

Let's talk about health literacy

Health literacy is about finding, understanding and using information to promote and maintain good health.



Clear communication supports health literacy and gives a better health and social care experience for everyone. This includes listening and speaking, reading and understanding, numbers and digital health literacy.

Health literacy needs in Ireland

Research shows that 28% of Irish adults have limited health literacy. This is over 1 million people.

Limited health literacy means that people

- Are not using health services.
- Have less knowledge about their health and treatment.
- Go to their doctor and emergency services more often.



The Adult Literacy for Life programme office presents two short eLearning courses on health literacy.

- Course 1 is for the public.
- Course 2 is for health and social care professionals.

www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware



Literacy friendly approach in healthcare



Using a literacy friendly approach in healthcare, means:

1. **Being aware** of and **taking account** of unmet health literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs.
2. **Removing** literacy related **barriers** where possible.
3. **Communicating** clearly using plain language and universal design.
4. **Promoting** literacy and lifelong learning opportunities if appropriate.

Tips for being literacy friendly

Tip 1	Tip 2	Tip 3
Be aware and respond sensitively	Use plain language	Check for understanding
<p>You should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support people when they are filling in forms.• Use a highlighter pen to mark out important information.• Offer to go through a booklet or leaflet with them.• Use open-ended questions.• Allow for extra time with someone where needed.	<p>Plain language is a style of presenting information that helps someone understand it the first time they read or hear it.</p> <p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use active verbs.• Avoid jargon.• Be consistent.• Break up text with bullet lists.• Use sans serif font such as Arial.	<p>Teach back is a tool to check that people understand what you have said.</p> <p>Three steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain one point.2. Check the person's understanding by asking them to repeat back what you have said in their own words.3. If the person has understood, then explain the next point.

More information

<https://www.nhcprogramme.ie/>

More information

www.nala.ie/publications/writing-and-design-tips/

More information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDOoApTfDMs>