

## You Have a Right to Know

When you enlist the help of a professional- whether it's because you don't have any hot water and you have to call in a plumber, or because you've got a bad pain in the back of your knee and you make an appointment to see your chiropractor – you expect them to give you some answers.

What's wrong? Is something broken?  
Why did this happen? How can you fix it?

If we want to be 'informed consumers' it is important to ask the right questions. But did you know that in Health Care, your practitioner has a duty to inform you of certain facts – whether you think to ask or not.

The onus is on your Health Care Provider to tell you what they think is causing your knee pain and how their treatment is going to make a difference. They should tell you what kind of results they are expecting – relief of some symptoms or all symptoms? Do they expect the treatment to be a cure? Or will there be maintenance required?

They must inform you of the downsides to the treatment (any possible complications or side-effects) and talk about alternatives for you to consider.

If your practitioner is a true 'pro', they'll also give you a realistic sense of the potential consequences of not doing the treatment at all. It really is a question of giving you enough information to make a 'truly informed decision' about the risks and benefits of the treatment they're prescribing.

For a very long time, the risk/benefit ratio was entirely a judgment call for the practitioner. The doctor was always right and always had the best interests of the patient in mind. Things have changed.

There has been a major paradigm shift in Health Care in Canada – we now have a system which aspires to be 'patient-centered'. This means that your Health Care Provider needs to understand the importance of educating you, their patient, about what you can do to take better care of yourself and how you can prevent this problem from coming back

The plumber suggests a yearly appointment for servicing the hot water tank so that you'll never have to take a cold bath again. Your healthcare professional recommends twice-daily stretches, new shoes and regular monthly adjustments so you'll not be troubled with your knee again.

Make sure that the health care you choose is 'patient centered'.

Make it a point to be well-informed of the benefits and risks of any kind of care and be prepared to be an active participant in your quest for health and wellness.

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