Patient and Family Education Material Guidelines

nova scotia
health

These guidelines explain the process for developing most Nova Scotia Health patient education pamphlets. These guidelines support and expand on NSHA Policy AD-LIB-001 Patient Education Materials: Development and Maintenance:

> The information and instructions in this guide do not apply to Nova Scotia Health Cancer Care Program or IWK Health patient education materials. Please connect directly with these teams for further support.

Nova Scotia Health Cancer Care Program
› http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/cancer-care-program

IWK Health
› http://pulse.iwk.nshealth.ca/subsites/page/view/?id=6232

Contents

Patient and Family Education Material Guidelines

Why does Nova Scotia Health create and update patient education pamphlets?

- Approximately half of all Canadians experience some challenges understanding the health information and teaching provided to them (Guo, 2012). This is true for many Nova Scotians, especially those whose first language is not English (NS Department of Health, 2010).

- Low health literacy has been linked to increased Emergency Department visits, as well as increased hospital admissions, poorer health outcomes, faster disease progression, and increased co-morbidities (Imoisili et al., 2017; Jager et al., 2019).

> "Health literacy is about communicating health information clearly and understanding it correctly" (Osborne, 2018, p.1).

- To better accommodate the health literacy of all Nova Scotia Health patients and families, Library Services' Patient Education Team works collaboratively with staff, physicians, and stakeholders to create, publish, update, and share patient education pamphlets.

- Nova Scotia Health aims to support patients and families in managing their health by providing them with pamphlets that are:
    › appropriate
    › comprehensive
    › easy to use
    › reliable

- Patient education pamphlets created and used within Nova Scotia Health are targeted for specific patient populations and are more exhaustive than general consumer health information that may be retrieved from an Internet search or other general health resources. Many health and medical websites are written at a high school to postgraduate reading level, which is too difficult for the majority of Canadian readers.

What is the role of the Patient Education Team?

The role of the Patient Education Team is to:
- Provide support for Nova Scotia Health staff, physicians, and stakeholders creating patient education pamphlets
- Review patient education pamphlets for readability, plain language, consistency, and medical jargon
- Provide copyright guidance and facilitate adaptation and permission requests to copyright holders
- Manage Nova Scotia Health patient education pamphlet versions and file formats
- Format and implement provincial branding standards using design software
- Support accessibility of print and online patient education
- Manage access to print files of patient education pamphlets with Dalhousie Printing Services
- Manage and provide access to online patient education pamphlets

Who is responsible for creating patient pamphlets?

Nova Scotia Health staff and clinicians are responsible for creating, reviewing, and updating the content of patient education pamphlets used in their area, group, department, clinic, or specialty. This may be an individual or a working group (referred to in this guide as "content creators").

All materials must be reviewed and approved by a clinical subject matter expert on the relevant topic.

Development process

Before getting started

Visit the Content Creator Toolkit:
  › https://library.nshealth.ca/CreatingContent/Pamphlets

- Determine if a new patient education pamphlet is required. You can do this by:
  › Checking the print code index or library catalogue found on the Library's webpage:
  › https://library.nshealth.ca/

- Contacting the Patient Education Team to search the catalogue of archived pamphlets. You can do this by completing the Patient Education Project request form:
  › https://cdha-nshealth-ca.libwizard.com/f/pamphletrequest

- We recommend that staff collaborate with colleagues in other areas caring for patients with the same clinical problems; for example, cardiology and respirology. If another department has developed a pamphlet that could be adapted for your use, please email pamphlets@nshealth.ca to discuss steps for adaptation.

- You may wish to develop a working group and appoint a lead. The Librarian Educator is available to support your group as needed. Email pamphlets@nshealth.ca for assistance.

> **Note: Do not format your document to look like a pamphlet.** Create your draft using a standard 8.5" x 11" Microsoft Word document. Formatting and style will be added by the Patient Education Team using design software at a later stage.

What is the process?

1. **Develop a draft** using a standard 8.5"x11" Microsoft Word document.
   - We use standard formatting within design software to align with Nova Scotia Health branding.
   - **Any formatting you apply is removed** during our review so that we can easily edit and manipulate the content.
   - Nova Scotia Health Communications' style guidelines are applied to ensure provincial consistency.

