

Health Literacy: Challenges & Solutions
Florida Literacy Conference
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Health Care Navigation and Self-Care Tasks*

Task	Tools	Skills
Health Promotion		
Maintain healthy habits (e.g., purchase and prepare healthy food, exercise)	Food labels Recipes Charts/graphs such as BMI	Using charts Understanding labels and measures Comprehending personal relevance of recommended behaviors
Navigation		
Find appropriate services (e.g., find listing of clinics or services within a hospital)	Directory Map	Using an index Using a map Asking for directions Using a telephone directory Recognizing hospital dept. names
Make appointments (e.g., schedule appointment, get directions)	Telephone Map Bus schedule Calendar	Making plans Recording dates Using reminder cues Using a calendar Following a bus schedule Using a map
Apply for health insurance (e.g., compare plans, compare costs and benefits)	Health insurance booklets Forms	Completing forms Reading for relevant information Understanding charts Calculating costs
Disease Management		
Provide information (e.g., personal health history, describe symptoms)	Medical history forms	Asking doctor for clarification Filling out forms Verbally describing symptoms
Learn more about condition (e.g., locate information online or in the library)	Patient education publications Dictionary/encyclopedia Web sites	Asking for help from a librarian or other person Using a dictionary/encyclopedia Using the Internet
Take medicine (e.g., follow label directions; measure amounts or count pills; plan timing)	Labels Calendar Clock	Reading and understanding labels Using clock and/or calendar to plan when to take medicine Developing reminder cues
Measure or monitor (e.g., use a peak flow meter)	Measurement tools (e.g., peak flow meter, scale, thermometer, etc.)	Understanding and using measurement scales Using a chart Measuring and record
Recognize and act on symptoms (e.g., make note of symptoms, make appointment)	Health education materials Calendar	Reading health education materials and recognizing relevance to personal health Observing and taking notes

Disease Prevention/Health Protection		
Be attentive to public health recommendations (e.g., notice publicly posted health posters, read health-related articles)	Public announcements on billboards, signs or on radio/TV Articles in newspapers and magazines Web sites	Reading newspapers/magazines Understanding public announcements Differentiating between advertisements and official health warnings
Take disease preventive action (e.g., stop smoking, use condoms, sunscreen, etc.)	Articles in newspapers and magazines Public announcements Web sites	Reading labels Reading newspapers/magazines Locate resources and supports
Determine need for screening test (e.g., make a decision about getting screened for particular disease)	Health information materials Graphs and charts	Understanding mathematical and risk concepts
Participate in screening programs (e.g., get an HIV test or a dental checkup)	Directions for preparations Informed consent instructions	Fill out forms Ask questions
Take follow-up action (e.g., change behavior or make a doctor/dentist appointment)	Follow-up letters/instructions Directions	Understand test result vocabulary Ask for clarification Plan for various outcomes Use reminder cues

[*Chart revised with permission from author Rima Rudd: Table 1. Health Activities, Materials, and Tasks, Table 2. Health care access and navigation: examples of tasks, materials, tools, skills and lesson ideas, Table 3. Chronic disease management: examples of tasks, materials, tools, skills and lesson ideas, and Table 4. Disease prevention and screening: examples of tasks, materials, tools, skills and lesson ideas. Rudd R, Soricone L, Santos M, Zobel E, Smith J. Health Literacy Study Circles⁺: Introduction, Overview, Planning and Facilitation Tips. Boston: HALL/NCSALL; 2005. http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/nav_ch1.pdf. Updated 7/27/07. Accessed 5/20/10.] {With appreciation to the Harvard School of Public Health.}