

Improving Health Literacy for Family Planning Patients and Providers

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Disclosure

I have no financial relations or conflicts of interest to report

The presenter, Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, is responsible for the content of this presentation, which does not necessarily represent the views of Tufts University, New York State Department of Health, New York State Family Planning Training Center or John Snow Research and Training.

Case Example

Renee is a 21-year old new patient coming into your clinic because she “wants to get the pill.”

The receptionist notices that Renee does not fully complete her patient intake form, and leaves several questions blank.



**What do you think
is going on here?**

Case Example

After doing a full history and physical, the provider gives Renee instructions about the method and asks, “Do you have any questions?” Renee says, “No.”

But just as Renee is leaving she says, “So, I should take a pill after I have sex, right?”



**What do you think
is going on here?**

Learning Objectives

- Discuss impact low health literacy on patient access to reproductive health information, services, outcomes and equity
- Describe strategies for communicating clearly and checking for understanding so patients can make informed decisions
- Identify plain language principles for creating and selecting educational tools and resources that are accessible to all patients

What do you ask patients to read, understand, and act on?



- Fever (100.4° F or higher)
- Vaginal discharge that may smell foul
- Painful sex
- Pain when urinating
- Irregular menstrual periods
- Pain in the upper right abdomen (this is rare)

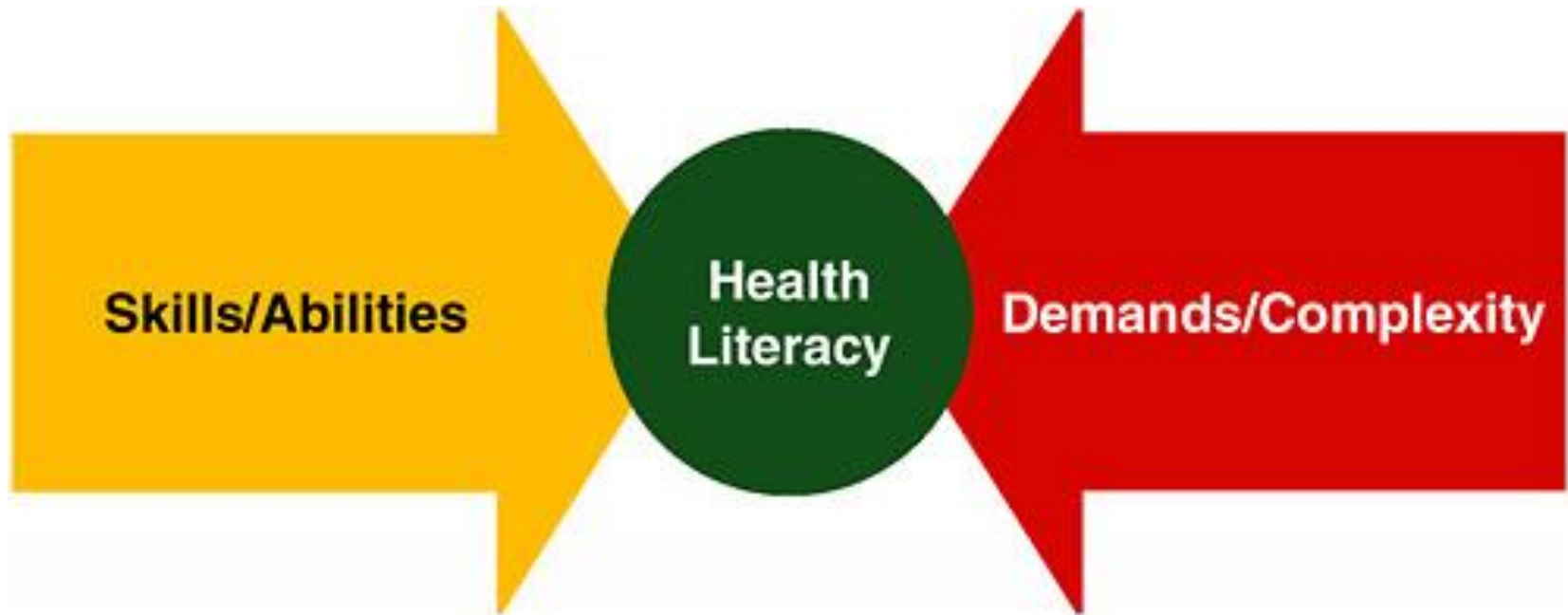
- Have had an STI
- Have had PID before
- Are younger than: 25 and have sex. PID's most common in women 15 to 24 years old.
- Have more than one sex partner or have a partner who has multiple sexual partners
- Douches. Douching can push bacteria into the reproductive organs and cause PID. Douching can also hide the signs of PID.
- Recently had an intrauterine device (IUD) inserted. The risk of PID is higher for the first few weeks only after insertion of an IUD. PID is rare after that time period. Getting tested for STIs before the IUD is inserted lowers your risk for PID.

- Pain in the lower abdomen (this is the most common symptom)

www.womenshealth.gov | 800-994-9662



What is Health Literacy?



Source: Institute of Medicine Committee on Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion. Nielsen-Bohlman L, Panzer AM, Kindig DA, eds. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2004.

At First Glance - Readability

- Numerous studies show readability of health materials far exceed skills of patients
- Studies of Web-based health information show similar results



Source: Institute of Medicine Committee on Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion. Nielsen-Bohman L, Panzer AM, Kindig DA, eds. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2004.

Effects on Health Outcomes

- Low health literacy is linked to...
 - Under use of prevention services
 - Increase in medication errors
 - Poor knowledge about health
 - Increase in hospitalizations
 - Poor health outcomes
 - Increase in healthcare costs

Source: Berkman N, Sheridan S, Donahue K, et al. Health Literacy Interventions and Outcomes: An Updated Systematic Review. Evidence Report/Technical Assessment No. 199. Prepared by RTI International-University of North Carolina Evidence-based Practice Center under contract No. 290-2007-10056-1. AHRQ Publication Number 11-E006. Rockville, MD. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. 2011.

Who is at Risk? Everyone



Anika Shah



Jessie Morton



Mercy Rodríguez



Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi

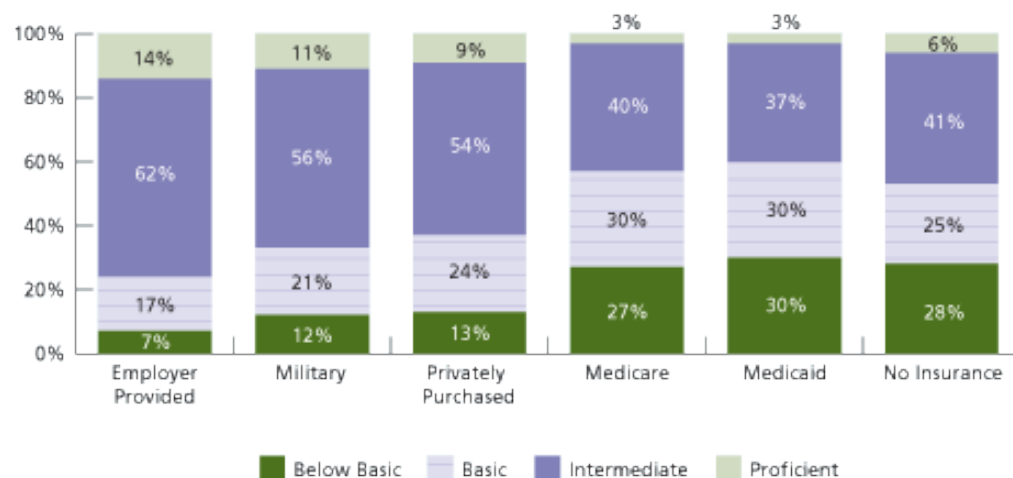
Navigating the health system demands reading, writing, and numeracy skills that exceed the health literacy skills of MOST patients

Who is at Risk?

