TORONTO GENERAL HOSPITAL

Peter and Melanie Munk Patient & Family Learning Centre and Library News

Health Literacy: Why is it Important?

Have you ever been confused by what your doctor is saying?

Have you ever asked a question of your health provider and not understood the answer?

Have you ever not asked a question because you were anxious or embarrassed?

You are not alone.

Each October, our Patient and Family Education Program and Libraries focus on raising awareness about the importance of Health Literacy and aim to build these skills in our patients, families and staff.

Using Our Digital Collection

e-Books, audiobooks and videos now available online and for download from the UHN Patient and Family Libraries using OverDrive. Visit uhnpatient.overdrive.com to browse our collection.

To borrow from our digital collection, you must be a registered library patron. Visit the TGH Patient & Family Library on the first floor next to the Pharmacy to get your Access Code.

Holiday Hours: The Library will be closed on Monday, September 4th and Monday, October 9th.
What is health literacy?
Health literacy means using many different skills to get, understand, communicate and use information so you can make good decisions about your health, or the health of those you care for.

Why is health literacy important?
About 60% of Canadian adults, and 88% of seniors, have trouble accessing, understanding and acting on information for health. (From: Canadian Council on Learning)

More and more people need to manage a chronic health condition or take care of someone else who has one. The better your health literacy, the better you will be able to manage your health and move through the health care system.

Building your health literacy can also increase your safety. It can help you to follow instructions about taking your medication correctly, about watching for symptoms of infection or illness, and to know who to call if you need help.

Tips to improve your health literacy
When you visit with your healthcare provider:

- Write down your questions so you can remember everything
- Bring all of your medicines, including vitamins and any over-the-counter or herbal remedies
- Take a family member or trusted friend along to help you remember what your healthcare provider says
- Ask questions if you do not understand
- If you still are not sure about the message, ask your healthcare provider to repeat using different words
- If you can repeat back the health information you receive in your own words, you understand it
What questions do I ask?

Be sure your healthcare provider answers these questions before you leave your visit:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

(From Ask Me 3)

For Health Literacy Month 2017, our Patient and Family Education Program will focus on how health literacy is related to your safety.

Check in with the Library to learn more about Health Literacy Month events and information during the month of October.

Are you a health care provider?

To best care for our patients, it is important that we have health literate medical and support staff working at our organization. Anyone, even medical professionals, can struggle with health literacy in stressful or unfamiliar situations, regardless of one’s education or experience.

To learn more about improving your own health literacy, and for tips on supporting your patients’ literacy, contact our Patient and Family Library at tgpen@uhn.ca.

Our program offers workshops and one-on-one consults on writing and speaking in plain language, developing videos, brochures and posters, and using evidence-based patient education techniques, and more.

Save the Date

Our next health talk will focus on building skills for you to be the leader of your own health care journey. Tips on communicating with your health care team, preparing for your appointments, navigating services and systems, and accessing information will be covered.

Date: Thursday, September 28th
Time: 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

For more details or to register, contact Patient Education Coordinator, Becky Quinlan, at:
Phone: 416-340-4800 ext. 5647
Email: Becky.Quinlan@uhn.ca

If you’d like to receive emails about upcoming events, or an electronic version of this newsletter, please, contact our Library at tgpen@uhn.ca to sign up.

Health Literacy Word Search

Word List
- Communication
- Information
- Plain Language
- Questions
- Skills
- Health Literacy
- Library
We Welcome Your Feedback

Do you have suggestions for our Library, or comments about the service you received from us?

Let us know!

Send us an email: tgpen@uhn.ca

Call us:
416-340-4800 ext. 5951

Visit us in person:
First Floor
Norman Urquhart Building
Toronto General Hospital

Or fill out our online survey:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/LKSC9DX