sick.
- ☐ I don't know. It's confusing. Where do I take the kids when they get sick? Do I need an appointment?
- ☐ I don't have the money to pay to take care of my health.
- ☐ None of the above applies to me. Here's my situation.

Where to get health help

In this workshop, you will learn about many health providers and services where you can get help. These include:

- 811 Healthline
- Family doctors
- Mental health professionals
- Pharmacies
- Walk-in clinics
- Emergency rooms
- Online programs and services

A **walk-in clinic** is a place where you can go to get help when you do not have a family doctor, or you can't get an appointment with your family doctor soon enough. The injury or sickness is not urgent or an emergency, but you'd like to have a health care provider take a look and treat it.

The **ER** or **emergency room** is the department in a hospital where you go when you need help now.

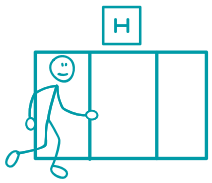
When injuries or illnesses are very bad, and may be life-threatening, you need to get to the ER right away.

Life-threatening means the person might die if they don't get help soon.

You might also visit the ER if you don't have a family doctor or a walk-in clinic in your community.

Health care in Newfoundland and Labrador

Health care in Newfoundland and Labrador is run by the provincial government. If you live in Newfoundland and Labrador, you can use the health care system. But where you live might change the way you take care of your health.



Meet Mohammed

Mohammed lives in St. John's. He has a family doctor, and lives close to a walk-in clinic. He can also get to a large hospital by car or by bus. Because he lives in the city, he can easily go in person to see all kinds of health care providers to stay on top of his health.

Meet Sasha

Sasha lives in a small fishing village. The only way she can see a doctor is to drive about an hour to an emergency room. She has limited access to wifi, so it's hard for her to use online programs. She calls **811 Healthline** when she has a health-related question.

Think about…

- Do Mohammed's or Sasha's experiences sound like yours?
- Different communities have different health care services available. It's important to take care of your health no matter where you live. Knowing about your options will help you stay healthy.

Health cards

You get your health card from the province or territory in Canada where you live. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the health card is also called your **MCP card**. MCP is short for the **Medical Care Plan**.

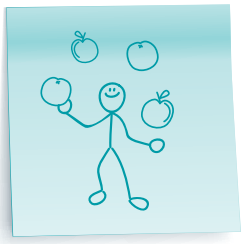
Your health card is free. You show your health card at the clinic, hospital, or doctor's office each time you go.

Here is what an MCP card looks like:

Canada has a **universal health care system**. That means most health care services are free for all Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

All you need is a health card.

Activity 2



Healthy living

Do you have a health card?

Yes **No**

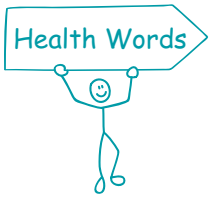
If you answered Yes, do you carry your health card with you at all times?

Yes **No**

Getting a health card

If you don't have a health card, there are two ways to get one:

1. Print out the online form, complete it, and mail it to an **MCP office**.
2. Go to the St. John's MCP office to complete and submit your form. Only the St. John's office is open for drop-ins.



An **MCP Office** is a place that processes health card applications. There is one office in St. John's that you can visit to apply for a health card. There is also one in Grand Falls-Windsor that only accepts mailed applications.

Activity 3

Mapping it out

Go to the MCP section of the Newfoundland and Labrador Health & Community Services site to find the MCP Office closest to you.

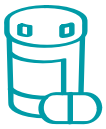
Find the MCP office on a local map.

Make sure you know what kind of ID you need to show get a health card. You can find this information on the MCP website at **www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp**.

Since not everyone can visit the St. John's MCP office, it might be easier to mail in your form. Write down the full mailing address for the MCP office closest to you.

My MCP office:

Add this information to page 23, your health centres map.



Your local pharmacist

A pharmacy is a good place to get health information and advice. You can ask the pharmacist questions about your medicine and how to use it. You can ask for advice on what medicine to take when you're sick.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, your pharmacist can also help you with:

- Flu shots and other vaccines
- Quitting smoking
- Tips for taking medication on the right schedule
- Getting your medication delivered to your home
- Counselling services
- Medication you can buy without a prescription
- Understanding and managing health issues like diabetes, heart disease, or arthritis

Activity 4

Mapping it out

Use your phone to find the pharmacy closest to you.