2. **Circulate your draft among your working group for review.**
   - Share your draft with your colleagues, team members, supervisor, etc., to ensure clinical accuracy and that care procedures outlined are correct and reflect current practice.
   - Have a Patient/Family Advisor review your draft and provide feedback, if possible.

3. **Send your draft to the Patient Education Team** via email to: pamphlets@nshealth.ca or via the online form:
   › https://cdha-nshealth-ca.libwizard.com/f/pamphletrequest

   > Note: The pamphlets email account (pamphlets@nshealth.ca) cannot receive files from MOVEit Transfer. If the file is too large to send via email, let us know and we will arrange an alternative.

   - Let us know if you have a deadline.
   - We will review the draft for plain language, flow, and reading level.
   - Let us know what template you would like us to use:
   › **Booklet style** (5.5" x 8.5") — our most common format
   › **Tri-fold style** (8.5" x 3.6") — will fit in a standard business envelope for mailing
   › **Letter-size single page handout** (8.5" x 11") — can be single or double-sided; can be produced as a tear-off pad, if requested
   › **Letter-size guide** (8.5"x 11") — for lengthy and/or complex documents

4. **Answer questions and review edits.**
   - We will return a revised version of your draft as a PDF for you and your team to review. We will try to incorporate any feedback or edits you suggest, and continue to communicate with you as needed.

5. **Approve the final document.**
   - When you are happy with the final product, you will be asked to approve the document using the online approval form: http://cdha-nshealth-ca.libwizard.com/f/PamphletApproval

☐ A Nova Scotia Health staff member with the appropriate clinical expertise must review the content before approval (such as a Division Head/Clinical Leader or Delegate) to ensure clinical accuracy.
   - If you are approving on behalf of someone, there is a place to note this within the form. You must have the person's permission to approve on their behalf, as well as their approval of the final draft.

☐ The Librarian Educator coordinating patient education must also approve the final version to ensure that it supports health literacy, and that organizational standards and branding are upheld.

Once your pamphlet has been finalized and approved, we will let you know when we have uploaded it to the Nova Scotia Health public website server and distributed the print version to Dalhousie Printing Services. We will send you everything you need (the link, title, and print code) to access the pamphlet online and to order print copies.

Criteria

Writing in plain language helps readers of all literacy levels by clearly communicating important information as simply and concisely as possible (Osborne, 2018).

Some health care providers may be concerned that plain language will offend patients who read well (Osborne, 2018). This has been proven to be a misconception – plain language enables everyone to read and use essential health information (Wizowski, Harper & Hutchings, 2014).

All Nova Scotia Health patient education pamphlets should:
- Be evidence-based, reflecting best-practice
- Enable consistency
  › ensure each patient receives and has access to the same information

- Be easy to read and understand (see Appendix A on page 16)
  - › Written in short sentences, at a grade 6 level or below, using familiar language that sounds like everyday speech (plain language)
  - › Avoid complex medical terms, unless they are likely to be used throughout the patient's care, in which case they should be included and explained in simple language.
  - › Question and answer format can be useful.
- Be sensitive to all visible and non-visible elements that may differentiate one individual from another, including but not limited to: ability, culture, ethnicity, gender, geographical location, physical characteristics, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, spirituality, and values.
  - › Remember that your readers' cultural, ethnic, economic, and/or educational background may differ from your own.
- Have team members and a Patient/Family Advisor review your draft at all stages of the project.
- Developed for provincial use, where/when possible
- Be written and designed with accessibility in mind

Organization of pamphlet content

- All patient education materials should be designed for maximum readability and be presented in a logical format.
  - › Text must have sufficient white space and not be dense. White space between paragraphs of text helps readers quickly absorb information.
  - › Use headings, bullets, and spacing to guide the reader and highlight important key points.
  - › The font size of main text must be no smaller than 14 pt.
  - › The font size of footnotes and backmatter must be no smaller than 10pt.
- When reviewing, Library Services' Patient Education Team will edit your draft to ensure these criteria are met.

