



WI Cancer Council Annual Summit:
November 15, 2018

Better Health Literacy:

*Strategies to Remove Barriers and Reduce
Disparities in Access and Outcomes*

Kari LaScala

Stephanie Severs

Who we are



- Statewide nonprofit organization offering professional development on Health Literacy
- Projects (e.g., Medication workshops, Rx labels)
- Division of Wisconsin Literacy (75 members)
- Health Literacy Summit (every other year)
 - April 2-3, 2019

WisconsinHealthLiteracy.org





Today's topics:

- What is Health Literacy
- Health literacy and disparities
- Low health literacy and cancer
- Health literacy techniques
- Evaluating materials
- Upcoming materials on cancer screenings using health literacy techniques

Which of the following is the single strongest predictor of an individual's health status?

1. Age
2. Income
3. Literacy Skills
4. Employment status
5. Education Level
6. Racial or ethnic group

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6. Racial or ethnic group

What is Health Literacy?

“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.**”

—The Affordable Care Act of 2010

Two sides to Health Literacy

- A person's ability to access, understand and use health information
- The *other person's* ability to clearly communicate how to access, understand and use health information for better health

Health Literacy means a person is able to understand:

- Instructions on prescription bottles
- What their doctors say to them
- Appointment slips
- Medical brochures, provider instructions and consent forms
- Insurance benefits

What's it like?

Your naicisyhp has dednemmoer that you have a ypocsonoloc. Ypocsonoloc is a test for noloc recnac. It sevlovni gnitresni a elbixelf gniweiv epocs into your mutcer. You must drink a laiceps diuqil the thgin erofeb the noitanimaxe to naelc out your noloc.

Almost everyone will have difficulty with health literacy at some point.

It's much harder for those that do not:

- Read very well.
- Speak English as their primary language.

Medical studies show most people suffer a 68% hearing loss when naked.





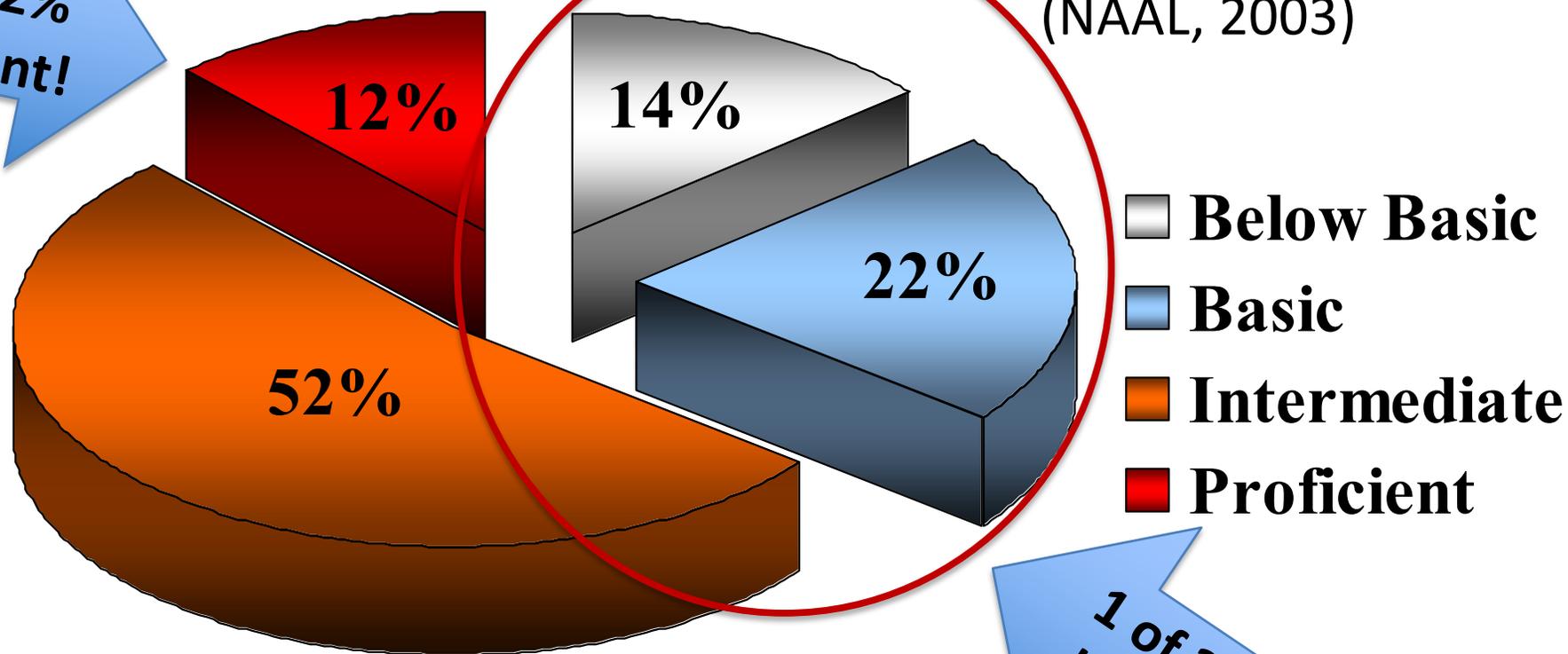
Health Literacy, disparities & health equity

