

Health Literacy Toolkit

Below is a collection of health literacy resources by category. It is in no way comprehensive, but highlights key reports, resources and tools to help one learn more about this field of Health Literacy. Information was collected by Michele Erikson of Wisconsin Literacy, Inc. and Dr. Paul Smith, Health Literacy Committee Chair of Wisconsin Literacy's Board of Directors. An online version of this toolkit is available at www.nationalahec.org/Publications to aid you in getting to the web pages listed below.



GENERAL RESOURCES

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| Health Literacy Toolkit | www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/health-literacy-program/health-literacy-kit.shtml |
| Video: AMA Foundation (2001): Low Health Literacy: You Can't Tell by Looking (18 minutes) | www.ama-assn.org/ama/no-index/about-ama/8035.shtml |
| Video: AMA Foundation (2007): Health Literacy and Patient Safety: Help Patients Understand (23 minutes) | www.ama-assn.org/ama/no-index/about-ama/8035.shtml |
| Report: Assessing the Nation's Health Literacy: Key Concepts and Findings of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) | www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/health-literacy-program/assessing-nations-health.shtml |
| AHRQ Health Literacy Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Study (CAHPS) | www.cahps.ahrq.gov/content/products/HL/PROD_HL_Intro.asp The primary goal of the CAHPS item set for addressing health literacy is to measure, from the patients' perspective, how well health information is communicated to them by health care professionals. |
| | www.cahps.ahrq.gov/CAHPSkit/files/1311_About_Health_Lit.pdf American Medical Association has developed a CAHPS summary document with recommendations for solutions to address problems assessed by the health literacy CAHPS. |
| Advance Directives | www.ih4health.org/index.cfm/CFID/26550072/CFTOKEN/4968653/MenuItemID/266.htm An advance directive form from California is written at the 5th grade level and is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. |
| Understanding Health Literacy | Advancing Health Literacy: A Framework for understanding and action, C. Zarcadoolas, A. F. Pleasant, D. S. Greer - Copyright © 2006 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. |

PHARMACY-RELATED TOOLS

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| Is Our Pharmacy Meeting Patients' Needs? Pharmacy Health Literacy Assessment Tool User's Guide | www.ahrq.gov/qual/pharmlit/ This pharmacy health literacy tool was released by AHRQ in October 2007. It is a step-by-step guide on 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. |
| Strategies to Improve Communication Between Pharmacy Staff and Patients | www.ahrq.gov/qual/pharmlit/pharmtrain.htm A training program released by AHRQ in October 2007 for pharmacists and pharmacy staff about low health literacy and implications of this problem for the delivery of healthcare services. The program also explains techniques that pharmacy staff members can use to improve communication with patients who may have limited health literacy skills. |
| How to Create a Pill Card | www.ahrq.gov/qual/pillcard/pillcard.htm A tool for creating a pill card to assist patients in correctly taking medications. Released by AHRQ in February 2008. Download a Microsoft Word file to create the pill card with colored pill pictures and other pictures to improve understanding of instructions. |
| Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) | http://pharmacyhealthliteracy.ahrq.gov/sites/PharmHealthLiteracy/default.aspx Recently released health literacy tools |

HEALTH LITERACY TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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| American Medical Association Health Literacy Toolkit with Training for Health Professionals | www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/health-literacy-program/health-literacy-kit.shtml |
| Physician Continuing Medical Education (CME) | www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/education-careers/continuing-medical-education.shtml |
| Free Training Course for Health Professionals: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) "Unified Health Communication 101: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency, and Limited English Proficiency" | www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/training.htm |
| The New York-New Jersey Public Health Training Center (NYNJ PHTC) Course: "Communicate to Make a Difference" | www.nynj-phtc.org/phLit/Home/phlit-default.cfm |
| Workshop: "Health Literacy for Healthcare Providers—Tools for Effective Communication" | Wisconsin Literacy (608) 257-1655 Designed by Wisconsin Literacy in three modules to be presented in four hours to healthcare providers. Module 1 includes information on literacy, health literacy, clues and signs of low-level literacy and resources for addressing it. Module 2 includes information for improving oral communication including the use of medical jargon, the "teach back" technique and Ask Me 3. Module 3 includes information about improving written communication and a review of readability tools. Each module can be done as an individual workshop or as a complete set. Each module is designed to be highly participatory with a lot of hands-on practice. |
| Free Health Literacy Courses: Great River Partners for Health-E People | www.literacycoalition.org/healthliteracy.html One for patients and one for providers. The project also uses DVD and MP3 players and iPods for patient education. |



TOOLS TO HELP TRANSLATE TECHNICAL HEALTH LANGUAGE INTO UNDERSTANDABLE INFORMATION

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| Health Research for Action | healthresearchforaction.org/downloads/tip_glossary_common_words2.pdf healthresearchforaction.org/downloads/tip_glossary_managed_care.pdf These lists of common "big" words and managed care jargon include suggestions for simpler language. They were created by a group at University of California Berkeley School of Public Health. |
| Simply Put | www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/cdcynergy_training/Content/activeinformation/resources/simpput.pdf This guide from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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. |



TEXT ASSESSMENT AND WRITING TOOLS

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| Clear & Simple: Developing Effective Print Materials for Low-Literate Readers | www.nci.nih.gov/cancerinformation/clearandsimple 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. |
| Creating Plain Language Forms for Seniors | www.cpha.ca/en/portals/h-l/resources.aspx This 30-page guide was developed with attention to the needs of seniors and 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 Canadian, but unable to confirm. |
| Developing Easy-to-Read Health Education Materials | www.breasthealthga.org/Education_Program/health_literacy/KJFMLiteracy%20Slides.pdf A step-by-step development guide by Kara Jacobson and Felecia Morton is free. |
| Glossary of Medical Terms | http://kidshealth.org/kid/word/index.html www.familydoctor.org Web site offers definitions for more than 1,300 medical words. The definitions are at a medium reading level. |
| How to Create and Assess Print Materials by Rima E. Rudd | www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/materials.html#three An excellent online resource for how to write and evaluate text materials. |
| MedlinePlus: How to Write Easy-to-Read Health Materials | www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/etr.html Excellent resource with step-by-step instructions. |
| Plain Language Materials | www.plainlanguage.gov/ Examples and tools for developing plain language materials. |
| Plain Language Initiative | execsec.od.nih.gov/plainlang/guidelines/index.html A Web site developed by the National Institutes for Health provides guidelines and examples of how to write in plain language, engage readers, display information, and evaluate materials. |
| Reviewer's Guide to Evaluating Health Information Materials | www.guidesforbeginnings.com/pdfs/articles/Reviewers-Guide.pdf Excellent succinct instructions and check sheet help guide evaluation of health information documents. Written by Sandra Smith, MPH CHES. |

READING GRADE-LEVEL MEASUREMENT TOOLS

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| SMOG (Simple Measure of Gobbledygook) Reading Grade Calculator | <p>www.harrymclaughlin.com/SMOG.htm www.wordscount.info/hw/smog.jsp</p> <p>Copy and paste text or entire document (up to 2000 words) into this program, which then calculates reading level.</p> |
| OKAPI | <p>www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/tools/okapi/okapi.php</p> <p>This is a very valuable online 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.</p> |

HEALTH LITERACY CURRICULA FOR ADULT LEARNERS

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| "Staying Healthy—An English Learner's Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living" | <p>www.floridaliteracy.org/literacy_resources__teacher_tutor__health_literacy.html</p> <p>A publication of the Florida Literacy Coalition Inc.</p> |
| "Health Stories" from New Reader's Press | <p>www.newreaderspress.com/Items.aspx?hierId=2664</p> <p>Offers a healthy dose of readings and language activities to help adults navigate the U.S. healthcare system.</p> |
| Expecting the Best | <p>www.expectingthebest.org/</p> <p>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.</p> |

LEARN MORE

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| Literacy and Health Outcomes | <p>www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epcsums/litsum.htm www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/literacy/literacy.pdf</p> <p>A 2004 comprehensive report on literacy and health by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.</p> |
| Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion | <p>www.nap.edu/catalog/10883.html</p> <p>The Institute of Medicine's 2004 report</p> |
| Health Literacy Interest Group: National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) | <p>www.nifl.gov/mailman/listinfo/Healthliteracy</p> |
| MedlinePlus by the National Library of Medicine | <p>www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/easytoread/all_easytoread.html</p> <p>A collection of health information intended for consumers, it includes many easy-to-read health materials listed by topic alphabetically and by topic area.</p> <p>www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorial.html</p> <p>Interactive Video Tutorials</p> |
| Refugee Health Information Network | <p>www.rhin.org</p> <p>Health information in many languages for patients and providers.</p> |