Pamphlets should include the following:

Title: an appropriate title describes content without abbreviations, acronyms should be spelled out

Opening paragraph: states the purpose of the pamphlet. For example, explains condition or diagnosis, reason for surgery or procedure, etc.

Table of Contents (optional): useful if the pamphlet is lengthy or complex; can be added by the Patient Education Team after the first draft is reviewed

Headings and subheadings: used to show sections, topics, and subtopics. Question and answer format can be helpful

Glossary (optional): placed at the beginning rather than at the end, so the reader is more likely to see and use it

Images, Illustrations, and Diagrams

- Images, illustrations, or diagrams may be used when they contribute to the understanding of the material. For example:
  › Demonstrating how to perform an action or exercise
  › Demonstrating parts of anatomy
  › Highlighting location details (such as a map)
- Images included for aesthetics should be limited to 1 or 2 photos only (per pamphlet) and only when there is sufficient space to add images without adding unnecessary page length.

> Remember, added page length and use of colour images will increase printing costs.

Choosing the right images

- Images should be diverse, inclusive, and representative. Choose images that represent various groups and a balance of genders, and avoid stereotypical occupational roles.
- **Content creators are responsible for locating appropriate images for use.** The Patient Education Team has limited images/diagrams available.

- Only use images for which you possess the copyright permissions to do so. Copyright permission for images created outside of Nova Scotia Health is required by Canadian Law. Ask yourself:
  › Does copyright clearly allow use of the image for educational purposes within published print and digital media?
  › Has permission been granted in writing and can it be provided to the Patient Education Team in a timely manner?
  › Visit: https://library.nshealth.ca/Copyright

Drawing diagrams or taking photos

- Nova Scotia Health staff can choose to draw diagrams or take photos of staff members to use in patient pamphlets.
  › If you take photos of individuals who are not staff members, you must obtain their permission via a media release form to use the images in patient education pamphlets. The release form can be found on the intranet.
  › When using line drawings of anatomy, include major body parts.
  › Use simple line drawings.
  › Label diagrams with familiar words.

Remember, not all pamphlets need photos or illustrations.

Updating

- Keeping content up-to-date helps provide patients with access to current, evidence-based information, in line with both Nova Scotia Health policy and practice. This helps patients understand and follow health care directives, supporting both self-care and patient safety.

> **Nova Scotia Health policy AD-LIB-001 (Patient Education Materials: Development and Maintenance) requires all patient education materials to be reviewed every 3 years by the creators or other suitable clinical expert.**

- **If the material is not reviewed 5 years from its date of publication, the item is subject to be removed from the collection and archived. Items that are archived can be brought back into circulation, but must be reviewed, updated, and approved by the appropriate clinical expert.**
- When it's time to update an existing pamphlet, the Patient Education Team will email to remind you that an update is needed.
- If no changes are needed to the content or images, the revision date can be updated to show that the information remains current.
- Teams can update a pamphlet any time they identify a need to change the information in the pamphlet (within reason).

Questions to consider when reviewing and updating patient pamphlets:
  › Do we need this pamphlet? Is there another pamphlet in the collection that is more current and will meet our needs?
  › Is it evidence-based/best practice? Have any changes in clinical practice been incorporated?
  › Is the contact information (including phone numbers, places, and times) listed still current?
  › Is the equipment used still current?
  › Are the medications listed still current?
  › Are there changes to pre- or post-op instructions?
  › Are patients in the target population using the information? Missed appointments, phone calls about pamphlet content, and failure to follow instructions may indicate that your patients are confused by the content or do not find it relevant.

What is the updating process?
The updating process mirrors the creation process, but requires less time developing content.
1. **Contact** the Patient Education Team to let us know you are ready to start the updating process:
   - Email: pamphlets@nshealth.ca
   - Online Project Request form:
     › https://cdha-nshealth-ca.libwizard.com/f/pamphletrequest

- If needed, we will send you the most recent version of the pamphlet as an MS Word document, so that it is easier to edit.
- Tell your manager/supervisor/lead that you are starting this process so they are ready to review and approve when needed.

2. **Review using 'Track Changes' in Word** (.doc, .docx) or add comments to a PDF (.pdf), so that we can quickly see your edits.