Improved health literacy may lead to better health equity

- Another tool that can be used to help:
 - Understanding health information
 - Access to information

Health literacy of U.S. Adults

(NAAL, 2003)



Only 12% proficient!

1 of 3 struggle with low health literacy

Who is most at risk for low health literacy?

- Race/ethnicity:
 - Entire population 36%
 - Caucasian 28%
 - Native Americans 48%
 - African-Americans 58%
 - Hispanics 66%
 - Asian 31%
- Limited literacy skills
- Poor health status

Who is most at risk for low health literacy?

- Age:
 - 16-64 years: 28-34%
 - 65 and older: 59%
- Education Level
 - In High School, GED or HS grad: 34-37%
 - Less than/some high school: 76%

Health literacy and cancer

- Those with low health literacy more likely to:
 - Avoid physician visits
 - Know less about screening tests
 - Seek information from physicians--less from other sources
 - Feel more fatalistic about cancer and less control over health risks
 - Avoid seeking more cancer information

Morris, Field et al, 2013

Health literacy and cancer

- Those with low health literacy more likely to:
 - Have higher tobacco use
 - Be less physically active
 - Consume fewer fruits and vegetables



Health literacy techniques to help decrease disparities

Create Shame-Free Environment



Even highly educated people prefer simple, understandable health information.



Practice plain, simple language

20% of American adults read at or below the **5th grade** level.

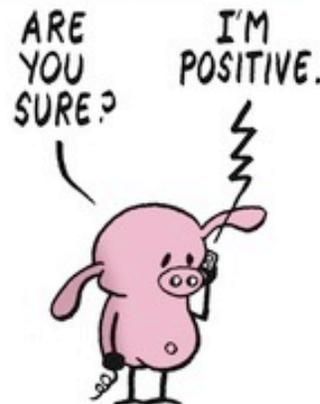
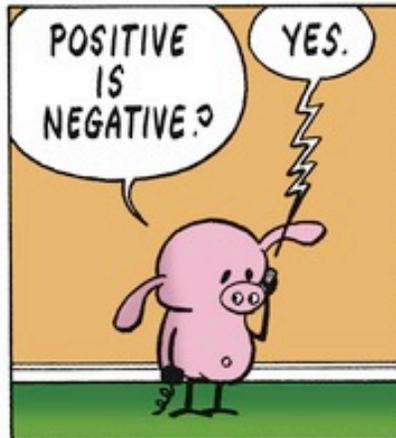
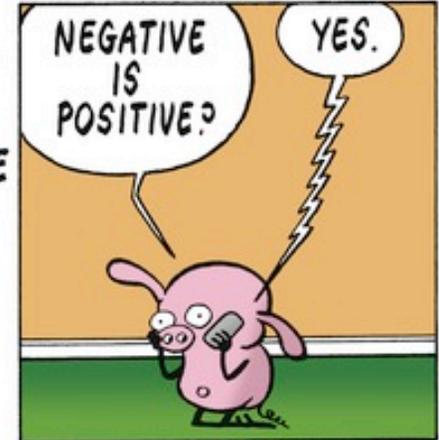
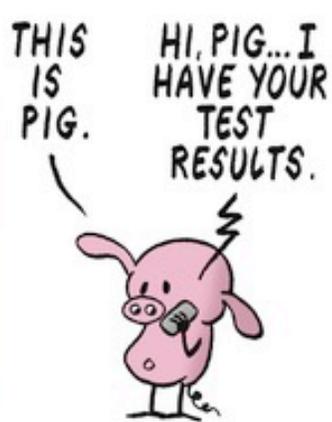


2016 study of sickle cell disease materials:
most written at **10th-12th grade** level.

