

Health Literacy Resources

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All links checked 4/5/11

You may need to copy and paste the address into your internet browser for the link to work.

Internet Resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics

Plain Language Pediatrics: Health Literacy Strategies and Communication Resources for Common Pediatric Topics. Mary Ann Abrams, MD, MPH, FAAP and Benard P. Dreyer, MD, FAAP
350 page book about limited health literacy, including the scope of the problem, how it affects children, in particular, and how clinicians can address and overcome health literacy issues with patients and their caregivers. Includes 25 easy to read patient education handouts about 17 common pediatric topics in English and Spanish.

https://www.nfaap.org/netFORUM/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=aapbks_productdetail&key=7c5e160d-fa79-468f-8503-20a524bc5ae9

The American Medical Association Foundation

Health literacy toolkit and videos available at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/health-literacy-program/health-literacy-kit.shtml>

Videos: Low health literacy: You can't tell by looking (18 minutes produced in 2001) and "Health Literacy and Patient Safety: Help Your Patients Understand (23 minutes produced in 2007) available for free at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/health-literacy-program/health-literacy-video.shtml>

Report: Assessing the nation's health literacy: Key concepts and findings of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) free at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/health-literacy-program/assessing-nations-health.shtml>

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Health Literacy Interventions and Outcomes: An Updated Systematic Review. An update of their 2004 report.

Summary: <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epcsums/litupsum.htm>

Full report: <http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/literacy/literacyup.pdf>

Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit. Practical methods for starting to address health literacy in any health care environment. Available at: <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy/> or http://nchealthliteracy.org/toolkit/toolkit_w_appendix.pdf

The Canadian Public Health Association

Health Literacy portal. A variety of excellent literacy related information including a variety of plain language resources that can be downloaded for free. <http://www.cpha.ca/en/portals/h-l.aspx>

The Commonwealth Fund

Health Literacy Practices in Primary Care Settings: Examples From the Field published January 2008

http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=645961

Department of Health and Human Services

National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy released 5/27/10

Summary:

http://www.health.gov/communication/HLActionPlan/pdf/Health_Lit_Action_Plan_Summary.pdf

Full Plan:

http://www.health.gov/communication/HLActionPlan/pdf/Health_Literacy_Action_Plan.pdf

The *Quick Guide to Health Literacy and Older Adults* is for people who serve older adults on health and aging issues. The guide provides background information on health literacy and strategies and suggestions for communicating with older adults.

<http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/olderadults/default.htm>

Food and Drug Administration

Easy to read publications in English and Spanish also available on MedlinePlus

<http://www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/7lowlit.html>

The Harvard School of Public Health: Health Literacy Studies Web Site

Has a variety of health literacy materials including a section on how to create and assess print materials.

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/>

Health Literacy Interest Groups

United States

Health literacy listserv. Sign up at: <http://lincs.ed.gov/mailman/listinfo/healthliteracy>

United Kingdom

Join a group of health and education academics and practitioners, service providers and service users committed to raising the profile of Health Literacy as a remediable cause of Health Inequalities in England, and to developing and undertaking research to achieve that. The UK group is very interested in linking with others with an interest in the area, both within the UK and abroad.

<http://www.healthliteracy.org.uk>

Health and Literacy Special Collection

This is an excellent health literacy resource with information for teachers and students, links to many sources of written health information, some health related curriculum topics and Family Health and Literacy: A Guide To Easy-to-Read Health Materials and Web Sites.

<http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/index.htm>

Health Literacy Cost Estimate

Based on 2003 data, this publication estimates the cost to the United States annually for low health literacy at \$106-238 billion with future costs based on today's decisions (or lack of) will cost from \$1.6-3.6 trillion.

http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/healthpolicy/dhp_publications/pub_uploads/dhpPublication_3AC9A1C2-5056-9D20-3D4BC6786DD46B1B.pdf

Health Literacy Missouri Library

A searchable database of a very large collection of health literacy materials including published articles, tools, and easy-to-read patient education materials.

<http://www.healthliteracymissouri.org/library>

Health Literacy Wisconsin

A variety of health literacy resources including health literacy curricula for healthcare providers. News and updates about health literacy initiatives around Wisconsin and the United States.