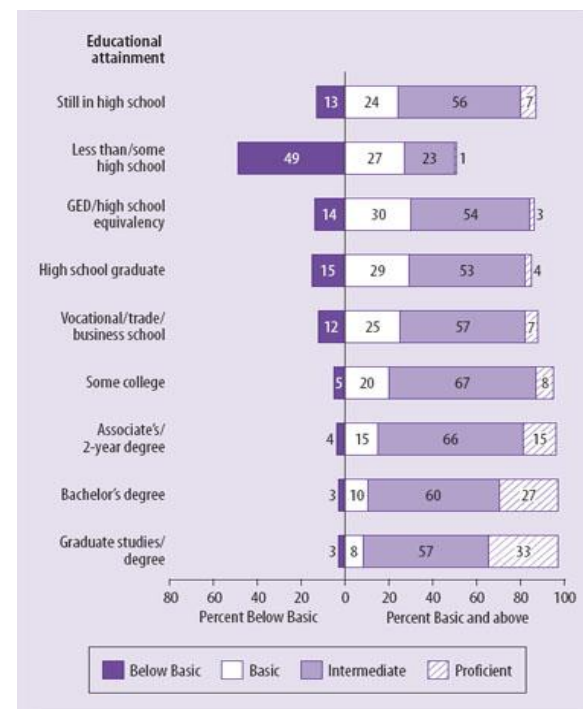
Health literacy is a health disparities issue



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Percentage of Adults in Each Health Literacy Level by **Type of Insurance**



Percentage of Adults in Each Health Literacy Level by **Education**

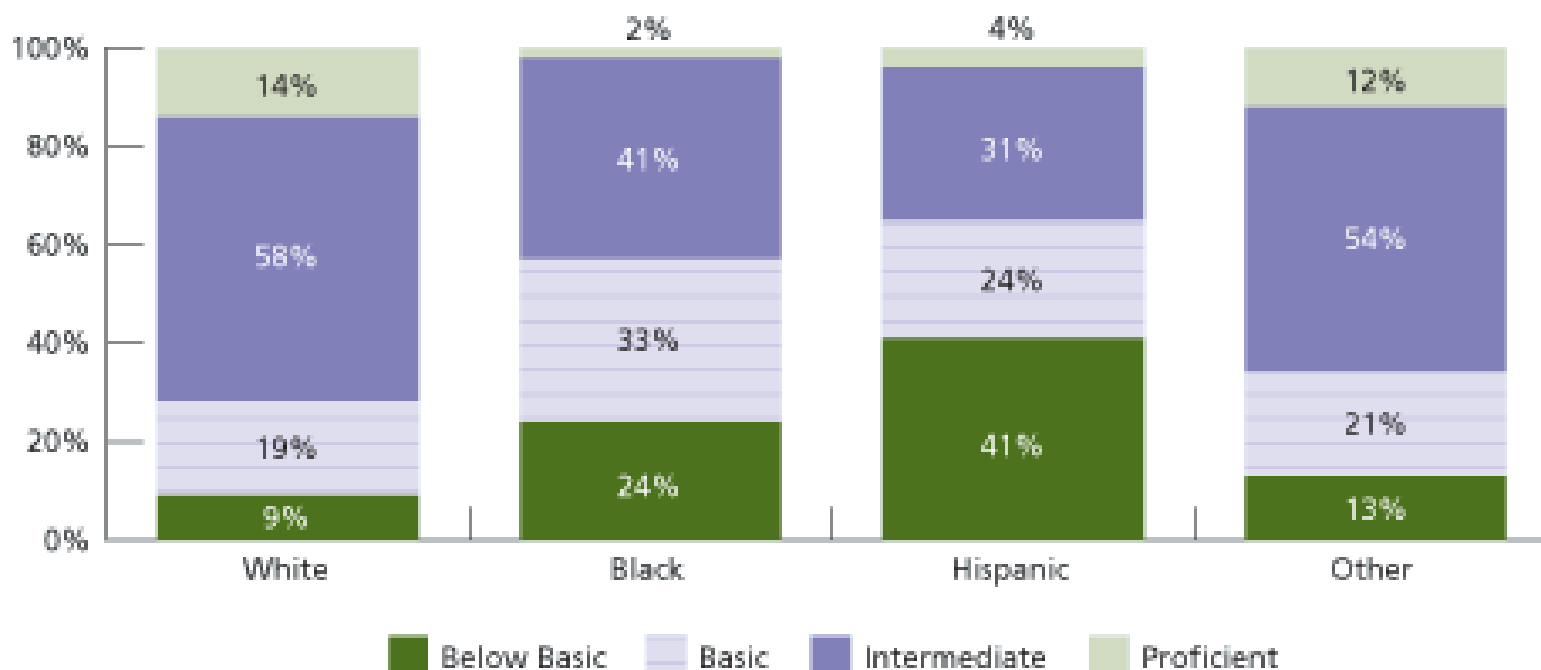
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Science, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Who is at Risk?