The Pharmacy nearest me:

_____

Add this information to page 23, your health centres map.

More about medication

Meet Laing

Laing has had high blood pressure for years. She takes medication that helps. She also just had knee surgery and has been given new medication to help her heal. Laing has questions about how these medications will work together but her doctor can't see her until next month. She decides to call the **Medication Therapy Services (MTS) Clinic** to get some answers now.

Through a program called the MTS Clinic, a professional will review your medication and give you advice and support for free. All you need is a health card. You might want to call the MTS Clinic if:

- you are unable to visit a pharmacy in person
- you are taking multiple medications
- you are living with a condition that requires medication, like diabetes

The MTS Clinic is located in St. John's, but you can use this service no matter where you live in Newfoundland and Labrador. You can also meet with MTS Clinic staff on Facetime if you have an iPhone, iPad, or Apple laptop.

To make an appointment with the MTS Clinic, call **709-864-2274.**

Does the MTS Clinic sound like a program that would be useful to you? What could you ask the staff at the MTS Clinic about?

Using 811 Healthline

Meet Clémentine

When Clémentine has a health question, or isn't sure about medicine for her father or for herself, she calls **811 Healthline** right away—day or night. French is Clémentine's first language. She talks to a Registered Nurse in French, so she better understands her advice.

Dial 811
24 hours a day. Every day.
More info at **811healthline.ca**.

Did you know?

- ☐ 811 Healthline is free. Anyone can use it. You don't need a health card.
- ☐ Your telephone call is confidential. What you talk about is kept private.
- ☐ You can talk to the nurse in English or French.
- ☐ They can bring in translators for many other languages, too.

Do you have a cell phone with you? A purse or wallet? If yes, add **811 Healthline** into your phone, or write the number on a piece of paper to keep in your wallet or purse.

What can you ask about?

- An illness or injury that may need medical care
- Illnesses that don't go away or keep coming back
- Food and healthy living (you can even speak directly to a dietitian using their Dial-a-Dietitian program)
- Teen health and issues
- Depression, suicide, or other mental health concerns
- Medications and drug interaction (if your drugs are safe for you when taken together)
- Breastfeeding and parenting information
- And more…

Activity 5

Try this

What could you ask if you called 811 Healthline?

My question:

Do you have any questions about your health?
Go ahead. Call 811 Healthline.

Ask your question. Get your answer.

Your family doctor

Your family doctor takes care of your health in an ongoing way. That means you go to the same doctor for all, or most, of your health needs.

Your family doctor also makes **referrals** for you. If you are very sick, your doctor may have you **admitted** to a hospital.

Did you know?

- ☐ You set up an appointment to see your family doctor.
- ☐ You show your health card at each appointment.
- ☐ When you sign up with a family doctor, they become your primary health care provider. That means you agree to see or call them for all, or most, of your health care needs.
- ☐ In an emergency, you would still go straight to the emergency room (ER).

A **referral** is when you are sent to another doctor or health care provider trained in your health problem.

Admitted means to enter and sign in with a health care facility.

Activity 6

Mapping it out

Where is your family doctor's office? Find it on a local map.

My family doctor:

What are the hours for your doctor's office? What do you do if you need help outside those hours? Not sure? Ask at your doctor's office.

Use your cell phone or a computer to get directions to your family doctor's office.

Add this information to page 23, your health centres map.

Finding a doctor

What if you don't have a doctor? Sometimes finding one can seem tricky. If you're looking for a family doctor, try one of these ideas:

- Ask your friends, family, or colleagues if their family doctors are taking new patients
- Ask your local pharmacist if they have any recommendations
- Call 811 Healthline for advice
- Use the internet to find a family doctor

Visit **www.findadoctornl.ca** to find a list of doctors who are taking on new patients.

What does a mental health professional help with?