Avoid jargon (And we have plenty of it!)

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEPHAN PASTIS



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Facebook.com/PearlsComic

What's your jargon?



MRI
Mortality
Survival
Clinical Trial
Risk

Use Plain Language

Prevents osteoporosis



Keeps bones strong

What is a way to say each of these words in plain language?

Diagnostic	
Biopsy	
Terminal	
Intravenous	
Radiologist	

Plain language resources

www.JustPlainClear.com



Search by Word:

case management

Submit



[How to search](#)

Just Plain Clear®

Search by Letter:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 0-9

Search results: case management

Term	Definition	Translations	Share
case management			
case management	A service to help patients get the health care they need	en español: administración de casos	

Use Short Words & Sentences

- Return in one week.
- Bring your insurance card with you.
- Please sign in.
- Take this form to your boss tomorrow.
- Pay your premium by next Friday.
- Drink plenty of orange juice.

Use one-idea sentences

Sentences with one idea

No: Help may be available for you to pay your medical bills and to find out if you qualify, here's what you should do.

Yes: We may be able to help you pay your medical bills. Find out if you qualify. Follow these steps.

Use active voice

Passive: You will be asked to give information about your medical history.

Active: We will ask for information about your medical history.

Avoid:

It shall be signed

You will be notified

Use:

You must sign

We will notify you

Use concrete language (say what you mean)

Exercise regularly

Don't lift anything heavy

Get adequate rest

Exercise 3-5 days per
week for 40 minutes

Don't lift anything over 10
pounds.

Get at least 7 hours/night

Word meaning

“The test results are consistent with metastatic disease.”

- Radiologists: “slam-dunk diagnosis”
- Primary Care doctors: most don’t think of it that way
- Patients: “definitely don’t” understand it that way