Health literacy is a minority health issue



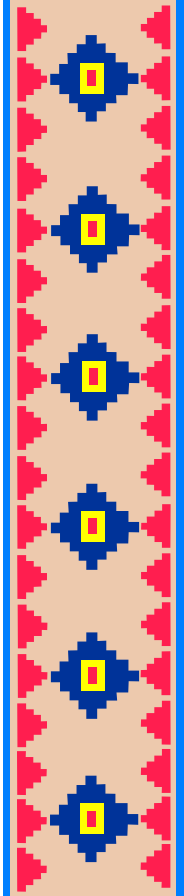
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Percentage of Adults in Each Health Literacy
Level by **Race / Ethnic Group**

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Science, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Intersectionality



- **Literacy:** Among adults with limited health literacy, 45% are from racial or ethnic minority groups.
- **Language:** People with limited English proficiency (LEP) are at risk of limited literacy in their native language.
- **Culture:** Individuals from diverse cultures may not understand materials if Western constructs are used.

Source: Andrulis, DP and Brach, C. (2007) Integrating Literacy, Culture, and Language to Improve Health Care Quality for Diverse Populations. *Am J Health Behav.* 31(Suppl 1):S122-133.

CLAS Standards: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)



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- Principle Standard (Standard 1)

Provide effective, equitable, understandable and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse **cultural** health beliefs and practices, preferred **languages**, **health literacy** and other communication needs.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. *National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care: A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice*. U.S. DHHS. Washington, DC: 2013.

CLAS Standards: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

- Leadership, Governance, and Workforce (Standards 2-4)
- Communication and Language Assistance (Standards 5-8)
- Engagement, Continuous Improvement and Accountability (Standards 9-15)



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. *National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care: A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice*. U.S. DHHS. Washington, DC: 2013.

Health Literate Organizations

Ten Attributes of a Health Literate Organization

1. Has **leadership** that makes health literacy integral to mission and operations
2. Integrates health literacy into **patient safety and quality improvement**
3. Prepares the **workforce** to be health literate and monitors progress
4. Includes **populations served** in the design of health information and services
5. Meets people's health literacy needs while **avoiding stigmatization**
6. Uses health literacy in **oral communication** and confirms understanding
7. Provide easy access to health information and **navigation assistance**.
8. Designs and distributes **health content** that is **easy to understand** and act on
9. Addresses health literacy in **high-risk situations**
10. Communicates clearly what **health plans** and what people have to pay

Source: Institute of Medicine Roundtable on Health Literacy. Attributes of a Health Literate Organization 2012. http://iom.edu/~media/Files/Perspectives-Files/2012/Discussion-Papers/BPH_Ten_HLit_Attributes.pdf

Chat Box Question

What health jargon do you hear everyday?