Mental health is confusing and not everyone knows what it means. Many people think that mental health means that you're sad or depressed, but there's much more to it.

What can a mental health professional help with?
Here are a few examples:

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Eating disorders
- Feelings of depression, sadness, stress, or nervousness
- Problems with a marriage or family
- Substance abuse (drugs or alcohol)

Does it sound like it might help you or someone in your family to speak to a mental health professional? Talk to your family doctor or call **811 Healthline** to learn more.

Mental health professionals

Meet Nadia

Nadia is looking for a new job. Whenever she works on job applications, she gets very nervous. The thought of doing an interview makes her feel so anxious that sometimes she doesn't apply for a job she wants. She is having trouble sleeping because she can't stop thinking about all of the things that could go wrong if she does get a new job. Her anxiety is making it hard for her to live her life. She wants to talk to someone about it. But she doesn't know where to start.

Staying mentally healthy is just as important as keeping your body healthy, but it often gets ignored because people don't know how to talk about it.

Think about…

- Have you ever felt worried about your mental health or the mental health of someone you love? If so, what did you do about it?
- Is it easy for you to talk to others about how you're feeling? If not, why?

Did you know?

- ☐ Different types of mental health professionals can help you with different needs. For example, you can see a **psychiatrist**, a **psychologist**, or a **social worker**.
- ☐ Talking to a mental health professional is always confidential. Your conversation is private.
- ☐ 811 Healthline can answer questions about mental health.
- ☐ You can get a referral for a mental health professional from your family doctor.
- ☐ Newfoundland and Labrador has many free mental health programs that anyone can use.

A **psychiatrist** is a trained doctor. They can diagnose mental health issues. They are able to treat patients with medication.

A **psychologist** treats patients by talking with them. Psychologists help patients make plans to take control of their mental health.

A **social worker** works with people and families who are in stressful or bad situations (like homelessness) to improve their lives.

Mental health resources

Knowing how to get mental health help is important. When you know how to get help, you can take charge of your mental health.

Bridge the gApp is an online tool that adults and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador can use to learn more about mental health. **Bridge the gApp** also has information on the services you can use in different parts of Newfoundland and Labrador. You can find the website at **www.bridgethegapp.ca**.

Newfoundland and Labrador's Mental Health and Addictions webpage has information on mental health services that are run by the government. You can find it at **www.health.gov.nl.ca/health** by choosing "Mental Health and Addictions" from the menu.

Would you rather speak with someone on the phone? You have options!

CHANNAL Peer Led Warm line (non-emergencies)
1-855-753-2560
11am-11pm 7 days/week

Provincial Mental Health Crisis line (emergencies)
1-888-737-4668
24 hours 7days/week

Add this information to page 23, your health centres map.

Using a walk-in clinic

Meet Li

Li is looking for a family doctor, but can't find one. He calls some doctors' offices, but none of them are taking new patients. His youngest daughter has a chest cold, and he wants her to see a doctor.

Question & answer

Q. What can Li do to get help for his daughter?

A. Li can take his daughter to a walk-in clinic. If you don't have a family doctor, you can go to a walk-in clinic. You can go there even if you do have a family doctor.

Q. Does Li's daughter need to show her MCP card?

A. Yes. Remember, you can find instructions for getting an MCP card on page 7 of this workbook.

Activity 7

Mapping it out

Using walk-in clinics is a great way to take care of yourself. Many (but not all) parts of Newfoundland and Labrador have walk-in clinics. Do you know if there is a walk-in clinic in your community?

Find a walk-in clinic on a local map. Use your cell phone or a computer to get directions to the clinic from where you are.

Not sure whether or not your community has a walk-in clinic? You can look for the walk-in clinic closest to you at **www.skipthewaitingroom.com/region/nl**.

The walk-in clinic nearest me:

Add this information to page 23, your health centres map.

Hospital professionals

A hospital is a big place, and it can be intimidating. Who are all these people? What do they do? Who do I see, and where do I find them?

