

Video
Transcript**TRANSCRIPT****Limited Health Literacy—Worst that can happen**

Mrs. Cordell-Seiple, a middle-aged White woman, recounts how her limited health literacy, and her embarrassment over her limited general literacy, created a situation in which she signed medical consent forms to undergo a hysterectomy without having the slightest idea that that was what she was agreeing to do.

Mrs. Cordell-Seiple:

At approximately 30, or 31, I went into the gynecologist's and complained about part of this not working correctly; and he said, 'we can repair that' [while nodding head up and down].... great, I didn't ask all the right questions.

When I showed up two weeks later, at the admissions office at the hospital, they put enough papers in front of me; I'll bet there were about five papers that I needed to sign.

Well, I wasn't going to say, 'Excuse me,' but I don't read really well (pointing left pointer finger to side of face with confused expression) and I certainly don't read fast and I'm concerned with some of these words.

To me, it was lines and circles over sheets, and sheets, and sheets. And I wasn't going to reveal my sense of stupidity.

So, I signed everywhere they told me to sign; never read it, and then a couple of weeks later, in the follow-up office visit, the nurse said, 'How are you feeling since your hysterectomy?'

Now, I acted as normal as I could. Inside, my mouth fell open and I thought to myself, How could I be so stupid as to allow somebody to take part of my body, and I didn't know it?

Resource: Excerpt from *Help Your Patients Understand* video provided by the American Medical Association