

News Release

From the Missouri Center for Patient Safety



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“Ask Me 3” for Safer Care March is Patient Safety Awareness Month

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – To avoid confusion during medical care, this March experts are encouraging patients to remember a simple set of questions to be sure they understand what they need to do to get well.

While the average American reads at an eighth- or ninth-grade reading level, most health care information is written at a much higher level. Low health literacy affects nearly one in two Americans and costs the U.S. healthcare system an estimated \$58 billion annually. Additionally, poor communication is linked to an estimated 65 percent of medical errors.

“Sometimes, patients get bombarded with information and important details can be lost. The next time you see a doctor, nurse or pharmacist, these three questions could help you understand your health,” said Rebecca Miller, executive director of the Missouri Center for Patient Safety.

“Studies show that people who understand health instructions make fewer mistakes when taking medicine or preparing for a medical procedure. Understanding your condition and treatment may also help you get well sooner or be able to better manage your condition,” said Diane Pinakiewicz, president of the National Patient Safety Foundation.

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The recommended questions are:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

They are a part of the Ask Me 3 program from the Partnership for Clear Health Communication at the National Patient Safety Foundation. To celebrate March as Patient Safety Awareness Month, the group has shared the trademarked Ask Me 3 program with Missourians.

This March marks the second year that Missouri recognized March as Patient Safety Awareness Month through an executive proclamation from Gov. Matt Blunt.

For more tips and resources to help your health, visit www.mocps.org and look for the Patient Safety Awareness Month link.

About MOCPS

As a private, not-for-profit corporation, the Missouri Center for Patient Safety (MOCPS) is dedicated to fostering change throughout Missouri's health care systems. Based in Jefferson City, the mission of MOCPS is to improve health care quality and patient safety in collaboration with health care providers, physicians, purchasers, consumers and government. Online at www.mocps.org.

About the National Patient Safety Foundation

The National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF) is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to improving patient safety and reducing medical errors through research, education and dissemination of program. It is an unprecedented partnership of stakeholders working together to raise awareness and improve the safety of the health care system. The NPSF was founded in 1997 by the American Medical Association, CNA HealthPro, and 3M, with significant support from the Schering-Plough Corporation. For more information, visit www.npsf.org.

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