

Health Literacy Assessment

Never Assume

You can't judge a person's health literacy level based on appearance, educational degree or demographics.

Always Assess

LOOK for Signs:

Common clues to lower literacy ¹

- Makes excuses when asked to read or fill out forms. Examples include: "I don't have my glasses," "I'm too tired to read," and "I'll read this when I get home."
- Poor/inconsistent historians.; unable to complete medical forms.
- Non-compliant with medications and prescribed treatment plan; often misses or doesn't make appointments.
- Makes medication errors; unable to explain the purpose of their medications; often identifies pills by their appearance instead of reading labels .
- Exhibits signs of nervousness, confusion, frustration, anger and even indifference. They ask fewer questions and may withdraw or avoid situations where complex learning is required.

Literary Assessment Questions to Ask¹:

1. On a scale of one to five, how confident are you about filling out medical forms?
2. How often do you have someone help you read hospital materials?
3. How often do you have problems learning about your medical condition because of difficulty understanding written information?

Remember these Points:

- ✪ Reading ability doesn't always equate to health literacy level.
- ✪ **Assessment** is your best tool to identify health literacy problems.