

Health Literacy: Challenges & Solutions



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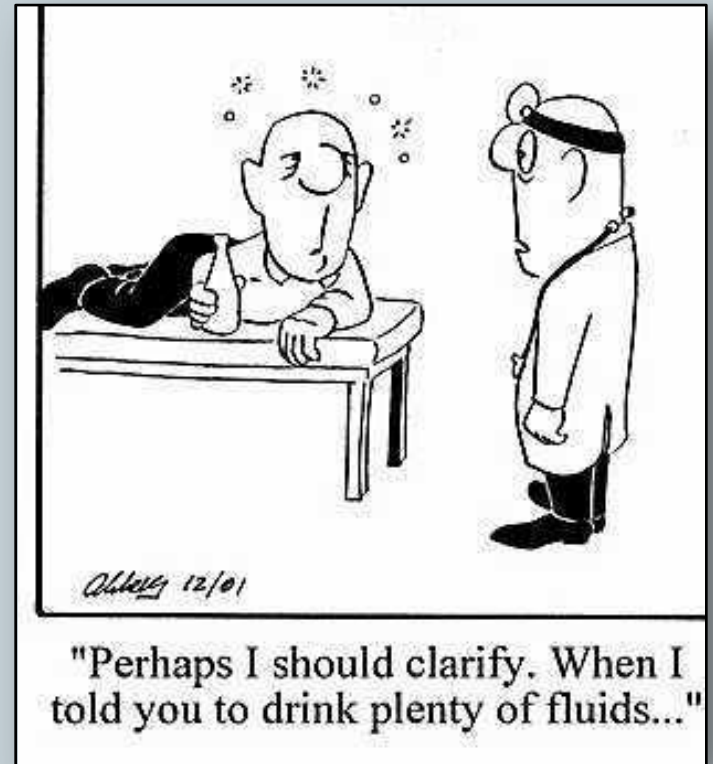
<http://nnlm.gov/sea/>



Agenda



- Health Literacy
- Why it Matters
- Tools
- Hands On Exercise
- Questions/Comments?



Determinants of Health



- Age
- Income
- Literacy Skills
- Employment Status
- Education Level
- Race or Ethnic Group



