



Patient Education Solutions

Health Literacy and ExitCare Easy-to-Read Topics

Health Literacy is the ability to read, understand, and act upon health-related information as defined by Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., an organization dedicated to improving literacy and understanding for all. ExitCare is passionate about Health Literacy and the impact that patient education can have on both patients and health care providers. Whether the reason for limited understanding of health related information is cognitive ability, a language barrier (on the side of the patient or the doctor), or the stress associated with serious health problems, clear patient education materials can improve and save lives.

Only 12% of adults in the United States are considered “proficient” in reading ability with 52% of the population reading at an “intermediate” level. Twenty percent of American adults read at or below the 5th grade level. These percentages emphasize the importance of patient education and ExitCare’s strong mission to create clear and readable patient documents, many of which have been translated into 8 additional languages.

For the 80% of patient who read above the 5th grade level, ExitCare users have consistently told us that these patients appreciate the amount of information contained in most standard ExitCare documents. So, rather than deny complete information to the majority, ExitCare has begun development of duplicate topics, labeled in the Title List with “Easy-to-Read” after the name of the topic (never on the documents themselves). As of September 2009, 175 topics were complete, with the December 2009 release this will increase to 213. More will be added each quarter.

The “Easy-to-Read” documents are written at a 2nd to 4th grade reading level as measured by the Flesch-Kincaid readability calculator. They also contain graphic illustrations, bulleted instructions, short sentences and at least 40% of the page is white space for ease of readability. These are brief patient instructions that emphasize “need to know” information such as HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS and GET HELP RIGHT AWAY emergency information that a patient will need so they can take appropriate responsibility for their own health care issue(s) while at home. Much like our standard ExitCare documents, they contain quality, physician-reviewed medical information but at a simpler understanding level for those serving low literacy populations. Having the Easy-to-Read title option in your ExitCare library will help to lower repeat emergency hospital visits and equip healthcare providers with yet another tool to educate their patients.

ExitCare’s passion for patient education is apparent through its employees, physician authors and reviewers, customer service, and responsive attention to detail and customer needs. Our new set of documents is yet another example of how ExitCare continues to provide more value for clinical users and all of their patients, and why ExitCare is the “Patient Education Solutions Company”.

For more information on ExitCare®, please contact at www.ExitCare.com or (800) 694-6669.