<http://www.healthliteracywisconsin.org/>

Health Literacy Public Health Forums: Partners for Action. Rima E. Rudd and Emily K. Zobel

This guide was designed to assist public health professionals and members of departments of health to conduct a forum on health literacy and thereby raise awareness about health literacy and links to health outcomes.

<http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=899>

Informed Consent Documents

Simplification of informed consent documents for cancer trials, National Cancer Institute:

<http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/education/simplification-of-informed-consent-docs/page1>

Template for English language consent form for cancer research from the National Cancer Institute

<http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/education/simplification-of-informed-consent-docs/page3>

Minnesota Collaborative for Patient Safety surgery consent written at the 4th grade level

<http://www.mnpatientsafety.org/files/pdfs/informed-consent-form.pdf>

AHRQ Informed Consent and Authorization Toolkit for Minimal Risk Research

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has developed this toolkit to facilitate the process of obtaining informed consent and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) authorization from potential research subjects. Available online and as a PDF at:

<http://www.ahrq.gov/fund/informedconsent/>

The Institute of Medicine

The IOM report Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion may be read for free or purchased at: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10883.html>

Joint Commission

2009 Hospital requirements that Support Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient-Centered Care. http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/6/2009_CLASRelatedStandardsCAH.pdf

What Did the Doctor Say?: Improving Health Literacy to Protect Patient Safety. Released 2/2007:

http://www.jointcommission.org/What_Did_the_Doctor_Say/

Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient- and Family-Centered Care- A Roadmap for Hospitals. Released 2010

<http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/6/ARoadmapforHospitalsfinalversion727.pdf>

Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS)

Adult Literacy research and resources: <http://lincs.ed.gov/>

LINCS health literacy adult education curricula: <http://lincs.ed.gov/health/health>

Health literacy listserv. Sign up at: <http://lincs.ed.gov/mailman/listinfo/healthliteracy>

MedlinePlus

Many easy to read health materials listed by topic alphabetically.

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/easytoread/all_easytoread.html

How to Write Easy to Read Health Materials. Excellent resource with step by step instructions

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/etr.html>

Interactive tutorials with audio about a large number of health topics, tests and diagnostic procedures:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorial.html>

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers; Partners for Action: Making Your Healthcare Facility Literacy-Friendly. This guide and the review tools found within it offer an approach for analyzing literacy-related barriers to healthcare access and navigation.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=1163>

National Adult Literacy Database

A Canadian site with a variety of publications and resources from a Canadian perspective. Materials available in French.

<http://www.nald.ca>

National Center for Educational Statistics

The Health Literacy of America's Adults:

Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL)

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006483>

Initial National Adult Assessment of Literacy Results

A First Look at the Literacy of America's Adults in the 21st Century

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006470>

National Health Literacy Institutes

Excellent opportunities to learn plain language skills to plan, write, and design effective, accessible information for print and web. This 4 day annual event in Freeport Maine is sponsored by the University of New England in Maine.

www.HealthLiteracyInstitute.net

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

A variety of easy to read materials about alcohol related topics

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/Publications/PamphletsBrochuresPosters/English/default.htm>

National Institute Of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases

"What I need to know about Eating and Diabetes" in English and Spanish in easy to read format.

http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/eating_ez/index.htm

National Women's Health Information Center

Some documents available in easy to read format, including bulimia and anorexia nervosa

<http://www.4woman.gov/faq/>

New Routes to Community Health

Locally-focused media and outreach campaigns created by immigrants including television and radio features, telenovelas, first person narratives, live theater, print, the Internet and social marketing campaigns.

<http://newroutes.org/>

Rhode Island Health Literacy Project

“Health Literacy Toolkit: Better Communication for Better Care” A comprehensive guide addressing gain insight and knowledge about health literacy, advance directives, and cultural competency.

http://www.rihlp.org/pubs/Complete_toolkit_224pgs.pdf

Reading is Fundamental:

Childrens' literacy information

<http://www.rif.org/>

Refugee Health Information Network

Health information in many languages for patients. Refugee health information for providers.

