

# HEALTH LITERACY

## 20 Misunderstood but Often Used Terms

1. Screening
2. Dermatologist
3. Immunization
4. Contraception
5. Hypertension
6. Oral
7. Diabetes
8. Diet
9. Hygiene
10. Prevention
11. Mental Health
12. Annually
13. Depression
14. Respiratory problems
15. Arthritis
16. Cardiovascular
17. Community resources
18. Monitor
19. Referral
20. Eligible

## What is Health Literacy?

The ability to:

- Obtain, process, understand basic health information and services
- Make appropriate health decisions
- Access/investigate healthcare system

## Why is Health Literacy important?

Patients/people must understand their diagnosis and discharge instructions to take care of their illness and avoid errors (readmissions or adverse events).

## Red Flags for Low Health Literacy

- Frequently missed appointments
- Incomplete forms
- Non-compliance with medications
- Unable to name medications, explain purpose or dosage
- Identifies pills by looking at them, not reading label
- Unable to give coherent, sequential health history
- Asks few questions
- Lack of follow-through on tests or referrals

## 7 Tips for Clinicians

1. Use plain language
2. Limit information (3-5 key points)
3. Be specific and concise, not general
4. Demonstrate, draw pictures
5. Repeat, repeat, repeat
6. Summarize
7. Be POSITIVE