Literacy



5 Core Skills

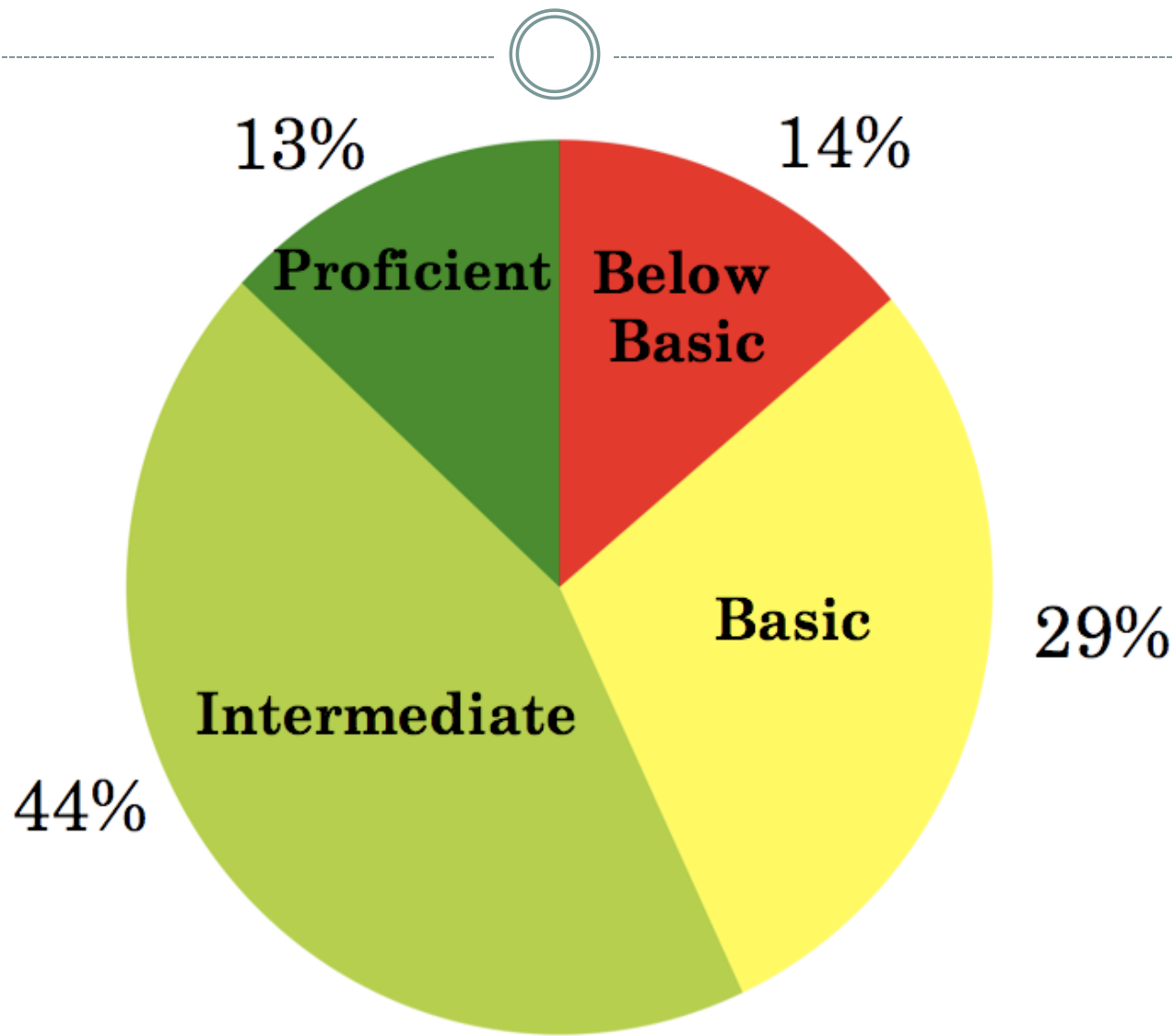
- Reading
 - Prose
 - Documents
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Speaking
- Listening

The
Oral Exchange

Literacy in Context

- Time & Place
- Circumstances
- Background
 - Speaker/Writer
 - Listener/Reader
- Culture
 - Speaker/Writer
 - Listener/Reader

NAAL (2003): <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/>



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 care decisions”

- Healthy People 2010

“...understand and **act on** health information”

- Pfizer Clear Health Communication, 2012

Two Sides to the Story



At first, health literacy was considered to be a characteristic of the individual.

Increasingly, researchers and practitioners are looking at both sides of the coin:



graphic by Dalen Gilbrech

Shared with permission from Dr. Rima Rudd, Harvard School of Public Health

www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy

AMA 'Help Patients Understand' Video

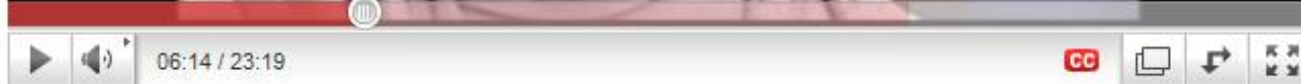


Health literacy and patient safety: Help patients understand

AMAFoundation

11 videos

Subscribe



Do You Understand?



“Transverse and longitudinal response functions have been extracted for ^3He , ^{12}C , ^{40}Ca , ^{48}Ca , and ^{56}Fe up to a momentum transfer of 550. The quenching of the longitudinal response function in the quasi-elastic region is significant and might be a signature of modification of the intrinsic properties of the nucleon in nuclear matter.”

--Zein-Eddine Meziani. Transverse and longitudinal response functions in quasielastic electron scattering from nuclei. Nuclear Physics A Volume 446, Issues 1-2, 16 December 1985, Pages 113-122

Health Literacy Matters



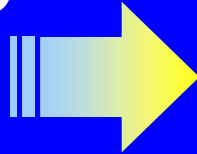
- To fill out a patient information form
- To follow discharge instructions
- To manage medications
- To care for a loved one's health
- To keep appointments
- To understand insurance
- To identify signs
- To research health information
- To sign consent forms



Directional Signs



**Ambulatory
Entrance**



Hospital XYZ

- Some people become confused about whether this entry was intended for ambulances or for patients

**Ambulatory
Entrance**



- The use of visuals clarify the message
- Contrast in color makes it easy to read
- Try to be consistent when hanging signs

Symbols and Drug Labels



→ What's "plenty" of water?