<http://rhin.org/>

TV411 Health Smarts While You Wait

A set of TV programs available for purchase to increase health literacy intended for use in hospital waiting rooms. Can be used with volunteer tutors or by learners at home. Some evidence of effectiveness. There is also the TV411 health Smart Kit, a more in-depth health literacy program with seven two-hour units for classroom use.

http://www.tv411.org/about_alma/hswyw_feature/index.shtml

Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.

Coordinates activities of Wisconsin Community-based Literacy organizations

<http://www.wisconsinliteracy.org>

Health Literacy PowerPoint with speaker notes by Paul Smith, MD and patient story video clip

http://www.wisconsinliteracy.org/news_article.php?id=3

Pharmacy related tools

Is Our Pharmacy Meeting Patients' Needs?

Pharmacy Health Literacy Assessment Tool User's Guide

This pharmacy health literacy tool was released by AHRQ 10/07. It is a step-by-step guide for how to capture perspectives of objective auditors, pharmacy staff, and patients. It is designed to form a complete assessment with recommendations for evaluating the results and developing an action plan.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pharmlit/>

Strategies To Improve Communication Between Pharmacy Staff and Patients

Training Program for Pharmacy Staff

A training program released by AHRQ 10/07 for pharmacists about low health literacy and implications of this problem for the delivery of health care services. The program also explains

techniques that pharmacy staff members can use to improve communication with patients who may have limited health literacy skills.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pharmlit/pharmtrain.htm>

How to Create a Pill Card

A tool for creating a pill card to assist patients correctly taking medications. Released by AHRQ 2/08. Download a Microsoft Word file to create the pill card with colored pill pictures and other pictures to improve understanding of instructions. <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pillcard/pillcard.htm>

Publications:

Working with Low-Literacy Seniors: Practical Strategies for Health Providers. Canadian Public Health Association, 1998. Can be downloaded for free.

<http://www.cpha.ca/en/portals/h-l/resources.aspx>

Health Literacy A to Z, Practical Ways to Communicate your Health Message. Author Helen Osborne Jones & Bartlett Publishing Co/Login Brothers Canada, 2004. Softcover book \$36.95.

Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills. Doak, Doak and Root. This book is considered a classic text in health literacy. The second edition is available free for download at:

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/resources/doak-book/> or can be purchased as a book from a variety of sources.

Institute for HealthCare Advancement. Series of self care books written at the 3rd to 5th grade level. What to Do When You're Having a Baby, What to do When Your Child Gets Sick, What to do for Teen Health, What to do for Senior Health, What to do for Healthy Teeth.

<http://www.ih4health.org/index.cfm?CFID=34093552&CFTOKEN=91199034&MenuItemID=130&MenuGroup=Health%20Literacy>

Health Literacy Assessment

Newest Vital Sign

Validation article:

Weiss B, Mays M, Martz W, Castro K, DeWalt D, Pignone M, Mockbee J, Hale F. Quick Assessment of Literacy in Primary Care: The Newest Vital Sign. Ann Fam Med 2005;3:514-552.

Available to download at:

<http://www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com/physicians-providers/newest-vital-sign.html>

English and Spanish versions available. Scoring sheets and patient sheets available at:

<http://www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com/physicians-providers/newest-vital-sign.html>

or email request to nvs@fleishman.com

Cost: Free!

Find a literacy program

To find a literacy program near you.

<http://www.literacydirectory.org/>

To search resources by state.

<http://www.literacydirectory.org/?op=hotlines&type=contacts>

Health Literacy training programs for health professionals

Health Literacy Wisconsin

Health literacy training program for healthcare professionals

<http://www.healthliteracywisconsin.org/article.jsp?id=58>

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) **Unified Health Communication 101: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency, and Limited English Proficiency.** A free online training course for health professionals. <http://www.hrsa.gov/publichealth/healthliteracy/>

The New York-New Jersey Public Health Training Center (NYNJ PHTC)

List of training programs available including several about cross cultural effective communication techniques: <http://www.nynj-phtc.org/pages/catalog/>

Health Literacy & Public Health: Introduction: <http://www.nynj-phtc.org/pages/catalog/phlit01/>

Health Literacy & Public Health: Strategies for Addressing Low Health Literacy:

<http://www.nynj-phtc.org/pages/catalog/phlit02/>

American Medical Association Health literacy toolkit and videos available at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/health-literacy-program/health-literacy-kit.shtml>

