



What Is Health Literacy?

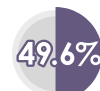
Health Literacy In The United States



Nearly **9 out of 10** adults in America lack the skills needed to manage their health and prevent disease. Health literacy is one of these skills.²



36% of adults in the United States had **inadequate health literacy skills** to manage the demands of the healthcare system.³



Among patients with **kidney disease**, prevalence of limited health literacy has been found to be even higher, with upward estimates at **49.6%**.³



Improving health literacy could prevent nearly **1 MILLION HOSPITAL VISITS** and save over **\$25 BILLION** a year.²

What Is The Impact?⁵

A systematic review conducted among patients with kidney disease found that limited health literacy is associated with:

	Hospitalizations
	Emergency department use
	Missed dialysis sessions
	Cardiovascular events
	Mortality



Health literacy is how we receive, interpret and act on information about our health.¹

Four Components Of Health Literacy:⁴

1 Cultural and conceptual knowledge

2 Writing and reading skills

3 Listening and speaking

4 Using and working with numbers

Limited health literacy is more prevalent among:³

- Older adults
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Individuals with low socioeconomic status

Causes of limited health literacy:^{3,4}

- Health care providers use words patients don't understand
- Cultural barriers
- Limited English proficiency

Why Is Health Literacy An Important Issue In Clinical Trials?^{7,8}

Limited health literacy can create difficulty for participants in their understanding of what will take place during a trial and can be a limiting factor for enrollment. Informed understanding, participant trust and therapeutic behavioral change improves when health literacy is improved.

When health literacy level is not taken into consideration during clinical trials, it may result in:⁹

- Failure to arrive to appointments on time
- Failure to report adverse events
- Not seeking information about their experiences or well-being
- Not understanding clinical documents

Improving health literacy of participants leads to:⁸

- Diversity within the trial
- Increased engagement
- Better understanding of risks and ability to make informed decisions during the consent process



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Practical Strategies For Healthcare Systems & Providers To Promote Health Literacy³



Welcoming Environment

Develop an environment whereby all organizational staff contribute to a welcoming and friendly environment that enables patients to feel more relaxed and able to participate in their care.



Patient-Friendly Communication

When talking with patients and families, use nonmedical language that they can understand. Speak slowly, repeat when needed, be specific and concrete while utilizing patient-friendly terms.



Teach-Back Method

The teach-back method will confirm patient and family understanding and give an opportunity to reinforce any needed education.



Goals & Action Plans

Engage with the patient to create a treatment action plan with manageable, concrete steps toward the final treatment goal.

1

Health Literacy Improvement Plan



Create a health literacy team that includes both clinical and administrative staff. This team will assess needs, as well as create and implement an organizational health literacy plan.

2

3

Easy-To-Read Materials



Evaluate all forms and written materials, utilizing easy-to-read documents and educational brochures that patients can understand.

4

5

Demonstrations



Any patient or family medical instruction should include a demonstration as well as verbal communication to improve the patient's understanding and learning.

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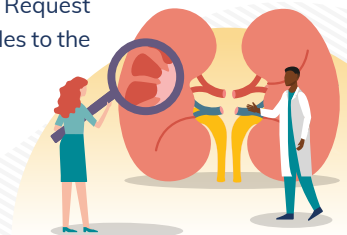
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Medication Reviews



Reviewing and educating the patient about all medications will highlight any knowledge deficits and identify whether the patient is taking their medication correctly. Request patients bring all medication bottles to the appointment for review.

8



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