→ "Medicine will make you feel dizzy"



→ "Don't take medicine if you've been in the sun too long."

Low Health Literacy Leads to...



- Underutilization of services
- Increased medication errors
- Poor understanding of health
- Increased hospitalizations
- Poor health outcomes
- Increased healthcare costs

What Can We Do?



Change the Skill Side:

- Improve literacy skills of the public
- Improve communication skills of professionals

Change the Demand Side:

- Recalibrate the norm and identify literacy barriers
- Lower Demands
- Remove Barriers

Dr. Rima Rudd

Harvard School of Public Health

www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy

Communication Tools



- Use Teach-Back technique
- Encourage questions & self advocacy
- Use plain language
 - “Keeps bones strong” vs. “Prevents osteoporosis”
 - “Chest pain” vs. “Angina”
 - “The heart is a pump.”
- Provide easy-to-understand materials
- Combine tools

Teach-Back Technique



- I want to be sure I went over everything. Tell me how you will take this medicine.
- Just to check if I've covered everything: Tell me what you will say to your wife when you return home.
- Just to be sure I was clear: Show me how you will use this peak flow meter.

Encourage Self Advocacy



- Partnership for Clear Health Communication
Ask-Me-3 Initiative: <http://www.npsf.org/askme3/>
 1. What is my main problem?
 2. What do I need to do?
 3. Why is it important for me to do this?
- Patient can initiate Teach-Back
“Let me make sure I understand: I should...”


Encourage Self Advocacy: Websites

Home Health Topics A-Z Videos A-Z About Us

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov>

NIH Senior Health

Built with You in Mind



HEALTHY ROADS MEDIA

GET HELP GET ANSWERS

አማርኛ Amharic | العربية العربية Arabic | Bosanski Bosnian | မြန်မာဘာသာ Burmese | English | فارسی Farsi | Français French | Hmong | ကာရင် Karen

ខ្មែរ Khmer | Ikirundi Kirundi | 코리아 Korean | كوردی Kurdish | Liberian English | ພາສາລາວ Laotian | नेपाली Nepali | Русский Russian | Soomaali Somali

<http://www.healthyroadsmedia.org>



A service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine
NIH National Institutes of Health

medlineplus.gov **ESPAÑOL** Search MedlinePlus **GO**

1 Tachycardia **Hypothyroid** Electrocardiology Dyspnea
2 Anemia Hypertension Neuropathy **Osteoporosis** Arthritis Diverticulitis
3 **Colonoscopy** Pneumonitis Osteopenia Rhinitis
4

Want to understand what your doctor is saying?
Check out our tutorial on Understanding Medical Words.

→ Health Topics → Drugs & Supplements → Videos & Cool Tools

EASY TO READ

Plain English/Plain Language



<http://www.plainlanguage.gov>

- Promote the use of plain language for all government communications
- Examples, word suggestions, thesaurus
- Separate section for health literacy

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/plain-language-dictionary>

Plain Language Widget and App

Visual Tools: Story Cards

I Can Brush My Teeth Social Story

Instructions: Read the social story with your child to learn the routine. Your child may also read the story independently.



I get my toothbrush.



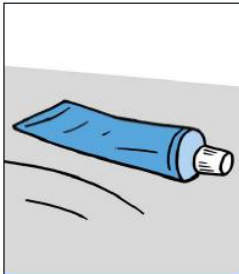
I brush my teeth to keep them healthy.
I brush my teeth in the morning and at night.



I turn on the water and put my toothbrush
under it. I can get the bristles wet.



I turn the water off.



I get my toothpaste.

