Wisely NL. One explains the differences between bacterial wait times given our recent increase in patient visits. We recently had a runny nose for a month last week, “Can you believe I’ve had this cold for 3 weeks?” Again, going back to my hypertension example, patients with a potential diagnosis of hypertension might need to be reassessed up to 3 times before they are started on a medication. Why should antibiotics be any different? It is a process. The right investigation or medication for the right person at the right time is how I practise medicine in general, but I believe that these principles are also the foundation of making better choices. As a result of the practice data we received last year and our new patient resources, our community is now choosing a little more wisely.

What does Choosing Wisely mean to you as a family physician?

The key ingredients to Choosing Wisely for me are providing clear communication and education for my patients around the various disease processes, and informing them when they might need to seek re-assessment. Also, it is important for me to ensure my prescribing practices are judicious and I always find myself reevaluating and ensuring that I am practicing to the best standards I can. If I am not going to give a patient active treatment, I need to reassure both the patient and myself that I have made the right choice. I frequently invite patients to come back to see me if they have any concerns, and I try to clearly communicate to patients why I am not doing a particular investigation or writing them a prescription. I tell my patients, “I’m concerned, I’m going to follow you through this, and I’m not going to lead you astray.”

Choosing Wisely Canada is a campaign to help clinicians and patients engage in conversations about unnecessary tests, treatments, and procedures, and to help physicians and patients make smart and effective choices to ensure high-quality care. To date there have been 11 family medicine recommendations, but many of the recommendations from other specialties are relevant to family medicine. In each installment of the Choosing Wisely Canada series in Canadian Family Physician, a family physician is interviewed about how he or she has implemented one of the recommendations in his or her own practice. The interviews are prepared by Dr Kimberly Wintemute, Primary Care Co-Lead, and Hayley Thompson, Project Coordinator, for Choosing Wisely Canada.