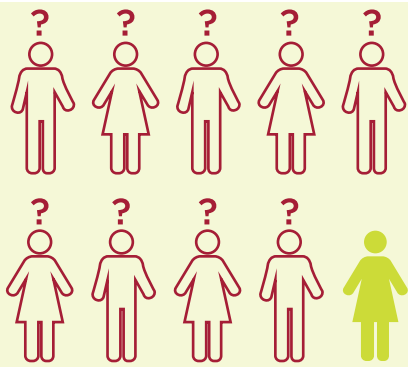
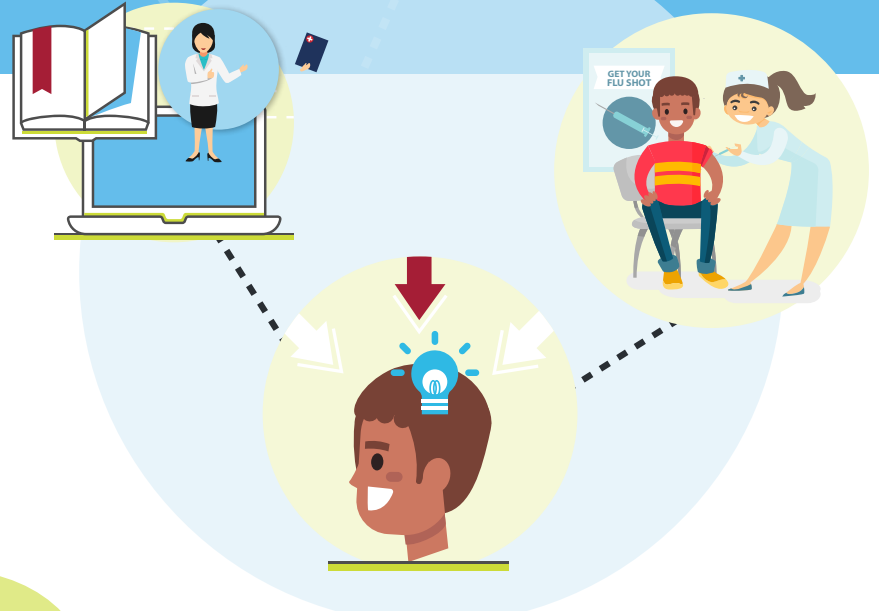


Always use plain language with patients.

What is health literacy?

The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.¹



Who is affected by inadequate health literacy?

9 in 10 adults struggle to understand and use health information.²

Why is health literacy important?

Health literacy is critical because it affects people's ability to:

- Navigate the complex healthcare system
- Share health information with healthcare providers
- Understand medical concepts
- Engage in self-care



What can I do to improve health literacy?

Pledge to stop using jargon and words that are hard to understand. Instead, use words that people know the first time they hear them.

Instead of...
Fatigue
Say...
Tired

Instead of...
Hyperlipidemia
Say...
High Cholesterol

Instead of...
Myocardial Infarction
Say...
Heart Attack

Instead of...
Immunization
Say...
Shot

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¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2010. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; 2000.

²Kutner, M., Greenberg, E., Jin, Y., and Paulsen, C. (2006). The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NCES 2006-483). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.