

Health Literacy....

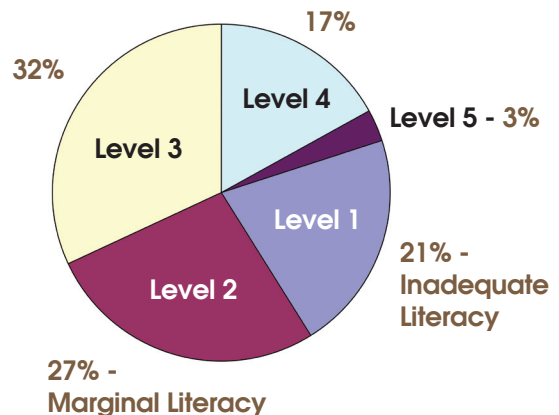
Do They Hear What You Say?

You can't tell by looking . . .

You probably see patients every day who have trouble reading and understanding health information. Half of the adult U.S. population has limited or marginal general literacy skills, and these individuals are likely to have limited health literacy skills as well. In addition, even persons with adequate literacy skills may have trouble understanding and applying healthcare information, especially when it is explained in technical, unfamiliar terms. Patients may be verbally articulate and appear well educated and knowledgeable yet fail to grasp disease concepts or understand how to carry out medication regimens properly.

Program and materials provided by the AMA Foundation.

1993 National Adult Literacy Survey



Health Literacy: By The Numbers

Percentage of adults who may struggle with low health literacy: 48%

Percentage of physicians who know about low health literacy: 33%

Estimated annual cost of extra doctor visits and longer hospital stays incurred by patients with low health literacy: \$73,000,000,000.

Percentage of physicians who make changes in patient communications after learning about health literacy: 66%

A Health Literacy Program designed to improve communication between you and your patients is available free of charge through the Iowa Medical Society/IMS Alliance. Improved communication can help enhance the productivity level of your office, the quality of care that you provide, as well as patient understanding and compliance.