   - Review contact information and clinic hours listed within the pamphlet. Make sure instructions, directions, and other information listed is up-to-date and reflects current practice.
   - Share your edits with your team members and consider asking a Patient/Family Advisor to review your updated version.

3. **Return your edits to pamphlets@nshealth.ca.**

   - We will revise the current version to reflect your edits. If the pamphlet has not been reviewed in over 3 years, we will review to ensure the content meets current patient education standards.

4. **Answer questions and review edits.**

   - We will return a version of your updated pamphlet for you and your team to review. We will try to incorporate any feedback or edits you suggest, and continue to communicate with you as needed.

5. **Approve the final document.**

   - When you are happy with the final product, you will be asked to approve the document using the online approval form:
   › http://cdha-nshealth-ca.libwizard.com/f/PamphletApproval

☐ A Nova Scotia Health staff member with the appropriate clinical expertise must review the content before approval (such as Division Head/Clinical Leader or Delegate) to ensure clinical accuracy.

If you are approving on behalf of someone, there is a place to note this within the form. You must have the person's permission to approve on their behalf, as well as their approval of the final draft.

☐ The Librarian Educator coordinating patient education must also approve the final version to ensure that it supports health literacy, and that organizational standards and branding are upheld.

Once your pamphlet has been finalized and approved, we will let you know when we have uploaded it to the Nova Scotia Health public website server and distributed the print version to Dalhousie Printing Services. We will send you everything you need (the link, title, and print code) to access the pamphlet online and to order print copies.

Archiving Project

- Every year, the Patient Education Team identifies patient pamphlets that have not been reviewed or updated within 5 years of the last review date. A list of items is circulated via Nova Scotia Health News and posted on the Library's website. Individual content creators and/or teams are emailed directly to confirm whether the identified pamphlets will be updated or if they should be removed from circulation.

- Routine archiving of out-of-date pamphlets is done in accordance with policy AD-LIB-001 - Patient Education Materials: Development and Maintenance (Procedure 4.3).

- Failure to connect with the Patient Education Team about out-of-date pamphlet titles due for archiving may result in the pamphlets being removed from Printing Services and online.

Ordering

Every Nova Scotia Health pamphlet is formatted for printing and a master copy is held by Dalhousie Printing Services. Assign one staff person to place pamphlet orders and maintain pamphlet stock.

To order print copies of any Nova Scotia Health Pamphlet:

1. **Find the pamphlet print code**

Every pamphlet has a unique alpha-numeric print code assigned to it. You can find this code online, when you search Nova Scotia Health Library Services' catalogue. If you have a printed copy of a pamphlet, you'll find the print code on the back cover, in the lower left corner, with 2 letters and 6 numbers: XX85-####. The 4-digit number at the end of the print code is unique to that pamphlet title.

WX85-2118 © November 2020 Nova Scotia Health Authority
The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.

2. To order bulk copies, **complete and submit the Dal Print Shop Ordering Form** (requisition form)

If you wish to get a quote before submitting your print order, please contact print.nsha@dal.ca. The Print Shop can ship print copies anywhere in Nova Scotia. Please note, there may be a shipping fee depending on your location.

Please keep in mind, as content is frequently updated, it is not recommended to order copies in large quantities. Ordering limited numbers helps to prevent waste.

Printing

We know that sometimes you may need to print a few copies using your office printer. You can print any pamphlet from the Nova Scotia Health website: www.nshealth.ca/patientinformation. Printing from the website ensures you are printing the current version of the pamphlet.

Tri-fold pamphlets (formatted to be folded in thirds) always have two links to view the pamphlet: one for easy reading and one for easy printing.
   › Find the "Printer-Friendly Version" link on the Pamphlets Listing.

   › In the Print window, select 'Flip on short edge'.

Sharing

Displaying materials

- Place patient information materials in high-traffic areas. This is an ideal way for patients and families to readily access relevant information.
- The year that the pamphlet is created/revised is placed on the front cover so it can be easily seen when the pamphlet is displayed in a pamphlet rack. Recycle the out-of-date copies.