Other problem words

- Most likely represents
- Stable
- No significant change
- Cannot exclude

2

Show or draw pictures

Fever



Chills



Body aches



Cough



Sleepy



Headache



Sore throat



Runny nose



Sneeze





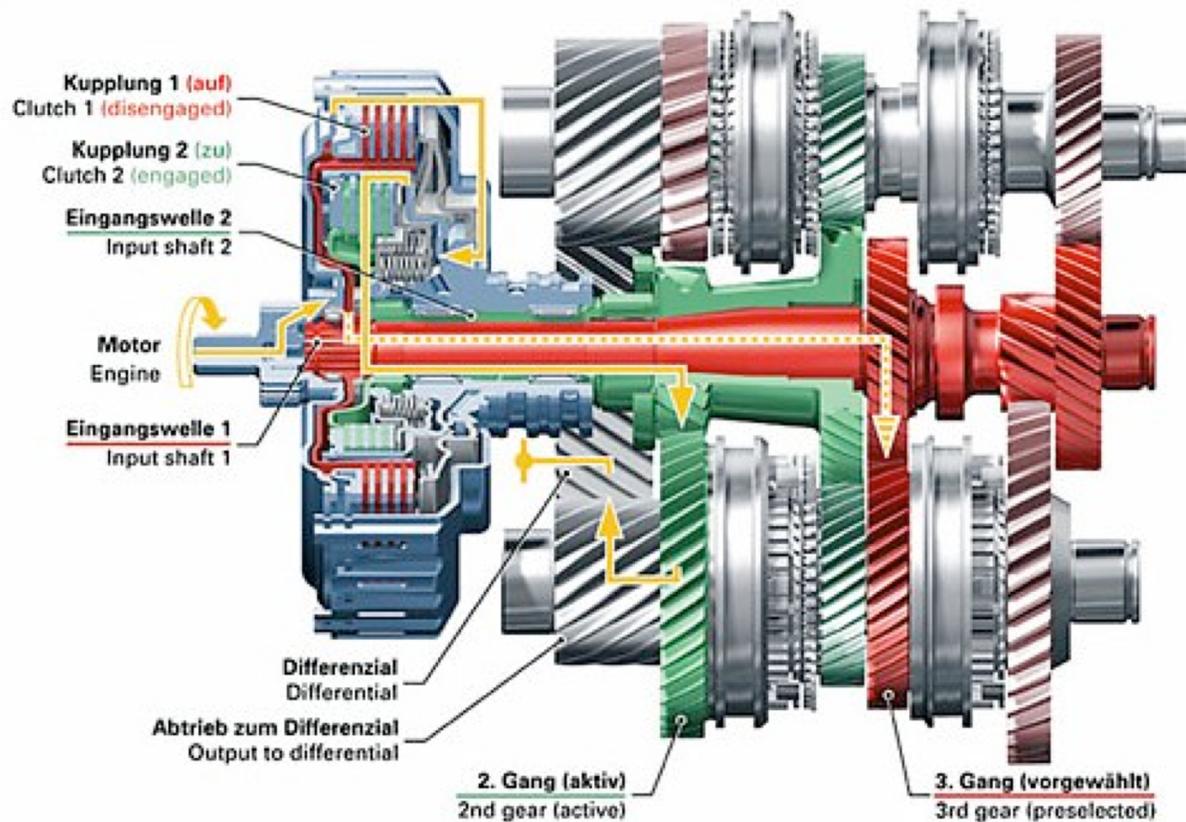
Slow down

Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.

sorrymyemaillooklikethisbutmycomputerdroppedandmyspacebarbroke

4

Organize for understanding



Only “need to know” concepts

- Limit to 5 pieces of information at a time; 3 even better



Help with numbers, risk

**THERE ARE 3 KINDS OF
PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD...**

**Those who are good at math
and those who are not.**

The danger of risk

1995: Warning that a new oral contraceptive pill doubled the risk for thrombosis

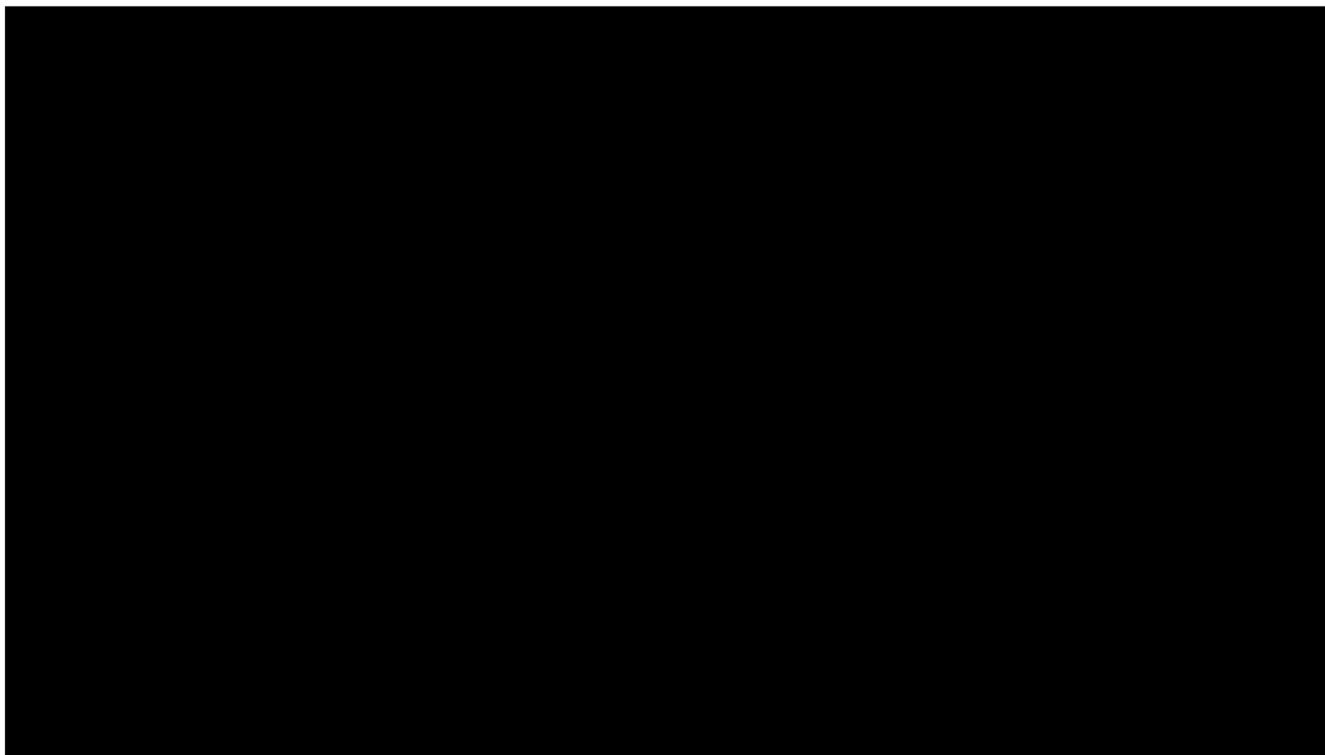
Risk actually had increased from 1 in 7,000 chance to 2 in 7,000.

