

# What is Health Literacy?

The ability to  
**find and understand basic health information and services**  
needed to make appropriate health decisions

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## Why is it important?

Health literacy affects people's ability to

- Share personal information
- Keep appointments
- Take medications correctly
- Fill out forms
- Understand instructions
- Measure blood sugar levels
- Choose between health plans and providers

## Who should know about health literacy?

EVERYONE

Teachers  
Consumers  
Doctors  
Dentists  
Pharmacists  
Parents  
Librarians  
Caregivers  
Nurses  
Patients  
Health educators  
Public health workers  
Medical Assistants

## What can we do?

Use plain language  
Avoid jargon and difficult words  
Limit information to 2-3 points  
State the most important point first  
Use visuals, pictures, images  
Ask questions to clarify  
Keep it simple  
Clearly state the actions you want  
Give written instructions  
Ask questions with “what” – “when” -  
“how” – “where”

