

How to fill in PODS with Content Patients can Understand

1 Use common words.
Avoid clinical language and speak to patient.

2 Listen.
To get a common word explanation of something, try explaining it verbally to a lower literate patient and having them explain it back, take note of the words they use.

3 Find a reference list.
The Plain Language Thesaurus for Health Communications is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **Find it here.**

4 Avoid abbreviations.
Avoid using unnecessary abbreviations and acronyms.

5 Avoid math concepts.
Words such as risk, normal, and range may not be meaningful to your audience. If possible, use words such as "chance" or "possibility" instead.

6 Use words consistently.
Pick the most familiar words and use them throughout your talk. Mad cow disease and bovine spongiform encephalitis may be the same thing, but your patient may think they are two different diseases and mad cow may be a more familiar term.

7 Focus on the relevant.
Provide information that will help the patient be able to complete proper follow up care at home. Skip details that are only nice to know.

8 Use familiar analogies.
When making comparisons, use references that your audience will recognize.



some examples:

Say: lumps about the size of a pea
Not: lumps 5-6 mm in diameter

Say: high blood pressure
Not: hypertension

Say: birth control
Not: contraception