Abstinence not having sex

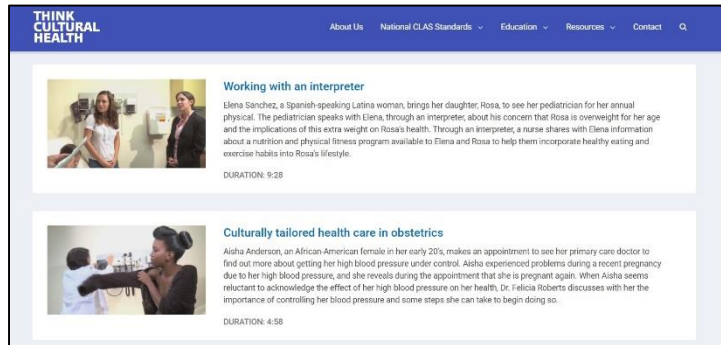
Discard throw away

Prenatal while pregnant

Teratogenic harmful to an unborn baby

Risk factor..... will increase your chance of

Work with Interpreters



<https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>

Last Reviewed 2019-11

Working Effectively with Medical Interpreters eLearning

0.50 hr

eLearning

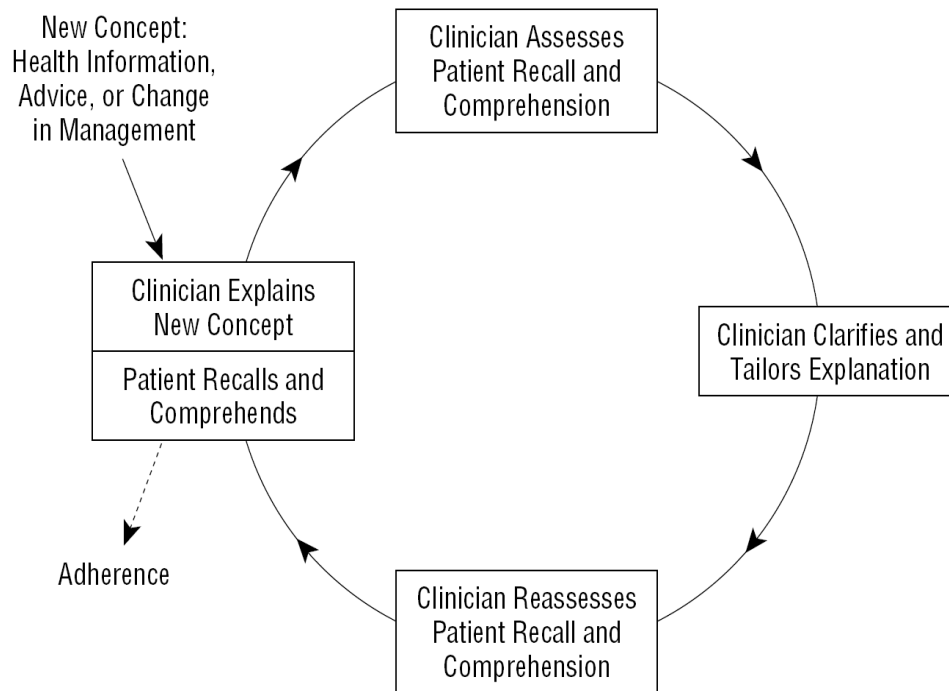
Patient Experience

CE Offered

Enroll in Course

<https://www.fpntc.org/resources/working-effectively-medical-interpreters-elearning>

Teach Back: A Method of Checking Understanding



Source: Schillinger D, et al. Closing the Loop Physician Communication With Diabetic Patients Who Have Low Health Literacy. Arch Intern Med/Vol 163, Jan 13, 2003

The Key to Teach Back is an Open Ended Question

- I am sending you home with a new pack of birth control pills. How would you describe to a friend when and how you'll take them?
- We talked about ways to remember to take the pill at the same time every day. How will you make it work at home?

Case Example

Verbal communication.

The clinic assistant says to Renee, "I'll need a clean catch specimen, then put it in the cut through." Renee stands there, looks confused.



After doing a full history and physical, the provider gives Renee instructions about the method and asks, "Do you have any questions?" Renee says, "No."

Plain Language: A Strategic Response



What is Plain Language?

- Writing that is clear and easy to understand the first time you read it.
- Use of organization, words, layout, and graphics, to help make written material relevant and easy to read.

