

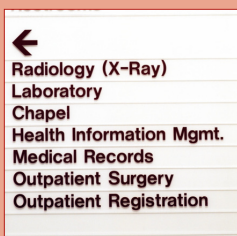
Health Literacy “Red Flags”

Health literacy can be a health barrier for many patients, including those who are elderly or have limited education. Clinicians should be aware of individual patients’ health literacy levels and adapt their communication accordingly.

Patients with low health literacy may:



- Fill in forms incompletely or inaccurately.
- Frequently miss appointments.
- Fail to follow through with lab tests, imaging tests, or referrals to consultants.



- Say they are taking their medication, even though lab tests or physiological parameters do not change as expected.
- Say: “I forgot my glasses. I’ll read this when I get home”; “I forgot my glasses. Can you read this to me?”; or “Let me take this home so I can discuss it with my children.”



- Be unable to name their medications, or tell when or why they are supposed to take them.



Source: Weiss BD. Health literacy and patient safety: Help patients understand; Manual for clinicians, 2nd ed. American Medical Association Foundation, 2007 Available at: www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/367/healthlitclinicians.pdf. Accessed Jul 22, 2013.