Your health care team might include:

- **Doctors** who look after your medical care and prescribe medication and treatment

- **Nurses** who keep track of your health care. They also support you and your family, and give you your medications

- **Occupational therapists** who help you become more independent by learning how to manage your illness

- **Physical therapists** who help you improve how you move around. They might prescribe helpful tools for you, like crutches

- **Pharmacists** who help you manage your medications

- **Psychologists** who give you mental and emotional support

- **Registered dietitians** who help you plan healthy meals

- **Social workers** who support you emotionally, and help you and your family navigate the health care system and treatment process

Think about…

- If you go to the hospital, how can you keep track of your health team?

Ask your hospital if they have a Patient Services Directory. This directory is a book that lists all the health providers you might see while you're at the hospital.

Using the Emergency Room

Meet Ivan

It's snowing, and Ivan goes outside to shovel. He feels as if something heavy is pushing down on his chest. He has trouble breathing and feels lightheaded. His neck and arm start aching. He knows something's wrong.

Think about...

- What is happening to Ivan?
- If you see someone having a heart attack, or another emergency, bad illness, or serious injury, what should you do?
- Have you ever called 9-1-1? What was your experience?

Meet Lily

On the same day that Ivan has a heart attack, Lily falls on a patch of ice and hurts her wrist. She wants a doctor to look at it. Lily doesn't have a family doctor, and there are no walk-in clinics in her community.

Think about...

- What are Lily's options? How can she get her wrist looked at by a health care professional?
- Have you ever felt like you didn't know how to deal with a medical issue? What did you do?

Many people in Newfoundland and Labrador are in the same position as Lily. If you don't have a family doctor, and there are no **walk-in clinics** in your community, you can go to the **emergency room** or call **811 Healthline** for help.

Emergency room: did you know?

- ☐ The ER is always open—day and night.
- ☐ You do not need an appointment to use the ER.
- ☐ You can go straight to the ER or call **9-1-1** in an emergency.
- ☐ **9-1-1** is the telephone number for help from the ambulance, fire department or police.
- ☐ Have your **health card** with you.

Have an emergency contact person listed in the contacts of your cell phone.

Activity 8

Mapping it out

Where are the hospitals and emergency rooms in your community?

Find the hospitals and emergency rooms on a local map. Use your cell phone or a computer to get directions to them from where you are.

My nearest ER and hospital:

_____

Add this information to page 23, your health centres map.

Activity 9

Make a medical history card

Take some time now or at home to write down your medical history. That means information like what medication you're taking, and your allergies—both now and in the past. Having this information with you will help better manage your health when you're meeting with health professionals.

Since your health information is private, do the activity on your own and share the information only with your health care providers.

Try this

Now create a medical history card. Be sure to include allergies or medicines you are taking. A Medical History Card is helpful for when you visit your health care provider, and also in case of an emergency when you may not be able to talk. Here's an example of the information to put on your card.

Name: _____ Birthdate: _____
Month / Day / Year

Medical Conditions: _____

Allergies & Reactions: _____

Medications / Vitamins: _____

Blood Type: _____ MCP Number: _____

Weight: _____ Height: _____

Emergency Contact

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Looking for a way to add this information to your phone? Many free medication information apps can help you keep track of your medical information. The apps also let health care providers see this information easily in case of emergency.

Activity 10

Your health centres map

The activities in this workbook have helped you learn about health care providers and where they are in your community. Now, fill out the boxes below so you have a one-page list to post on your fridge!

Pharmacy

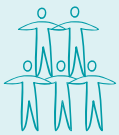
Address: _____

Phone number: _____

811 Healthline

Phone number: _____

Website: _____



MCP office

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Family doctor

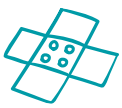
Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Walk-in clinic

Address: _____

Phone number: _____



Mental health help

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Emergency room

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

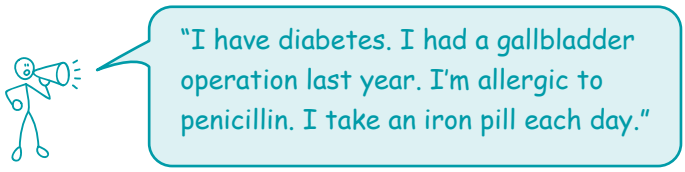
What happens when you arrive?

