

Job Aid

A Checklist for Creating Easy-to-Read Written Materials

General content

- ☐ Limit content to one or two key objectives without providing too much information or trying to cover everything at once
- ☐ Limit content to what patients really need to know by avoiding information overload
- ☐ Use only words that are well known to individuals without medical training
- ☐ Make certain content is appropriate for age and culture of the target audience

Text construction

- ☐ Write at or below the 6th grade level
- ☐ Use one- or two-syllable words
- ☐ Use short paragraphs
- ☐ Use active voice
- ☐ Avoid all but the most simple tables and graphs. Clear explanations (legends) should be placed adjacent to each table or graph and also in the text

Fonts and typestyle

- ☐ Use large font (minimum 12 point) with serifs because serif text has little horizontal lines that appear at the bottom of letters, as in the title of this table
- ☐ Don't use more than two or three font styles on a page to ensure consistency in appearance
- ☐ Use uppercase and lowercase text
ALL UPPERCASE TEXT IS HARD TO READ

Resource: Excerpt from Health Disparities Collaborative website at: <http://www.healthdisparities.net>

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Layout

- ☐ Ensure a good amount of empty space on the page. Don't clutter the page with text or pictures
- ☐ Use headings and subheadings to separate blocks of text
- ☐ Bulleted lists are preferable to blocks of text in paragraphs
- ☐ Illustrations are useful if they depict common, easy-to-recognize objects
- ☐ Avoid complex anatomical diagrams by showing images of people, places, and things that are age appropriate and culturally appropriate to the target audience