Help with numbers

- Less is more—only relevant information
- Reduce need for calculations
- Pictographs, diagrams
- Frequency, not percent
- Familiar objects as analogies
 - (3 oz. meat = deck of cards)



A word about numbers



6

Verify understanding using “Teach Back”

- Asking people to repeat **in their own words** what they need to know or do, in a non-shaming way.
- **NOT** a test of the person, but of how well *you* explained a concept.
- A chance to check for understanding and, if necessary, re-teach the information.

Using Teach Back...

- Ask to **demonstrate** understanding

“We have gone over a lot of information today. What will you tell your wife about what we discussed?”

“I want to be sure I explained things clearly. Let’s review what we discussed. Please describe the 3 things you agreed to do to help you prevent and reduce the risk of cancer.”

- Do not ask: “Do you understand?”

7

Language & Cultural considerations

- Language/interpreters
- Caregiving, gender & elder roles
- Literacy levels
- Cultural adaptation
- Beliefs about western medicine



covering

 Wisconsin

Connect to Care, Engage in Health

Introduction

- Covering Wisconsin (CWI), formerly Covering Kids & Families (CKF) - Wisconsin
- Part of the UW-Madison School of Human Ecology
- Since 2003, provides education and assistance with programs that support health
- Navigator entity since 2014 to provide free, in-person health insurance application assistance
- Develop materials and train professionals on health insurance literacy topics in Wisconsin and nationally

Literacy project funders: Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Beckner Endowment Grant, and the Baldwin Idea Endowment

Evaluating Materials

How do you decide what materials to use with clients?

Do you create your own?

Do you think they are easy to understand?

Need health insurance?
Questions about your options? We can help.

Marketplace
Sign up
November 1st - December 15th
or, after Special Life Events


Go to healthcare.gov
or call (800) 318-2596

BadgerCare Plus
Sign up any time


Go to access.wi.gov

Sign up for Marketplace within 60 days of these Special Life Events:

- Loss of coverage**
Loss of coverage from a job, COBRA, BadgerCare Plus, student health plan, or turning 26 and losing parent's insurance
- Moving**
If you have coverage and have made a permanent move to a new county 
- Changes in household size**
Birth or adoption, marriage, divorce, legal separation, death 
- Immigration**
Got citizenship or lawful presence in the U.S.
- Release from incarceration or jail**

Call 2-1-1 to find local enrollment help

Call Covering Wisconsin at:
Milwaukee (414) 270-4677 or Madison (608) 261-1455

Other events that let you sign up for Marketplace during the year:

- Tribal Membership:** Members of a federally recognized tribe may enroll at any time of the year.
- Mistake on application:** The Marketplace or a professional made a mistake on your application.
- Hardship:** Medical emergency, financial hardship, or victim of domestic violence during Open Enrollment.


Covering Wisconsin
Commit to Care. Engage in Health.
www.coveringwi.com

Sharing Materials with Clients



Use the universal precaution!

- Summarize topics and findings from articles (and avoid handing out documents that are difficult to read)
- If you send or give a document to a client, look at the language, layout and design
- Ask yourself:
 1. Is it accessible to all audiences?
 2. Is the client in the right frame of mind to access the information?

Key Messages and Language



Let's review:

- Key messages should be clear and stand out
- How to use the information should be clear
- Written in plain language
- Numbers should be simplified. (ie: 8 out of 10 people get financial help)

Design Considerations for Sharing Documents

- Large fonts, **at least** 12-point for print
- Short paragraphs, 3 lines is ideal
- Narrower margins for paragraphs when possible, 3/4 across the page or less
- Call out boxes
- Uses a grid

Prescription Drugs

Which Prescription Drugs can I Afford?