Source: Plainlanguage.gov. Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN). What is plain language? Accessed 1.10.20
<https://www.plainlanguage.gov/about/definitions/>

Plain Language Writing Tips



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1. Define unfamiliar words
2. Use action words and active voice
3. Use shorter words and sentences
4. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms
5. Give *pro-nun-see-AY-shun* if needed



Chat Box Question

How would you re-write these sentences in active voice?

- Birth control options can be discussed with your family planning counselor.
- For protection against HIV/AIDS, a condom must be used every time.

Plain Language Design Tips

1. Lots of white space and wide margins
- 2. Bold Concise Headers**
3. Larger type (12 pt or larger)
4. UPPER AND LOWER CASE—NOT ALL CAPS
- 5. Avoid italics, script, fancy fonts***

Chat Box Question

What plain language changes would you make?

RECOMMENDED REGARDING WRITING IN TERMS OF ITS RECEPTION

IT IS NOT INAPPROPRIATE , WHEN USING PRINT MEDIA TO IMPART MATERIAL OF A FACTUAL OR INTERPRETIVE NATURE WHICH HOLDS THE INTENTION OF CONVEYING CRITICAL INFORMATION TO AND/OR INCLUDING A CRITICAL ACTION BY ITS PROSPECTIVE RECIPIENTS, TO EMPLOY RELATIVELY NONCOMPLEX VERBIAGE SO AS TO MAXIMIZE COMRPEHENSION IN THE AFOREMENTIONED POPULATION.

Credit: Lessons in Plain Language 1992, PLAN, Inc.

Before and After - BEFORE

Before—Original

Doxycycline 100-mg tablets

Common Uses: This medicine is a tetracycline antibiotic used to treat certain bacterial infections.

How to use this Medicine: Follow the directions for using this medicine provided by your medical provider. **TAKE THIS MEDICINE** with a full glass (8 ounces) of water while standing or sitting upright. **TAKE THIS MEDICINE** with food if it upsets your stomach. Do not take vitamins, antacids, calcium, iron, magnesium, or bismuth products within 2 hours of taking this medicine. **STORE THIS MEDICINE** at room temperature, away from heat and light. **TO CLEAR UP YOUR INFECTION COMPLETELY**, continue taking this medicine for the full course of treatment even if you feel better in a few days. Do not miss any doses. **IF YOU MISS A DOSE OF THIS MEDICINE**, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not take 2 doses at once.

Cautions: If your symptoms do not improve within a few days or if they become worse, check with your medical provider. **THIS MEDICINE MAY CAUSE** increased sensitivity to sunlight. Avoid exposure to the sun or sunlamps until you know how you react to this medicine. Use sunscreen or protective clothing if you much be outside for a prolonged period.

Before and After – AFTER



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After—Easy-to-Read

Questions and Answers About Your Medicine

Name: Doxycycline 100-mg tablets
(Docks-ee-sy-kleen)

What is this medicine for?

Your doctor is giving you this medicine to treat a bacterial infection. This medicine is an antibiotic, which means it kills the germs that cause some bad coughs, skin rashes, and urinary tract infections. If you are not sure why your doctor wants you to take this medicine, call and ask your doctor.

Is there any special way I should take this medicine?

- Swallow the pills whole (do not crush them).
- When you swallow the pills, drink a glass of water (about the size of a soda can).
- For 2 hours before you take your pills or until 2 hours after you have taken your pills do **not** take:
 - Vitamins (multi-vitamin)
 - Antacids (Tums)

Tips for Communicating Numbers



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- Reduce effort, do the math
- Provide fewer options
- Keep denominator the same (1 in 100 / 4 in 10)
- Use appropriate visuals
- Use labels carefully (poor, fair good, excellent)
- Use frequency (1 out of 10) not percent (10%)

www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/numeracy-course



Use Frequency (1 out of 10) Not Percent (10 %)



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Birth Control Method Options

