How to Make PE Accessible

These are resources and recommendations to follow to promote user-friendly PE materials.

## Resources

### [“Simply Put” CDC guide](https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/simply_put.pdf)

**Recommendation: tell audience what they need to do with actionable statements.**

* Use active voice and “you” statements, i.e., *“You need to…”* or *“Talk with your doctor about…”*

**Recommendation: Limit negatives like “do not” or “should not;” instead, emphasize what the audience should do.**

* Some “do nots” are unavoidable - try using bulleted lists to separate “do’s” and “don’ts” so the audience can easily reference instructions.

**Recommendation: Limit use of statistics.**

* Instead of numbers and percents, use more general terms to emphasize the meaning, i.e., *“nearly all…,” “rarely…,”* or *“half…”*
* Put statistics in parentheses if you feel they are necessary to include, i.e. *“In almost all cases (95%)…”*

**Recommendation: Use visuals to help explain the text.**

* Make sure visuals are explanatory/relevant to the text.
* Use visuals with minimal lablels that only highlight relevant pieces of information.
* Use captions to highlight the key message of the visual
* Use visuals to reinforce actions that the audience should take rather than what the audience should not do.

### [Health Literacy Online Guide from the U.S. HHS](https://health.gov/healthliteracyonline/)

**Recommendation: Always use language that is familiar to your users.**

* Avoid medical jargon
* Use less technical word choices wherever possible, i.e., use *“cut”* as opposed to *“incision.”*

**Recommendation: Put the most important information first.**

* If the audience needs to make a decision about getting a surgery, place the decision-making factors at the beginning of the document and procedural details at the bottom.

**Recommendation: Think “need to know” vs. “nice to know”.**

* Consider which technical details may not be useful to the audience.
* Patient education is supposed to be supplemental; therefore, patients can seek more details from their primary care provider or specialists.