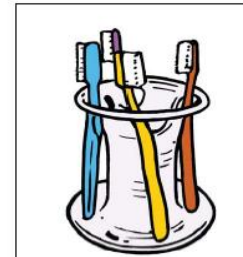


I take off the cap and squeeze a pea-size
amount of toothpaste onto my toothbrush.

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Brushing and Flossing Visual Sequencing Cards

Instructions: Cut out cards along the lines. Place the cards in order and show your child each step of brushing and flossing his or her teeth. Place the cards on a board, mirror, or ledge. Remove each step once it is completed. Use these visual aids each time your child brushes and flosses.



I get my toothbrush.



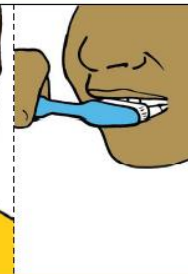
I get my toothpaste.



I take off the cap and squeeze a pea-size
amount of toothpaste onto my toothbrush.



I brush the front of my teeth
gently using a circle motion.



I brush the front of my teeth
gently using a circle motion.



I brush the inside
part of my teeth.



I brush the inside
part of my teeth.

14

Visual Tools: Videos & Tutorials

X-Plain
PATIENT EDUCATION


MedlinePlus
Trusted Health Information for You

Computed Axial Tomography (CT) Scan

Help | Credits | Terms of Use

Introduction

A Computed Axial Tomography or CT scan is a test that provides very clear pictures of structures inside the body.



Test

Summary

BREAKFAST **LUNCH** **SNACKS** **DINNER** **ACTIVITY**

English Muffin Whole Wheat Toast Blueberry Muffin Scrambled Eggs



FRUITS 0 cups **VEGETABLES** 0 cups **PROTEIN** 0 ounces **GRAINS** 0 ounces **DAIRY** 0 cups

FUEL TANK 0 TARGET 1600


MedlinePlus
Trusted Health Information for You

Aortic Aneurysm Repair

May 7, 2009 at 4:00 PM

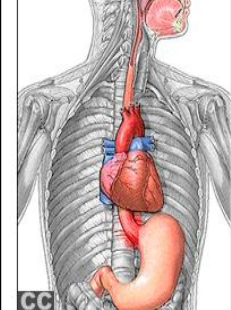
Understanding Medical Words

A tutorial from the National Library of Medicine



Introduction **Break it up** **Word Roots** **Beginnings & Endings**

Quiz Time **Abbreviations** **Learn More**



Heartburn does not involve the heart, but is felt in the esophagus near the heart's location.

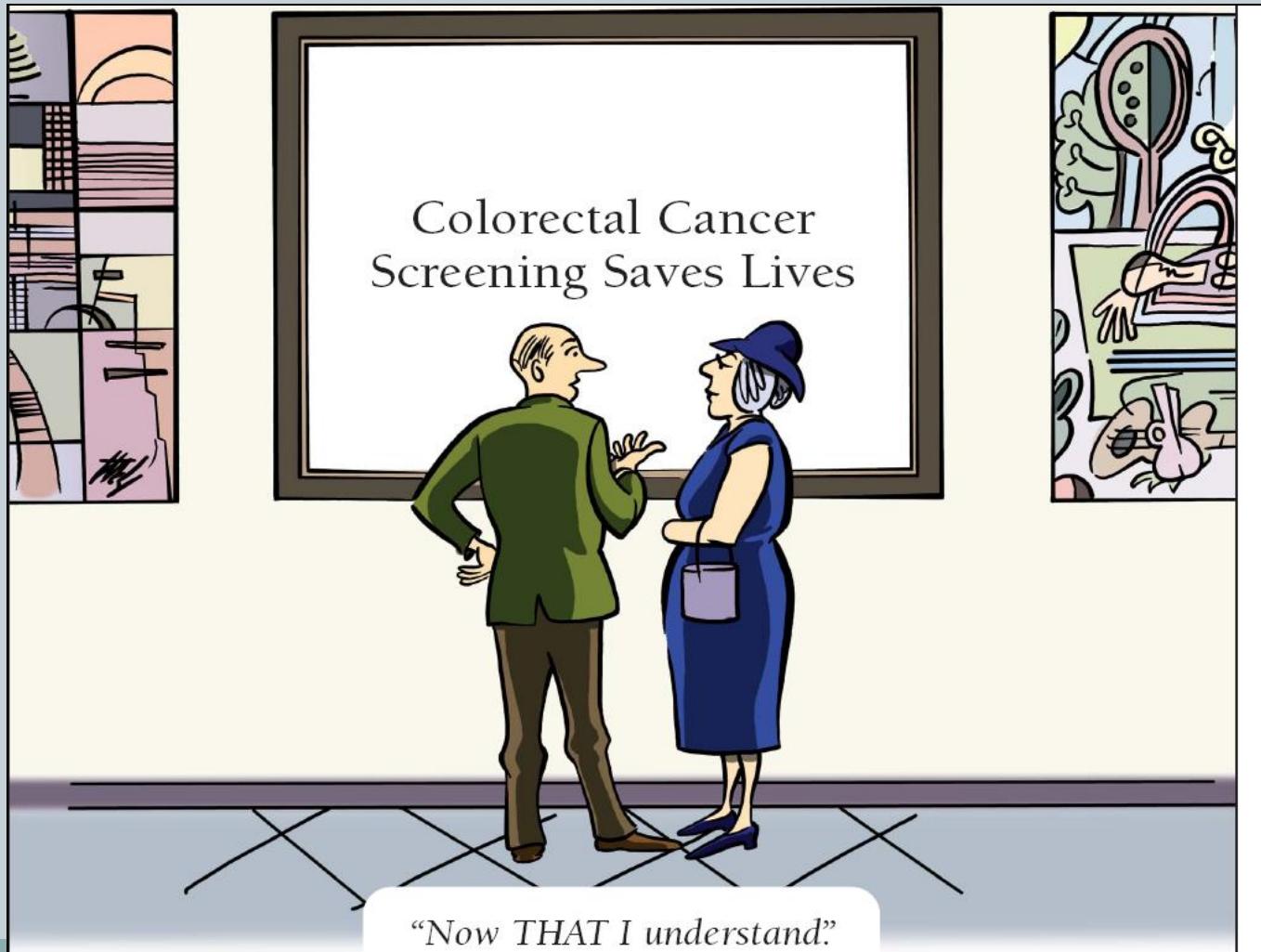
heartburn has nothing to do with the heart itself.

[View Program Transcript](#)

[Click Here to view the](#)

[Start the tutorial](#)

Easy-to-Understand Materials



"Now THAT I understand."

Tips for Message Content



- Be clear about targeted audience.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences – word choice, graphics, customs & beliefs.
- Tell readers what they will gain from reading your material – “**Tips for a Healthier You!**”
- Limit the number of messages.

Tips (cont.)



- Use visuals for text (or with text)
 - Place images close to related text
 - Text and pictures must agree
 - Pictographs may be used to represent ideas or actions
- Keep visual separation between topics
- Test for Readability – pg. 27 in *Simply Put* manual

Text & White Space



- 12 point or larger font size - not ALL CAPS, no “effects”
- Use common fonts such as Arial or Tahoma; avoid script

Eat fruits and vegetables.

Eat fruits and vegetables.

- Use **boldface** type and underlining to cue readers to important text
- Use white space
 - Aim for “50/50 split”

Present Tense & Active Voice





1. Wrap the cut in a clean cloth.
2. Keep it dry.

Avoid:

Use:

Give consideration to  Consider

Make payment  Pay

Is concerned with  Concerns

Common Terms

Avoid

- Accordingly
- Afford an opportunity
- At a later date
- Close proximity
- In the event that
- Incumbent upon
- Utilize