A. A **formulary** is a list of drugs your insurance covers

It has four levels or tiers:

- Level 1: Generic drugs**
These are the most affordable
- Level 2: Low-cost brand-name drugs**
These cost a bit more
- Level 3: Brand-name drugs**
These cost even more than level 1 and 2 drugs
- Level 4: Specialty drugs**
These cost the most, they are for rare health problems

B. If your insurance won't pay for the drug:

Call your insurance company and ask:

- How you can get the prescription drug you need covered
- How to file an **appeal** if they can't help

An **appeal** is when you fill out forms to tell the insurance company why they should cover the medicine or service you need.

How to get affordable prescription drugs:

Ask your doctor:

- If generic drugs can be used for your health problem.

Is there a generic drug?

Ask your pharmacist:

- Which drugs are covered and how much they cost.

Which drugs are covered? Pharmacy

- If the company that makes the drug has financial help available and how to apply

Does the drug maker have financial help?

covering Wisconsin
Connect to Care, Engage in Health
www.coveringwi.org

This project is supported by Wisconsin Health Information Organization, Inc and Ineva Reilly Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment, & Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Design Considerations

- Uses **bold**, avoids *italics* and CAPS
- High contrast with colors, but keep white text on dark colored background to a minimum
- White space: “padding” around chunks of text, headings, boxes, & images

I'm Sick or Hurt

Where do I go for care?

BadgerCare Plus

If you are sick and need care that day...

Call your Doctor's Office

Many clinics have openings for patients who need care that day. Doctors are also on-call at night. Unless it is an emergency, this is the best place to get care.

Call a 24-Hour Nurse Hotline

Many insurance companies have their own hotline. Ask what to do for treatment or where to go for care.

Go to an Urgent Care Clinic

Urgent care clinics treat people the **same day**. They usually take **less time** than the emergency room.

You don't need an appointment. Call your insurance company to find a clinic near you.

Make sure the clinic takes your insurance before you get care.

If you have a medical emergency, Call 9-1-1.

Don't have any way to get to same day care?

You can get a ride for:

- Urgent Care
- Doctor appointments

Call Medical Transportation Management at **1-866-907-1493**. You will be picked up in 3 hours or less.

You will need your ForwardHealth card number.

Forward Health
9999 9999 9999 9999
I.M. Covered
I.D. 1234567890

Chunking

Chunking is breaking text up into more manageable parts. Documents should have many headings!

For example:

What are some simple steps to take to prevent or reduce lead exposure?

Maintain the paint in your home and clean up any lead dust. If you live in a home built before 1978, the most important step to take to reduce the risk of exposure to lead is to make sure that the paint is well maintained. Whenever repainting, renovation, or other work is undertaken that may end up disturbing a painted surface, it is critical to moisten the surface first, in order to prevent the work from generating dust. Similarly, all painted debris from the work should be contained, in other words prevented from spreading beyond the area where the debris can be carefully gathered and then safely disposed of.

If you think you may have a lead dust problem, you can clean up lead-contaminated dust yourself by carefully and thoroughly washing the area, using soapy water and a mop. A three-bucket system is ideal, with one bucket holding the soapy water (a general all-purpose cleaner is adequate, but dishwasher soap containing phosphates or a lead-specific detergent may be more effective), a second bucket serving as the rinse bucket, and the third containing only clean water. After you wash a section of floor with the soapy water, rinse the mop in the rinse bucket, then dunk it in the clean water bucket, and finally dip it back in the soapy water bucket before cleaning the next area. For smaller areas such as window sills, a rag should be used instead of a mop. Once done, throw the mop or rag away. Whenever cleaning lead-contaminated dust, vigorous wiping is most effective in removing the lead. However, wiping should never be done in a back-and-forth manner, but rather from left to right (or vice-versa), or from the top of a wall downwards.

Once cleaning has been completed for a given room, it is time to rinse, using only clean water and preferably a new mop head.

Remember that if you do have a lead dust problem, you will also need to address the source of the lead dust. In many instances, lead dust particles are generated by friction caused by the opening and shutting of old windows. With old, deteriorating windows, outright window replacement may be the best option. In addition to solving your lead dust problem, this also typically results in significantly increased energy efficiency, higher property values, and lower heating and cooling bills.

If you have a young child in your home and you suspect there may be a lead problem, take the recommended steps to eliminate any lead-contaminated dust, and make sure the child washes his/her hands frequently. Also make sure to clean any toys that have been lying about in areas that you suspect may contain lead-contaminated dust.

