

Introduction to Patient Education Literature



0:01	This short tutorial introduces you to the concept of writing patient education literature.
0:08	Patient information documents, which often take the form of leaflets or pamphlets, such as the CDC example on this slide, assist patients as they make medical decisions related to treatment options, medications, and surgeries, among other medical procedures.
0:23	While these documents need to be factually correct and specific, they must also be written in a style that is accessible by patients who do not have medical training.
0:33	They should be organized with headings that make the document easy to read and that put the patient at ease with material that might be overwhelming for them.
0:42	Keep in mind, too, that these brief documents are meant to supplement, not replace, communication that has already taken place between the patient and his or her doctors.
0:52	Before you begin writing patient education literature, it's important that you fully understand the needs of your target audience.
1:00	Generally speaking, most patients are not medical professionals, so they are often uncomfortable with medical terminology.
1:07	Often, too, because they are experiencing a medical condition of some kind, they may feel vulnerable or overwhelmed.
1:14	Since the goal of these documents is to guide patients toward making an important medical decision, you should choose a style that will help put the reader at ease with the content and that will empower him or her to understand the material in order to make an informed decision about the test or procedure.
1:32	In some cases, you may need to develop a more specific understanding of your target audience.
1:37	For example, if you are developing materials for a small neighborhood clinic that serves a relatively specific regional area, as opposed to a large hospital in a major metropolitan area, you may need to do some research regarding typical patient demographics for that clinic.
1:53	You should also consider how the test or procedure you are writing about might suggest a narrowed sense of audience.
2:00	For example, more often than not, patients considering hip replacement surgery are older adults rather than adolescents.
2:07	The more specific your sense of audience is, the better prepared you will be to offer them information that meets their particular needs.
2:16	Using a question-answer approach to content delivery will provide readers a familiar organizational structure while also reinforcing the conversational tone of the document.



2:27	Some typical questions that you might use as headings in your document include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is this test or procedure? • Why do I need this test or procedure? • How should I prepare for it? • What will happen during the test or procedure? • What potential after effects or complications might I experience? • When will I receive the results? • Who can I contact with questions?
2:51	The material should be organized using headings that address the questions you asked when developing the document.
2:57	Each heading should be immediately followed by short, easy-to-read paragraphs that respond to the question posed in the heading.
3:06	The responses should be written in active voice and in second-person point-of-view to assist with ease of reading and to foster a sense of personal power and agency in the patient.
3:17	Along the same lines, these responses should avoid medical jargon, confusing abbreviations, or other terminology that would be confusing to patients without medical training.
3:28	On this page, you see an example of patient education literature.
3:33	Specific formats can vary widely and are often dictated by the organization for which you are writing.
3:39	For example, the CDC produces numerous templates for its patient education literature, as do Web-MD, the National Institutes of Health, and many large healthcare systems.
Displayed on screen	Links: Excelsior College Online Writing Lab, Download a Transcript, Tip Sheet, Exemplar