Use

- So
- Allow
- Later
- Near
- If
- Must
- Use

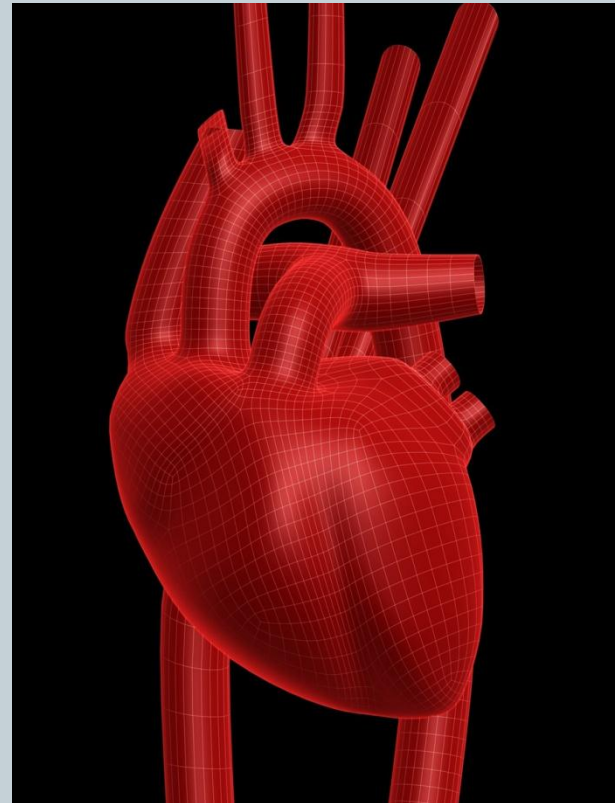
Medical Terms



Physician



Cardiac



Medical Terms

Hazardous

Radiology



Rewriting



Straight Leg Raise

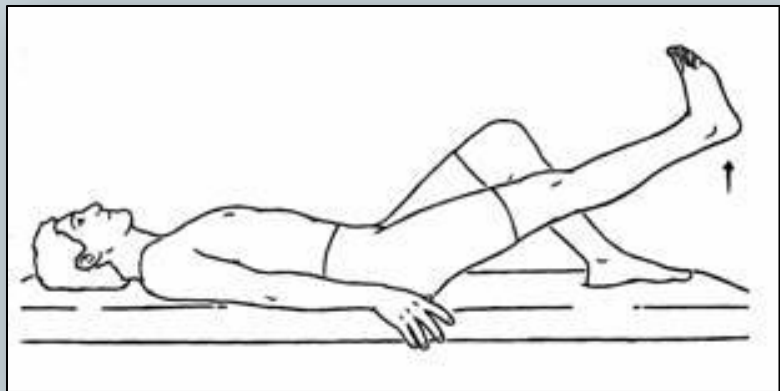
Lying on your back, bend your opposite knee straight and slowly lift your other leg up approximately 12 in, hold for 3s, and lower slowly.

Rewriting



Straight Leg Raise

- Lie on your back
- Bend left leg
- Lift right leg 12 inches
- Hold for 3 seconds
- Lower slowly



Visuals Should Reflect the Audience



- Age of reader
- Consider diversity
- Use current styles
- Get user input for color choices



Before and After Examples

Letter to Parents of a New Baby (revised)

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Carter,

Congratulations on your new baby.

We know that you will want to keep your baby happy and comfortable. We have enclosed some information that may help you.

We also have information on

- Post partum adjustment (getting used to having a baby in your life)
- Child development (how your child grows)
- Communicable diseases (diseases your child can catch)
- Immunization (protecting your child against those diseases)
- Family nutrition (healthy eating)
- Parenting

Please call us if we can help you.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe,

Your Community Health Nurse

[Flesch-Kincaid reading level: grade 5.8]

From: <http://www.mb.literacy.ca/letternewbaby.htm>

• Letter

*Example
<http://>

Resources



- NN/LM SE/A Health Literacy Toolkit:
<http://nnlm.gov/sea/outreach/healthlitkit/index.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Simply Put
http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/ToolsTemplates/Simply_Put_082010.pdf
[CDC Literacy Page](#)
[Gateway to Health Communication & Social Marketing Practice](#)
- Clear Health Communications (Pfizer)
<http://www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com/>

Resources (cont.)



- Health Literacy Consulting: <http://www.healthliteracy.com>
- Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit (AHRQ and UNC-Chapel Hill): <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy/>
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
<http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy>
- Universal Symbols in Health Care Workbook:
<http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=15864>

Thank You!



Questions/Comments?

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