Videos: Low health literacy: You can't tell by looking (18 minutes produced in 2001) and "Health Literacy and Patient Safety: Help Your Patients Understand (23 minutes produced in 2007) available for free at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/health-literacy-program/health-literacy-video.shtml>

Text Assessment and Writing tools

AHRQ Informed Consent and Authorization Toolkit for Minimal Risk Research

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has developed this toolkit to facilitate the process of obtaining informed consent and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) authorization from potential research subjects. Available online and as a PDF at:

<http://www.ahrq.gov/fund/informedconsent/>

Clear & Simple: Developing Effective Print Materials for Low-Literate Readers

This concise and easy to use 61 page guide developed in 1994 by the National Cancer Institute and NIH outlines a process for developing materials with, and for, people with limited-literacy skills. The guide contains five sections: defining the target audience, conducting audience research, concept development, content and visuals development, and pre-testing and revising materials.

<http://www.nci.nih.gov/cancerinformation/clearandsimple>.

Creating Plain Language Forms for Seniors.

This 30-page guide was developed with attention to the needs of seniors, offers clear guidelines for creating forms in plain language. The guide also includes a Plain Language Forms Tool Kit.

Appendices include a short glossary of plain words. Canadian Public Health Association, 1998. Cost was: \$10.00 Canadian.

<http://www.cpha.ca/en/portals/h-l/resources.aspx>

Developing Easy to Read Health Education materials. Kara Jacobson and Felecia Morton. Step by step development guide. Free.

http://www.breasthealthga.org/Education_Program/health_literacy/KJFMLiteracy%20Slides.pdf

Glossary of Medical Terms

Medical dictionary at: <http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/tools/dictionary.html>

Webpage with definitions for over 1,300 medical words. The definitions are at a medium reading level.

http://kidshealth.org/PageManager.jsp?dn=familydoctor&lic=44&ps=303&cat_id=52

MedlinePlus

How to Write Easy to Read Health Materials. Excellent resource with step by step instructions

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/etr.html>

Plain Language.gov

Examples and tools for developing plain language materials

<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>

Plain Language Initiative

A website developed by the National Institutes for Health (NIH) provides guidelines and examples of how to write in plain language, engage readers, display information and evaluate materials.

<http://execsec.od.nih.gov/plainlang/guidelines/index.html>

Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines.

These updated Guidelines, released in August 2006, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provides the most current and best available evidence for website development. The Guidelines are particularly relevant to the design of information-oriented sites.

<http://www.usability.gov/pdfs/foreword.pdf>

Reviewer's Guide to Evaluating Health Information Materials

Excellent succinct instructions and check sheet to guide evaluation of health information documents.

Written by Sandra Smith, MPH CHES.

<http://www.beginningsguides.com/Health-Literacy-Library.html>

Suitability Assessment of Materials (SAM)

This tool is a systematic method to objectively assess the suitability of health information materials for a particular audience.

<http://www.beginningsguides.com/Health-Literacy-Library.html>

University of Minnesota Bio-Medical Library

An extensive compilation of publications, web resources and articles about how to create patient education materials

http://courses.lib.umn.edu/page.phtml?page_id=839

Tools to help translate technical health language into understandable information Health Research for Action

Lists of common "big" words and managed care jargon with suggestions for simpler language created by a group at University of California Berkeley School of Public Health.

http://healthresearchforaction.org/downloads/tip_glossary_common_words2.pdf

http://healthresearchforaction.org/downloads/tip_glossary_managed_care.pdf

Simply Put.

