

Checklist for reviewing and developing consumer health information

Your aim is to meet at most of the criteria below. If you have 3 or more “no” answers, your resource does not meet health literacy criteria. For more information about each criteria and examples, go to: healthliteracy.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au

Criteria for resources to meet health literacy standards		Yes	No	Not applicable
Language				
1	The information is below a grade 8 reading level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences are about 20 words or less Paragraphs are about 5 sentences or less 			
2	Uses plain (“everyday”, conversational) language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replaces or explains jargon or acronyms 			
3	Uses friendly, welcoming language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses 'you', 'we', and 'us' instead of 'the patient' and 'hospital staff' Uses inclusive and trauma informed language 			
4	Uses action-oriented language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses active voice rather than passive voice Addresses the user when describing actions, e.g. “Take your medicine with food” instead of “medicine should be taken with food” 			
Information				
5	Purpose of the document is clear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose stated in title or introduction 			
6	The most important points appear first and stand out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a summary if a longer resource Limit the number of messages - 4 or less is a good target. 			
7	Information is "need to know" rather than "nice to know" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is directly related to the document's purpose Consumer actions are clear and broken into manageable steps Background information is limited (can include a link to further information, e.g. videos) E.g. “drink __cups of water a day” instead of background information about the impact of excess fluid build up 			
8	Numerical information is easy to understand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not make the reader do any calculations Uses relatable comparisons, e.g. use “a shopping trolley apart” for “1.5 metres apart” 			

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Formatting				
9	Aligns text to the left (not justified) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Titles can be centred or left aligned 			
10	Uses one font in at least size 12 for the whole document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plain font, e.g. Public Sans, Arial, Times You may have to use larger font for some audiences 			
11	The date of development and date for review are on the document.			
12	Important information is in bold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not use capitals or italics 			
13	Breaks text up into small chunks using headings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question and answer headings work well 			
14	Breaks up paragraphs and lists to be shorter or separated by category headings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists have just 3 to 5 items each Lists have only one idea per dot point 			
15	Uses images that are relevant, simple and help understanding by visually representing the main messages of the document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes captions for images 			
16	Uses plenty of white space around text			
17	Uses colours to support understanding and these colours do not distract the reader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses high contrast colours for text and background, e.g., black text on white background 			
18	Tables, charts or graphs are simple, easy to follow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes instructions for how to use the tables/charts/graphs to take action 			
19	Uses visual cues to draw attention to key points, e.g. arrows, boxes, bullets, larger font			
Consumer needs				
20	Designed or tested with at least 5 consumers who represent the target audience			
21	Considers and addresses the health, wellbeing and cultural needs of the population/s the information is for			

Improvements I could make to the information: