

**What is Health Literacy Month?**

Health Literacy Month is a time for organizations and individuals to promote the importance of understandable health information. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, Title V, defines health literacy as “the degree to which an individual has the capacity to obtain, communicate, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions.”

**Why is health literacy important?**

Health literacy skills are what individuals use to understand basic information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions. Strong health literacy skills, such as the ability to make appointments, navigate health systems, understand insurance plan benefits, and read medication instructions, is related to a greater likelihood of positive health outcomes.

**Who does health literacy affect?**

**Patients** need health literacy skills to:

- Find health information and services.
- Communicate their health needs and preferences.
- Process and respond to personal health-related questions.
- Understand their health choices and consequences so they can act in a manner that best suits their needs.

**Healthcare providers** such as doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, or public health workers need health literacy skills to:

- Help patients find information and services.
- Communicate about patients' health and healthcare needs.
- Process what patients tell them and ask for.
- Decide what information and services work best for their patients and act in a manner that best suits their needs.

**Mobile apps**

- [Health I.Q.](#)
- [MediBabble Translator](#)

**Tips from our docs**

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Kiko Torres, MD**, our Senior Medical Director.

Health literacy skills start early in life and are part of the process of caring for and educating people of all ages. Therefore, healthcare providers should consider the Three A's when communicating health-related information:

- **Accurate.** Using health literacy best practices does not mean “dumbing-down” the information. Health literacy practices ensure the information is presented accurately and in ways people can understand.
- **Accessible.** Just because you create health information doesn't mean people see it or can use it. Where and how you present information affects its accessibility.
- **Actionable.** It is human nature to want to tell people all we know about something, but that doesn't necessarily help. In the health field, we typically want people to start or stop doing something, or to do more or less of something. Background information *is* important, but make sure to provide actionable information so people **can** do something with the information you provide.

**Additional resources**

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Health Literacy](#)
- [healthfinder.gov](http://healthfinder.gov)