Check the water. To ensure your drinking water does not contain a hazardous level of lead, test the water at your faucets. Call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791 for more information. Kits for testing water, along with the instructions for doing so, are available from a number of providers.

How Can I Reduce or Get Rid of the Lead-Based Paint Hazards in My Home?

In addition to the day-to-day steps outlined in the previous section, you can prevent lead poisoning by using either interim controls, abatement, or both.

- ▶ **Interim controls.** Interim controls are treatments that temporarily reduce the risk of exposure to lead hazards. For example, you can repair damaged painted surfaces or plant grass to cover soil. (For more information on interim controls, see Chapter 6.)
- ▶ **Abatement.** Abatement is the permanent elimination of lead-based paint hazards. The four methods below are for abatement of structural components in housing.
 - **Replacement.** The removal of lead-painted items—such as windows, doors, and trim—and the installation of new, lead-free items.
 - **Enclosure.** The covering of lead-painted surfaces with a stiff material—such as paneling or wallboard—to prevent lead dust from getting into the environment. Enclosure also prevents contact with the lead-based paint.
 - **Encapsulation.** The covering of lead-painted surfaces with a special liquid coating. Once it dries, the coating prevents contact with the lead-based paint and the spread of lead dust.
 - **Paint removal.** The removal of paint done either in your home or at a paint stripping facility. Methods often used include wet scraping, wet planing, or chemical stripping.

You can perform many simple interim controls yourself, but—because performing an abatement can be dangerous—only a certified contractor should perform an abatement. Call your state lead contact (see Appendix B) or the HUD Lead Listing at (888) LEAD-LIST for a list of certified contractors in your area.

Layout

- Creates a clear path to follow
- Uses Visual Hierarchy: larger and at top of page means the information is more important
- Uses bullets and numbers where possible

Heading

Subheading

Text about your topic. Text about your topic.
Text about your topic. Text about your topic.

Subheading



Images

- Literal images provide the reader with information



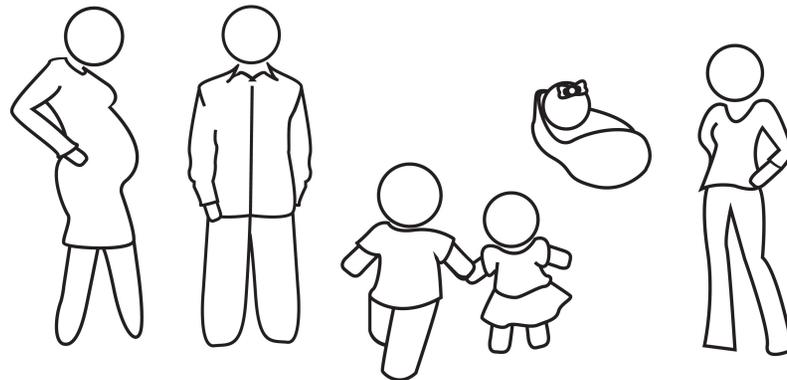
Created by Lluisa Iborra
from Noun Project

- Photographs play on our emotions



Images, Gender, and Health Messaging

- Men will more often read health documents with pictures of men
- Women will typically read health documents with either pictures of men or women



Motivate Your Audience



What techniques are motivating:

- Actionable content (ie: steps)
- Stories about how someone else (who might be like me) did it
- Tell me where or how to find help

How to Create or Evaluate Materials Handout

How-To

Evaluate Materials

1. Organization of the document

- 1-3 key messages
Tells readers what to do or why information is important
- Limits information
Tells readers what they need to know
Limits nice to know information
- How to use the information should be clear

Materials should be easy to understand!

- Use this checklist

2. Keep it simple!

Uses plain language:

- Friendly, active voice: "you"
- Common, everyday words
- Short sentences
- Jargon is limited and defined
- Avoids verbs like could, might should, etc

Simplifies numbers:

- Uses 9 out of 10 (instead of 90%) to explain percent, when possible
- Uses 1, 2 (not one, two)
- Gives specific examples

Focus on design:

- White space helps focus
- Large fonts help readability
- Relevant images help explain complicated concepts

8 out of 10 people qualify for financial help



3. To motivate readers, gives them:

- Action steps** to create a sense of ease
Following steps breaks up complex tasks
- Stories** that offer hope for success
The story should be simple and to the point
- Contact information** on where to receive help

Think about your own preferences.



