

# Checklist for designing consumer-friendly health information



	✓ / ✗
1. The reading grade level of the text is between 6 and 8 on the Flesch-Kincaid Index. *Use the Readability Check available in the Health Literacy eLibrary .	
2. Plain language is used and any technical terms, jargon or acronyms are replaced or clearly explained.	
3. Blocks of text are aligned to the left and not justified (the ends of lines are left jagged). Stand alone titles can be centred.	
4. One font is used for the whole document. We recommend using a plain serif or sans serif font. Font is Size 12 or bigger. Important information is in <b>bold</b> , not CAPITALS or <i>italics</i> .	
5. The purpose of the resource is clearly stated at the beginning - in the title or introduction. Main points appear first and there is a summary of main points.	
6. The main information is about desirable patient behaviour rather than facts e.g. 'Drink less water' instead of 'Excess fluid can build up in your body'	
7. The resource only contains important or essential information directly related to the purpose.	
8. The words 'you', 'we' and 'us' are used instead of 'the patient' or 'hospital staff'.	
9. Text is broken up into small chunks by Question & Answer headings or dot point lists. Lists have just three to five items each. Ensure there is only one idea per dot point.	
10. Pictures are relevant, simple and help understanding by visually representing the text or replacing text. There are captions where needed. *Ask the Health Literacy Project Officer for access to a library of approved images.	
11. There is plenty of white space on the page. The resource is printed in black ink on white paper or high contrast dark ink on light background. Colours are used to support understanding, and don't distract the reader.	
12. The resource has been tested with at least 5 consumers and is culturally appropriate.	

**Target: to meet at least 85% of the requirements.**

If your resource ticks at least 10 of these boxes you have met the Health Literacy criteria for developing consumer-friendly health information.

# Resources for designing consumer-friendly health information



## Designing consumer friendly health information

The Tasmanian Government has created a more detailed checklist:

[http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/about\\_us/health\\_literacy/health\\_literacy\\_toolkit/suitability\\_assessment\\_of\\_material\\_score\\_sheet](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/about_us/health_literacy/health_literacy_toolkit/suitability_assessment_of_material_score_sheet)

## Checking readability

This website gives you a list of sentences to rewrite to aid readability:

[https://www.online-utility.org/english/readability\\_test\\_and\\_improve.jsp](https://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp)

This website gives you an average readability score using a few different formulas:

<http://www.readabilityformulas.com/free-readability-formula-tests.php>

This website highlights sentences you can change to improve readability:

<http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>

## Plain language

Everyday words for Public Health Communication:

<http://www.cdc.gov/other/pdf/everydaywords-060216-final.pdf>

Plain Language Thesaurus for Health Communications:

[https://depts.washington.edu/respcare/public/info/Plain\\_Language\\_Thesaurus\\_for\\_Health\\_Communications.pdf](https://depts.washington.edu/respcare/public/info/Plain_Language_Thesaurus_for_Health_Communications.pdf)

## Multilingual resources

Health Translations has links to reliable Australian health information in languages other than English:

<http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/>

Cancer Council Victoria has developed a printable Multilingual Appointment Card:

<https://www.cancervic.org.au/multilingual-card>