

# 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](http://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 <a href="#">reading level</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentences are about 20 words or less</li> <li>• Paragraphs are about 5 sentences or less</li> </ul>			
2	Uses plain language (“everyday”, conversational language) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replaces or explains technical terms, jargon or acronyms</li> </ul>			
3	Uses friendly, welcoming language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses 'you', 'we', and 'us' instead of 'the patient' and 'hospital staff'</li> <li>• Uses inclusive and trauma informed language</li> </ul>			
4	Uses action-oriented language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses active voice rather than passive voice</li> <li>• Addresses the user when describing actions, e.g. “Take your medicine with food” instead of “medicine should be taken with food”</li> </ul>			
Information				
5	Purpose of the document is clear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose stated in title or introduction</li> </ul>			
6	The most important points appear first and stand out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes a summary if a longer resource</li> </ul>			
7	Information is "need to know" rather than "nice to know" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer actions are clear</li> <li>• Background information is limited (can include a link to further information, e.g. videos)</li> <li>• E.g. “drink __ cups of water a day” instead of background information about the impact of excess fluid build up</li> </ul>			
8	Information is directly related to the document’s purpose			
9	Numerical information is easy to understand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not make the reader do any calculations</li> <li>• Uses relatable comparisons</li> </ul>			

Criteria for resources to meet health literacy standards		Yes	No	Not applicable
<b>Formatting</b>				
10	Aligns text to the left (not justified) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Titles can be centred or left aligned</li> </ul>			
11	Uses one font for the whole document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plain font, e.g. Public Sans, Arial, Times</li> </ul>			
12	Important information is in bold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not use capitals or italics</li> </ul>			
13	Breaks text up into small chunks using headings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer headings work well</li> </ul>			
14	Breaks up paragraphs and lists to be shorter or separated by category headings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists have just 3 to 5 items each</li> <li>• Lists have only one idea per dot point</li> </ul>			
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"> <li>• Includes captions for images</li> </ul>			
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"> <li>• Uses high contrast colours for text and background, e.g., black text on white background</li> </ul>			
18	Tables, charts or graphs are simple, easy to follow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes instructions for how to use the tables/charts/graphs to take action</li> </ul>			
19	Uses visual cues to draw attention to key points, e.g. arrows, boxes, bullets, larger font			
<b>Consumer needs</b>				
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 aimed at			
Improvements I could make to the information:				

Adapted from SAM: Suitability Assessment of Materials Score Sheet, and the [Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool \(PEMAT\)](#)