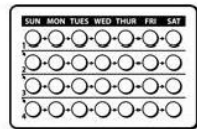
Moderately Effective

Injectables



4 out
of 100

Pill



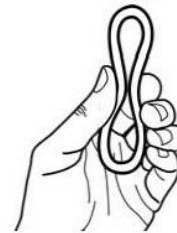
8 out
of 100

Patch



9 out
of 100

Ring



Diaphragm



12 out
of 100

Number of women out of 100 who will get pregnant using each method

Notes on Translation



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- Emphasize need for plain language
- Work with experienced translators
- Field-test and localize



Notes on Cultural Relevance



- Know your audience
- Involve your audience
- Use relevant images and examples
- Field-test and localize

Field testing

- A process of reviewing draft materials with your intended audience
- The way to find out whether your material is understandable, acceptable, attention-getting, and relevant

Questions

- What did you learn?
- What will you do?
- How would you say this?
- What do the pictures tell you?
- What is the main point?

Case Example

Written communication.

The receptionist notices that Renee does not fully complete her patient intake form, and leaves several questions blank.

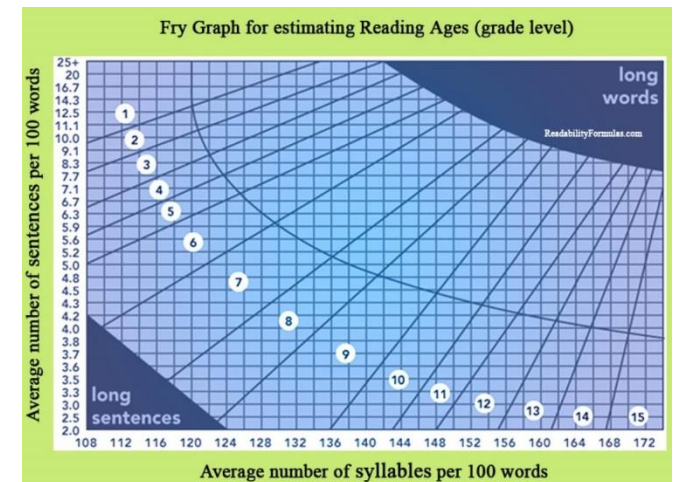


Just as Renee is leaving she says, "So, I should take a pill after I have sex, right?"

Poll Question

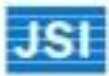
Readability Formulas

- What are readability formulas?
 - Assess the reading grade level at which materials are written
 - Mathematically calculated and expressed as school grade
- Why are they so popular?
- What are their limitations ?



Creating Easy-to-Read Materials

Region I Title X Family Planning Training Center
**Clear Communication:
A Family Planning Provider's Guide for
Developing Easy-to-Read Materials**



JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
44 Farnsworth Street • Boston, MA 02210
Phone: 617-482-9485 • Fax: 617-482-0617
www.jsi.com • www.famplan.org

- Clear Communication: A Family Planning Provider's Guide for Developing Easy-to-Read Materials https://internet-test.jsi.com/JSIInternet/Inc/Common/download_pub.cfm?id=10324&lid=3



- Toolkit for Making Written Material Clear and Effective
<https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Outreach/WrittenMaterialsToolkit/index?redirect=/WrittenMaterialsToolkit>

Selecting Easy-to-Read Materials



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- Bedsider.org
<https://shop.powertodecide.org/educational-materials.html>
- New York State Dept of Health, HIV, STD, Consumer and Provider Materials Order Form
https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/order_forms/hiv_educational_materials.htm
- New York State Dept of Health STD Order Form
https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/order_forms/std_materials.htm.

Health Literacy Training

Plain Language for Health
Research and Practice
April 16 – 17, 2020

[http://go.tufts.edu/
plainlanguageforhealth](http://go.tufts.edu/plainlanguageforhealth)



Health Literacy
Leadership Institute
June 8 - 12, 2020

[http://go.tufts.edu/
healthliteracyleadership](http://go.tufts.edu/healthliteracyleadership)



Summary of Key Points

- Integrate health literacy and cultural competency interventions to improve communication
- In verbal communication, avoid jargon, work with interpreters, and use teach back
- In written communication, apply plain language principles, translate, and involve your audience

Back to Renee



Contact Information

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Thank you!

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