Our culture is very **Visual**

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Wisconsin
Connect to Care, Engage in Health

www.coveringwi.org

Colon Cancer Screenings

Let's motivate the hard to reach!

Incorporates:

- Plain language
- Literal images
- Chunking, hierarchy
- Short paragraphs
- Uses motivating messaging
- Consumer review

***Developed In partnership with Wisconsin Cancer Council**

Find Colon Cancer Early With a Simple Test

Colon (or colorectal) cancer is **treatable**.
It can be **cured** when found early!

1. Who needs to get tested?

Everyone aged 50-75 years old.

Colon cancer is the **2nd most common** cause of **cancer death** in Wisconsin. It can be cured when found early!

Colon cancer tests are FREE with most health insurance.

2. What are the most common tests?

Talk to your doctor to find the best test for you.
Some tests you can even do at home.

FIT test (Fecal Immunochemical Test). Repeat every year.

Where?	What?	Next Step?
 At home	 Put small bit of poop in the kit	 Mail or bring to doctor's office

Stool DNA test (brand is Cologuard®). Repeat every 3 years.

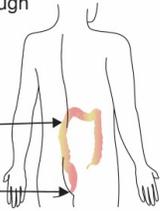
Where?	What?	Next Step?
 At home	 Poop in the kit	 Mail to the lab

Colonoscopy. Repeat every 10 years.

Where?	What?	Next Step?
 At a hospital or clinic	 A camera looks at your colon You may get drugs that make you sleepy	 Someone will need to take you home

What is the colon?

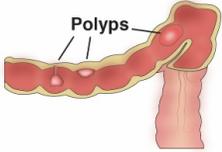
The colon is where poop collects and passes through your body.



Colon
Rectum

What are polyps?

These are bumps inside the colon that can turn into cancer. They can be removed during a colonoscopy.



Polyps

⚠ If you have bowel disease, or a family history of polyps or colon cancer, you may need to get tested younger.
Talk to your doctor.

How to Use the Sheet

- Use images from handout to help explain your point.
- Add handwritten notes to remind people what you covered.
- Circle numbers or important items that fit their needs.
- Consumers may not remember the details of the conversation.

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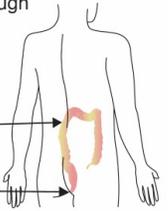
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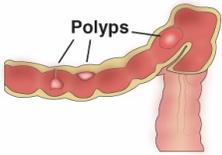
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⚠️ If you have **bowel disease**, or a **family history of polyps or colon cancer**, you may need to get tested younger.
Talk to your doctor.

Let's practice: Role Play

1. Use health literacy techniques to motivate someone to get a colorectal cancer screening
2. Think about how you would use the sheet to help you explain your point.

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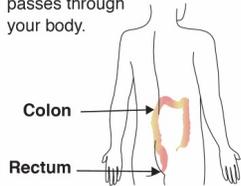
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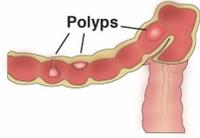
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More Sheets to Come

We will be developing multiple sheets to encourage early screening and detection

All topics will be specific to a Wisconsin audience

5 Tips to Help You Prevent Cancer

Get tested for common types of cancer!
Many cancers can be prevented or cured if you find them early.

1. See your doctor every year

This helps you stay healthy and lowers your risk for cancer. Yearly check-ups are free with health insurance, or you can go to a free clinic or community health center.

- A. Call your doctor or clinic and schedule a yearly check-up.
- B. Ask the doctor what tests you need to check for cancer. Ask if the test is free or covered by insurance.
- C. Ask what other activities or health services can help lower your risk of cancer.

2. Eat a healthy diet, exercise and maintain a healthy weight

Need Help? If you are having trouble with your weight, extra help from your doctor or a specialist may be free with health insurance.

Talk to your doctor.

Lower your risk for 13 different cancers by having a healthy weight!

3. Get an HPV (Human papillomavirus) shot for yourself and your children

Ask your doctor or local public health department where to get this shot for free.

This shot is very important for **girls and boys** starting at **age 11 or 12**.

- If you start **before** age 15, you only need two doses.
- If you start **after** age 15, you will need 3 doses.

The HPV vaccine **protects** you from **6** types of cancer!



What questions do you have?

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