

BETTER HEALTH LITERACY

The more you understand your condition,
the better your healthcare decisions can be.



HEALTH LITERACY IS ABOUT BETTER UNDERSTANDING your condition, so you can make informed decisions.

Without health literacy, you may feel frustrated after doctor visits, have difficulty finding support, or take a more passive role in your own care. This guide is designed to help you change that.

BEFORE YOUR VISIT



ASK SOMEONE
you trust to go with you. It can help to have someone for support and to ask different questions.



WRITE DOWN QUESTIONS
including anything related to diagnosis or treatment, any changes in how you feel, and any advice you may have heard.



EDUCATE YOURSELF
to prepare for your visits. Making sense of medical information online can be difficult, and not everything you find may be relevant or even correct. This [resource](#) can help.




DURING YOUR VISIT

-  **DON'T HOLD BACK**
if something just doesn't look or feel right, let your doctor know. No question is unimportant! Share as much detail as you can, even if it feels uncomfortable.
-  **ASK FOR A TRANSLATOR**
if you need help understanding your doctor. If a professional translator isn't available, consider using a medical translation app.
-  **RECORD YOUR VISIT**
with the voice memo app on your phone (or take notes by hand) so you don't forget anything. If someone is with you, they can do this also.
-  **UNDERSTANDING IS KEY**
as doctors can use confusing medical terms and go through information quickly. If you don't understand, ask them to slow down so you can get more clarity.

-  **ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO USE SIMPLER WORDS**
and speak more slowly. You can also ask them to write something down or even draw an explanation.

Some people prefer details, while others prefer key takeaways. It's okay to steer the conversation in the way that works for you.
-  **ASK FOR ANY MATERIALS**
you can take home (in your preferred language). Ask your doctor for any credible, patient-friendly websites you can visit.
-  **KNOW NEXT STEPS**
before leaving. Ask how you can send follow-up questions. You can usually do this either by phone or through a patient portal, which you may need to sign up for.

AFTER YOUR VISIT

-  **REFER BACK**
to the notes you made. Also, if your doctor gave you materials or directed you to resources, be sure to read those too.
-  **DISCUSS**
the information with your support network and/or immediate caregivers. It's important to keep them up to date on your condition and care, and they may have thoughts or questions you didn't consider.
-  **IF DISCUSSING IS UNCOMFORTABLE**
keep in mind that others can help offer support. Caring for yourself is a team effort: you don't need to go through this alone.