Guide from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) helps you translate technical and scientific language into information that is understandable. It has tips for writing simply, using visuals, and organizing information for easy recall and understanding. Updated April 2009
http://www.cdc.gov/healthmarketing/pdf/Simply_Put_082010.pdf

Reading Grade level measurement tools

Online-Utility.org

Free online software tool calculates readability. Measures: Coleman Liau index, Flesh Kincaid Grade Level, ARI (Automated Readability Index), and SMOG. Recommends sentences that you can revise to lower readability score. http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp

SMOG (Simple Measure Of Gobbledygook) Reading Grade Calculator

Copy and paste text or entire document (up to 2000 words) and program calculates reading level.
<http://www.wordscount.info/hw/smog.jsp>

OKAPI

Very valuable on-line text assessment tool for writing/editing text for low literate adults. Paste in up to 200 words and it will analyze reading level and highlight words that are not found in the Dale Familiar Word List. You can tag “big” words so they are not counted as “big.” Uses the Spache or Dale-Chall Readability Formula. Dale-Chall is for text at 4th grade level and higher, Spache for 3rd grade or less.
<http://www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/tools/okapi/okapi.php>

Fleisch-Kincaid Reading Grade Level

Is built into Microsoft Word. Only goes up to grade 12 in Word 2002. Goes higher in New Microsoft office. Counts word syllables and sentence length. Tends to estimate grade levels lower than other methods (like SMOG) by 1 to 1.5 grade levels.

How to use Word in Word 2002 to assess Fleisch-Kincaid reading level:

1. At the top tool bar, click “Tools”
2. At bottom of the drop down list, click “Options”
3. On the tabs at the top of the new window, click the “Spelling & Grammar” tab
4. Near the bottom of the list, select “Check grammar with spelling” check box
5. Select “Show readability statistics” check box
6. Click “OK”
7. Click and drag to select text to check or check entire document
8. Click “Spelling and Grammar” on toolbar at top.
9. Check the entire document, skipping the grammar suggestions if you prefer.
10. Box with word count and readability statistics appears when you are done checking.

For Microsoft office:

1. Click the **Microsoft Office Button** , and then click **Word Options** at the bottom right.
2. Click **Proofing**.

3. Make sure **Check grammar with spelling** is selected.
4. Under **When correcting grammar in Word**, select the **Show readability statistics** check box.

Health Literacy curriculum for adult students

Staying Healthy- Health literacy curriculum which integrates health and nutrition into adult English language learners instruction. Materials consist of a teacher's guide and easy to read student resource book. The materials are free at:

http://www.floridaliteracy.org/literacy_resources_teacher_tutor_health_literacy.html

An English Learner's Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living. A publication of the Florida Literacy Coalition, Inc.

http://www.floridaliteracy.org/literacy_resources_teacher_tutor_health_literacy.html

Health Stories from New Reader's Press - A healthy dose of readings and language activities to help adults navigate the U.S. health care system. <http://www.newreaderspress.com/Items.aspx?hierId=2664>

Expecting the Best - A health and wellness curriculum for English as a Second Language (ESL) students designed to improve health literacy, functional literacy, and enhance English communication skills. <http://www.expectingthebest.org/>

A listing of health literacy curricula assembled by Andrew Pleasant, of Rutgers University.

<http://www.advancinghealthliteracy.com/curricula.html>

Free Internet English Language Instruction

U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy developed this website for immigrants and other adults who want to learn or improve their English skills. www.USALearns.org

Easy-to-Read Health Materials

Diabetes

MedlinePlus- multiple diabetes related documents.

[Http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/easytoread/easytoread_d.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/easytoread/easytoread_d.html)

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse- multiple diabetes related documents.

<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/ez.asp>

Nutrition Education for New Americans Project- Many diabetes education documents written at the 6th grade level and bilingual with English and many other languages.

[http://monarch.gsu.edu/WebRoot\\$/multiculturalhealth](http://monarch.gsu.edu/WebRoot$/multiculturalhealth)

My Guide to Sugar Diabetes. 2009 target audience: South Carolina African Americans. Free

http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/reach/materials/My%20Guide%20to%20Sugar%20Diabetes%202009_4th%20edition.pdf

Living with Diabetes: An Everyday Guide for You and Your Family. American College of Physicians Foundation. Offered in English and Spanish, the guide is written in a conversational tone at a 5th grade

reading level and includes photographs of patients. It gives practical tips and concrete examples of successful approaches for diabetes care. \$26 for 40 copies. Single copy: \$5.95

<http://www.acpfoundation.org/hl/diabguide.htm>

Advanced directive

The simplified advance directive form from California can be downloaded for free in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese at:

<http://www.iha4health.org/index.cfm/CFID/26550072/CFTOKEN/4968653/MenuItemID/266.htm>