Finding pamphlets

- Wizowski, Harper & Hutchings (2014) note that 67% of home Internet users search for medical or health-related information, according to Statistics Canada in 2013.
- Patients and families are accessing health information on the web using their smartphone, tablet, or computer. **All Nova Scotia Health patient pamphlets can be viewed and downloaded anytime, anywhere.**

- To support patients and families in finding relevant and local health information, our pamphlets are available via:
  - Nova Scotia Health's Library catalogue
  - › https://libcat.nshealth.ca/
  - Nova Scotia Health's public website:
  - › http://www.nshealth.ca/patientinformation
- Most Nova Scotia Health pamphlets are also indexed by Halifax Public Libraries (HPL) and Nova Scotia Provincial Library (NSPL) branches. This means the public can search their local public library catalogue to find and access Nova Scotia Health pamphlets online. Only pamphlets flagged as very specific or not suitable for public indexing are not shared with HPL or NSPL.

To find a pamphlet

Staff should familiarize themselves with how to locate the pamphlets they use frequently within their area, as well as how to locate Nova Scotia Health pamphlets on other topics:

- Search pamphlets on Nova Scotia Health's Print Code Index:
  - › https://library.nshealth.ca/Pamphlets

OR

- Search Nova Scotia Health's Library Services catalogue and limit by pamphlet format type:
  - › https://libcat.nshealth.ca

Translations

- In support of accessibility, Nova Scotia Health staff are encouraged to consider whether patients in their department or service area would benefit from having a pamphlet available in a language other than English.
- The Patient Education Team is available to help support the translation of any Nova Scotia Health pamphlet by managing translation formatting and processing.

Requirements

- › To ensure quality, translation is done by a professional certified translator.
- › The English version of the pamphlet must be up-to-date before translation is requested.
- › Translation costs are to be paid by the requesting department/unit/clinic.

Maintenance

- The Patient Education Team maintains an electronic database of all approved pamphlets developed at Nova Scotia Health ("Master List"). This includes all active and archived titles.
- The Master List is a record of the print code, title, content creator, and year of most recent revision or year of archiving.
- Visit the Print Code Index to view all current active pamphlets:
  - › http://library.nshealth.ca/Pamphlets
- If your area has collected educational materials not produced at Nova Scotia Health, we recommend reviewing these materials once a year to evaluate if they are still suitable and current.

Tips for creating better pamphlets

- Be prepared to go through several drafts. The Patient Education Team will keep track of your project and check in with you every 2 weeks to keep projects moving. Let us know if you do not want to receive these reminder emails from us.
- Nova Scotia Health pamphlets ordered from Dalhousie Printing Services are printed on branded templates (shells) using black type on a blank white background for high contrast and easy legibility.
  - › If you are printing your own pamphlets, make sure the text is printed using black ink on a white or cream background.
  - › Avoid glossy paper, as it can be harder to read.
- If a pamphlet contains content dealing with challenging topics or ethical dilemmas, Ethics Nova Scotia Health can help:
  - › https://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/ethics-support/index
- Create and maintain a bibliography of sources used in the development of the pamphlet. Although the Patient Education Team does not require these or add them to the pamphlet content, this can help when updating material.
- Create your own content. Materials developed outside Nova Scotia Health should only be used as a guide, or adaptation permissions may be required. The Patient Education Team can answer questions you may have about this process.