No matter what health care provider you visit, there are some things you'll need to do when you arrive.

- ☐ You'll need to tell the person at the reception desk you are there.
- ☐ You'll need to show your **MCP card**.

You may need to fill out a form with your information, especially if it is your first visit. If you have a medical history card, you can use it to help you fill out the form.

- ☐ What is your name, address, telephone number?
- ☐ What is your health or medical history?
- ☐ What pills and other medications do you take?
- ☐ Do you have allergies?

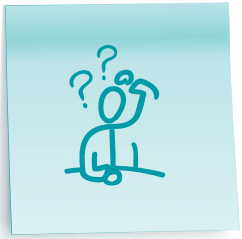


What happens when you arrive?

Think about...

- Have you gone to a health care provider lately?
- What did you have to do when you entered the office or waiting area? What kinds of things were you asked? What happened next?

Activity 11



Try this

Practice or act out arriving at a health care provider office or lobby. If you are part of a group, volunteer for the role of the person who has come for help or the person who works there. Take turns asking and answering the questions that you could be asked. Add questions based on your own experiences.

Other health care options

This workbook has gone over the main health care options for people living in Newfoundland and Labrador. You can learn more at **www.health.gov.nl.ca**. Here are a few options you can learn about online:

- Active living
- Immunizations
- Injury prevention
- New parent support
- Meal planning and healthy eating
- Sexual health programs

For more information on services in your community, you can visit your region's health care website. If you're not sure which region you live in, try googling it. Search: "Newfoundland Labrador health regions map" to learn more.

Eastern Regional Health Authority
www.easternhealth.ca

Central Regional Health Authority
www.centralhealth.nl.ca

Western Regional Health Authority
www.westernhealth.nl.ca

Labrador-Grenfell Regional Health Authority
www.lghealth.ca

The internet, your health, and you

Meet Dominic

Dominic has recently started using the internet to stay on top of his health. He loves that he can find things like walk-in clinics and healthy living advice online. The other day, Dominic was feeling sick. He googled his symptoms and found some scary answers on the internet. He decided to go see a doctor, who told him he just had a bad cold. His doctor gave him some ideas for managing his symptoms.

Going online can be a great way to find health care providers and services, and to learn more about how to stay healthy. Just remember, not everything you find on the internet will be right! The internet is not a replacement for a doctor, nurse, or mental health professional. If you have a serious concern, always contact a health care provider.

Think about…

- Do you go online when you have a health concern? What kind of information do you look up?
- Did you get good or bad information and advice online? Can you believe everything you read?
- How can you tell when you can trust online health information or advice? How do you know when you need to speak to a health care provider?

Try this

Find a health care option that interests you and is useful to your health. Check it out online on Newfoundland and Labrador's health website. Talk to your health care provider about these resources in your community. Or call **811 Healthline** and ask about it.

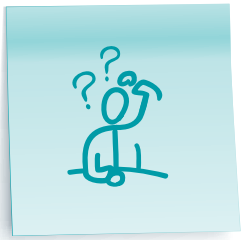
Time to think

Take a moment to think about or talk about what you learned in this workbook.

Think About…

- Have you gone to any of the people or places on the health centres list you created on page 23?
- What was your experience?
- Do you know where to go to get the kind of health care you need?

Activity 12



This workbook has covered many things, but there is always more to learn. Do you still have questions about health care in Newfoundland and Labrador? Use the space below to write them down. You can use what you've learned today to find the answers. Remember, the best way to take charge of your health is to know where and how to get help.

Congratulations!

You have completed *ABC Health Matters* Map Out Your Health and have taken the next step in managing your health. For the last activity, we hope you will make a **pledge**. The pledge can be personal or you can share it with others.

A pledge is a serious promise to yourself or others.

My pledge

I pledge to be healthier by...

My action plan

Sometimes a pledge includes an action plan. An action plan is a list of the steps you will take to make your pledge happen.

What I will do differently is...

What I can do right now is...

What I will do in the next six months is...

ABC Health Matters

Thank you for participating in
the *ABC Health Matters* program.

Find out more at:
abchealthmatters.ca