

Health literacy quiz



FIND OUT WHERE YOU ARE ON THE HEALTH LITERACY SCALE

Do your patients always go away completely understanding what you've told them and knowing exactly what to do next or do you sometimes, ahem, baffle them with science? Do our quiz to find out!

Either complete this quiz sheet and send to us, or go to www.open.hqsc.govt.nz/medication/health-literacy-quiz to do the quiz online. Everyone who completes the quiz goes in the prize draw to win a morning tea for your team worth \$100. Post your completed quiz to: Communications, Health Quality & Safety Commission, PO Box 25496, Wellington 6146, or scan and email to: communications@hqsc.govt.nz. Closing date for the competition is 31 March 2015.

Your name:

Your email address:

Tick to receive a pack of *Let's PLAN* resources

1. What is the first step when you are talking to someone about their health or medication?

- a) Find out what they already know.
- b) Make sure you have their name and address correct.
- c) Ask what is wrong with them.

2. Which of these are key steps for building people's health literacy?

- a) Link all new information back to what the person knows.
- b) Use the person's own words and build on them.
- c) Give information in logical steps.
- d) All of the above.

3. What is a good way to draw attention to key points in written material?

- a) Tear out the particular page and give it to them.
- b) Highlight the information in some way.
- c) Try to avoid giving people written information at all.

4. The best way to give people information is:

- a) refer them to an appropriate website
- b) in manageable chunks
- c) all at once, so they get the whole picture.

5. Rather than overload people with too much information at one time:

- a) give them a pamphlet
- b) ask them to make another appointment later
- c) agree with them the best way to get more information.

6. A picture is worth:

- a) a thousand words
- b) not a lot, unless it includes explanatory words
- c) quite a bit if it is a Rembrandt.

7. When reinforcing information you should (choose all that apply):

- a) ask the person to give you a written summary of what you have told them
- b) check for understanding (ask them to tell you what they understood about what you said)
- c) use pictures and diagrams
- d) link the information back to what the person knows
- e) use prompts – eg, 'Do you remember what we said about...'
- f) bring in another health professional to discuss the same information with the person.

8. When checking with someone that you have been clear, you should use:

- a) open questions
- b) closed questions.

9. When reviewing medicines, you should (choose all that apply):

- a) use the person's actual medicines
- b) find out what the person already knows about their medicines
- c) ask the person which medicine they want to start with
- d) consider using medicine cards.

10. People with low health literacy:

- a) understand everything health professionals tell them
- b) are less likely to ask questions of their health professionals
- c) have fewer problems with their medicines than others.

ANSWERS OVERLEAF

ANSWERS

1. What is the first step when you are talking to someone about their health or medication?

Answer: a) Find out what they already know. Everyone you see will have existing knowledge and finding out what they already know will help you plan how much information to give them. This will help you target information to the person involved and/or their caregiver.

2. Which of these are key steps for building people's health literacy?

Answer: d) All of the above.

3. What is a good way to draw attention to key points in written material?

Answer: b) Highlight the information in some way. This helps the person find the key information they need. Highlighting, underlining, circling or numbering key information will make the material more meaningful.

4. The best way to give people information is:

Answer: b) in manageable chunks. People can only take in so much information before their short-term memory is overloaded. Try to limit yourself to giving 3–5 pieces of information at a time.

5. Rather than overload people with too much information at one time:

Answer: c) agree with them the best way to get more information. While printed, 'take-home' information is helpful, if is only one way to give people information. If you think someone needs more information at a later stage, agree with them how you will do this – it may be a follow-up call, another appointment, text message, email, a website link and so on – or a combination of these.

6. A picture is worth:

Answer: a) a thousand words. The brain recalls visual information better than written or spoken information.

7. When reinforcing information you should:

Answers: c) use pictures and diagrams, **d)** link the information back to what the person knows and **e)** use prompts. People may need to be reminded of key points a number of times before they remember them. Simply repeating what you have said won't be enough. Find another way to remind them such as writing it down for them, drawing a diagram or picture or using prompts to help them remember.

8. When checking with someone that you have been clear, you should use:

Answer: a) open questions. Asking closed questions (eg: 'Does that make sense?') is not effective to find out if the person understood you. People are most likely to say they don't have any questions, and they do understand, even when they don't. Ask the person to repeat back to you, in their own words, what they now know or need to do. Consider using the 'Teach-back' method, which, when done effectively, improves people's understanding.*

9. When reviewing medicines, you should:

Answer: All of the above. Using the person's actual medicines helps to link spoken information to the actual medicines. If you are using medicine cards, again, use them with the patient's actual medicines, and make sure they use clear, ordinary language.

10. People with low health literacy:

Answer: b) are less likely to ask questions of their health professionals. Encourage people to ask questions. Other tips are to not speak too quickly, avoid technical language (or explain it if you do have to use it) and use a friendly, conversational tone.

* The Commission's booklet *Three steps to better health literacy* has more information about 'Teach-back' – www.hqsc.govt.nz/publications-and-resources/publication/1386/.

How did you score on the communication front?



1–2 out of 10

Your line is definitely crackly. Time to start using better techniques to help your patients build their health literacy.



3–4 out of 10

Not the best, but you have potential. While you're on the right track, there is room for improvement.



5–6 out of 10

Not bad. You get the message across most of the time, but some patients might not be getting the full picture.



7–8 out of 10

Good performance. You're a great communicator, and with a few improvements, you'll be brilliant!



9–10 out of 10

Crystal clear with five-bar signal. Congratulations! You are an excellent communicator – clear and direct. Well done, keep up the good work and lead by example.