



What is ‘health literacy’ and why does it matter?

Health Literacy refers to a patient’s ability to find, understand and use health information to make informed decisions about their healthcare.

How can I improve my Health Literacy?

- **Have a plan for your visit.**

To make the most of your time with your clinician, take the time to prepare for your visit. Think about what you want to talk about before you go. Patients might want to consider writing down their questions ahead of time to make sure they cover everything.

- **Bring a friend or family member.**

Having a friend or family member accompany you to important medical appointments can help you stay on track during your visit. This person can take notes during your visit so that you can simply listen and ask questions.

- **Request an interpreter if you need one.**

If there is a language barrier between you and your clinician or you have a disability that makes it difficult to understand them, make sure that you request an interpreter in advance of your appointment. Requesting an interpreter will make sure your visit runs smoothly.

- **Be a careful media consumer.**

Make sure that you vet the health information and sources you are reading. There is a wealth of health information available to patients, and it is important to make sure that your sources are credible and accurate. Consider asking your clinician to review the source for you or request that they share resources that they trust and use.

Sources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/about/>
2. https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Health_Literacy_Action_Plan.pdf
3. <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/healthliteracy>
4. <https://www.summithealth.com/health-wellness/10-tips-improving-your-health-literacy>
5. <https://news.web.baylor.edu/news/story/2022/five-steps-improve-your-health-literacy>

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