Appendices

- Readability Checklist
- Sample Content Script
- Readability Formulas

Appendix A – Readability Checklist

- ☐ Numbers are not spelled out, but appear as a numeral.
  - › For example, "Arrive 2 hours before your scheduled surgery time."
- ☐ Sentences are short and to the point.
- ☐ Sentences are written in a positive, active voice, talking directly to the reader.
  - › Use the words, 'you', 'I', 'we', and 'our'
  - › Avoid referring to your reader as clients, patients, or customers
- ☐ Words read at a grade 6 reading level or below (plain language).
  - › Usually less than 3 syllables per word
  - › Subject and verb are close to the beginning of the sentence
  - › Medical jargon is avoided or explained using simpler terms
- ☐ Contractions (can't, shouldn't, don't, etc.) are written out (cannot, do not, etc.)
- ☐ To add emphasis, text has been **bolded**, not written in UPPERCASE LETTERS.
  - › For example, "**Do not** drink alcohol while taking pain medication."
- ☐ The first time an acronym is used, it written out in full with the acronym in parentheses.
- ☐ Bulleted lists are used where possible.
- ☐ Question and answer format is used where possible.
- ☐ Directions on how to connect with health care team are clear and direct.
  - › Clinic address (floor number, room number) and phone number are included, ideally on the front or back of the pamphlet.
- ☐ All diagrams have labels.
- ☐ There is sufficient white space between paragraphs of text.
- ☐ Fever temperature is specified.
  - › For example, "high fever (38° C/101.4° F or higher)"
- ☐ Brand names are only used after the generic name of a drug or product.
  - › For example, "Do not take ASA or acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin®) before surgery."
- ☐ Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, etc.) are not used.
- ☐ The font size of main text is at least 14 pt.
- ☐ The font size of footnotes and backmatter is at least 10 pt.
- ☐ The same font is used throughout.

Plain language terms we replace

Note: This list is not comprehensive.

Complex Language	Plain Language
immediate	right away
assessment	test
operation	surgery
clinician	doctor, nurse, or specialist

Plain language terms we explain

Note: This list is not comprehensive.

Term	Explanation
abdomen	(stomach area)
bowel movement/stool	(poop)
chronic	(ongoing)
constipated	(not able to poop)
diarrhea	(loose, watery poop)
incision	(cut)
nausea, nauseous	(feeling sick to your stomach)
severe	(very bad)
strenuous	(hard)
vomit, vomiting	(throw up), (throwing up)

Appendix B - Sample Pamphlet Content Scripts

Use headings and subheadings to organize your information into different topic areas. Consider the topics listed in the 'Content topics' column below to ensure that all relevant topics are included in the pamphlet you are developing.

The 'Headings/Subheadings' column gives potential headings for the sections. Not all headings may be needed; consider what patients need to know.

Diagnostic tests/procedures

Content topics	Headings/Subheadings
• Definition and purpose of test	• What is a _____? • Why is this test done?
• General information about test • Provide phone number for additional information or questions	• Who will do the test? • Where will the test be done? • How long will the test take?
• Potential risks of test	• Are there any risks with this test?

• Preparation
   › Day before test
   › Parking
   › Day of test
   › Information about medications
	• How do I get ready for the test?
	 • Where will I park?
	 • Where do I go on the day of the test?
	 • Are there any medications I should stop taking before the test?

• Describe test	• How is the test done?
• Instructions after test	• Care at home • Call your primary health care provider if you have any of the following symptoms: • If your primary health care provider is not available, go to the nearest Emergency Department.
• Follow-up care	• Visit to your primary health care provider/other health care providers.

Surgery/Inpatients

Before you start to prepare any material, please review general day surgery patient pamphlets such as:

Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre (QEII):
> Before and After Day Surgery (#0672)

> Planning for Your Hospital Stay After Surgery (#1395)

These booklets thoroughly cover general preoperative care and the first few days after surgery.

Content topics	Headings/Subheadings
• Brief introduction about why surgery is being performed	• Why is this surgery needed?
• Anatomical explanation of surgery with diagram	• Your surgery
• Before surgery	• Getting ready

• Special preparation	• Just before surgery
	  › Special tests
	  › What can I eat?
	  › Medications

• Care during hospitalization • Include topics not addressed in general Before and After Surgery titles listed above this table	• Your hospital stay • Pain management • Give details specific to this surgery

Content topics	Headings/Subheadings
• Care at home • Lifestyle changes • Precautions	• At home OR • Recovering at home OR • When you go home: › Care of incision (cut/site) › Activity › Sex › Exercise/Sports › Healthy eating › Your medications, pain management › Supplies › Equipment › Going back to work › Coping with stress
• Symptoms to report to physician	• Call your primary health care provider if you have:
• Follow-up	• Visit to your primary health care provider/other health care providers
• Risk factors to avoid	• Staying healthy
• Resources	• Who can help me in the community?

