

Working together



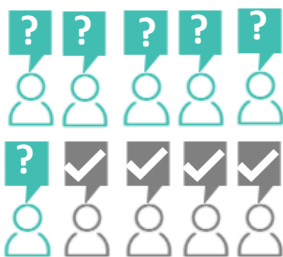
Have you ever struggled to understand something about your health?

Maybe a doctor explained an illness to you in a way that did not make any sense?

Perhaps you've found it difficult to keep track of your tablets or understand what a food label is telling you? If so, you are not alone.

Recent research²¹ tells us that 4 in every 10 people of working age in England have difficulty understanding, and using everyday health information.

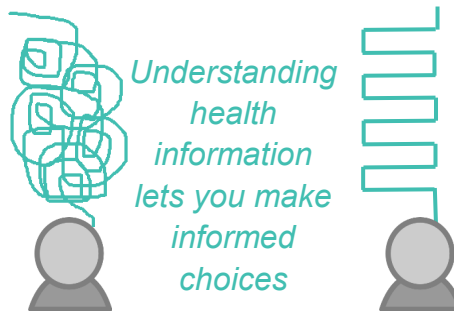
It's not just wording; add numbers into the mix, and even more people are confused.



6/10 have difficulty understanding health information that includes both words and numbers

When information is not explained clearly it can be confusing. For example it may not be clear:

- what a test result means
- how and when to take medication
- how important getting vaccinated is

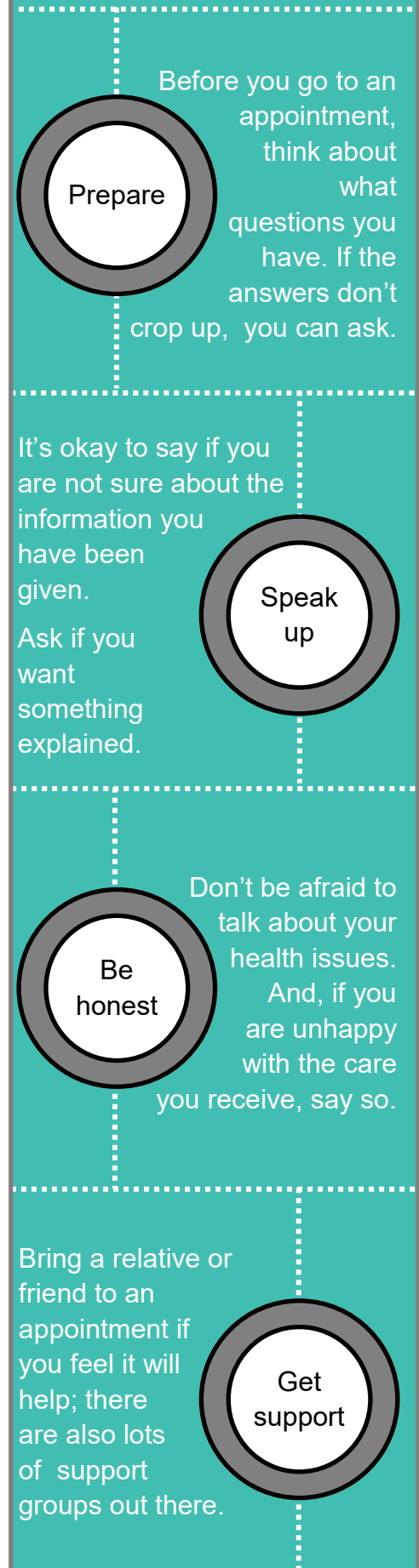


Making sense of health information is an important part of keeping us healthy. You have to know what things mean, in order to:

- Understand the choices you have
- find your way around the health care system
- Make the best choices about your health

Understanding health information, and making decisions as a result, is referred to by the health profession as health literacy.

4 steps to a better medical appointment



Easy to read

Now this looks good to read



+

Understandable

Is this making sense?



=

Informed decision

Yes! I know exactly what to do



By improving our health literacy we can:



Better manage our own health and wellbeing needs, as well as those of our families.



Find it easier to access the services we need.



Make sure we recover as quickly as possible by understanding medical advice.



Make better decisions to help prevent or delay frailty.



Feel more confident when chatting to health professionals.

What's happening in Derbyshire?

Our aim is to make everyone think more about health literacy and what they can do to help people understand the information they receive.

As a first step, staff working for Derbyshire County Council's Stop Smoking Service are going to be looking more closely at the language they use in their work.

Staff will also learn different ways to check in with the people they are helping to quit smoking, to make sure that everything is clear.



This is just the start...

If successful, this work will be expanded to other areas of health and social care throughout Derbyshire.

Tackling health literacy in this way has the chance to really make a big difference.

Health literacy and frailty - what's the link?



Health literacy can affect every health choice we make.

If we make good health choices throughout our lives, this will help us to build our health reserves.

Having larger physical and mental health reserves means we may be able to prevent or delay frailty later in life.

Want to find out more?

Click on the links below:

[What to ask your doctor NHS tips](#)

[Professionals: Plain English Guide](#)

Health professions: empower those you work with

Are you a doctor, a health visitor or someone who works in a care home? People with health and social care jobs can sometimes use words and phrases that have very little meaning outside their area of work.

This can be really confusing for anyone without that specialist knowledge. It doesn't have to be this way; by making small changes, we can tackle this together.



1. Explain clearly

Keep language as simple as possible

2. Demonstrate

Demonstrate instructions, such as portion size or measuring medication

3. Check understanding

Encourage service users to ask questions; listen well, and check their understanding