Surgery/Outpatients

General topics are covered in:
> › QEII - After My Operation (#0064)

Content topics	Headings/Subheadings
• Care at home	• Controlling discomfort, pain management • Hygiene • Physical activity • Sex • Caring for your incision (cut) • Other important points • Call your primary health care provider if you have:

Medical condition

Content topics	Headings/Subheadings
• Briefly describe condition	• What is _____? • What causes _____? • Is it passed down in families?
• Symptoms of condition	• What are the symptoms of _____? • How is _____ diagnosed?
• Recovery in hospital*	• How is _____ treated? • Treatment: • Lifestyle/Staying healthy • What can I do to help myself? 　› Pain control 　› Exercises, coughing exercises 　› Stop smoking 　› Activity 　› Healthy eating

Content topics	Headings/Subheadings
• Side effects and risks of medications	• Your medications

• Care at home*	• At home OR
	• Lifestyle
	  › Activity, sex
	  › Exercise/Sports
	  › Healthy eating
	  › Your medicines
	  › Supplies/Special equipment
	  › Going back to work
	  › Coping with stress

• Symptoms to report to physician	• Call your doctor if you have:
• Followup care	• Visit to your doctor/other health care providers • Other treatments
• Resources	• Who can help me in the community?

*For many conditions it is not necessary to provide recovery in hospital and care at home information separately.

Health promotion

Content topics	Headings/Subheadings
• Changes in lifestyle to reduce risk factors	• Preventing _____ OR • Making changes OR • Controlling risk factors OR • What can I do to feel better? OR • Staying healthy
• Resources	• Who can help me in the community? • Learn about support groups in your area by calling _____.

Welcome to [our Unit/Department/Service/Site]

Content topics	Headings/Subheadings
• Short general introduction to the unit	• About [our unit]
• Your health care team - List staff positions on the unit and explain their roles (avoid personal names as they may change) • Staff routines	• Who is on my health care team? • Rounds (if applicable) • Shift changes (if applicable)
• Communication between patient, family, and staff; choose one friend or family member to act as a contact for you and your family • Important phone numbers	• Communication
• Visiting - give unit contact details and other pertinent info; places to stay nearby	• Visitors • Parking
• Unit/facility details (include as applicable) • Whiteboard explanation, if needed • What to bring • What to leave at home (e.g., valuables)	• Typical day on the unit • Meals • Phone calls, phone/TV hookup • Personal care items to bring • Patient representative • Private and semi-private rooms • Interpreter Services • Diversity and Inclusion • Amenities
• Staying safe in hospital	• Medication safety • Infection control, hand hygiene • Smoke and scent-free policy • Violence and Aggression policy

Appendix C – Readability Formulas

SMOG Readability Formula

SMOG works well for longer documents. To check SMOG for text containing more than 30 sentences:

1. Choose 10 consecutive sentences from near the beginning, middle, and end of your text. Skip titles and headings.
2. In the sample of 30 sentences, count all words that have 3 or more syllables. Include repetitions of the same word, no matter how often it is used.
3. Find the nearest square root of this total.
4. Add 3 to the square root to find the reading level that a person must have reached to understand the text.

Additional guidelines:

- Hyphenated words are counted as one word.
- Numbers that are in numeric form should be pronounced to determine the number of syllables.
- Abbreviations should be read as though they are not abbreviated to determine the number of syllables.
- If a sentence contains a colon, avoid using that sentence in your count, or count it as 2 sentences.
- Do not count verbs ending in "ed" or "es" that give the word a third syllable.

SMOG Readability Calculator

- Find the calculator online at:
  › www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp
- Copy and paste your text into the calculator to receive an estimated reading level for SMOG and several other formulas.

The SMOG Calculator assesses an entire document, not just a sample. The SMOG Calculator was developed by G. Harry McLaughlin, Ph.D. in collaboration with Alain Trottier.

Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level

This tool works well for short or long documents. Be aware that short, bulleted lists can throw off the calculator. To access Flesch-Kincaid reading level information in Microsoft Word (depending on the version of Word you have):

- Click "File" at top left of window.
- Click "Options" from left-hand panel.
- Choose "Proofing" from pop-up box.
- Look for "Show readability statistics" and check the box.
- Click "OK".
- To run the statistics on your document: in the Review tab on the ribbon, click "Spelling and Grammar." When the check is completed, a pop-up window of "Readability Statistics" will appear, including estimated grade level.

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