

Health Literacy in General Practice

What is health literacy?

We used to think that health literacy was just about how well a person could find, understand and use health information — their skills and abilities and what they know about health. It is much more than this. The way health information and services are provided can also affect what you know and what you do about your health.¹

Health literacy in general practice

More than half of your patients do not have the level of health literacy they need to make well informed healthcare decisions and act on them. If your patients do not understand the information and services you are providing, then they may be at higher risk of experiencing poor health outcomes.²

Your general practice can make it easy for someone to make better health decisions by improving how you communicate health information. You can also make your practice easier to navigate. This is called organisational health literacy, and it makes up part of a person's health literacy environment.

RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th Edition)

Did you know that many of the criteria in the RACGP Standards for General Practices relate to health literacy? Acting on health literacy can help your practice to meet, further support or exceed accreditation standards in a range of areas.

The RACGP Standards for General Practice (5th Edition) have been [mapped](#) against organisational health literacy dimensions within the [HeLLO Tas! Toolkit](#). This toolkit will help you see what you are already doing well and what else you might do to further enhance your practice. It can help support your evidence towards meeting quality accreditation standards relating to outcomes for clients, consumer rights, evidence-based practice, and community development.

Helpful links

- [HeLLO Tas! Toolkit](#)
- [Teach-back videos](#)
- [Tasmanian Department of Health's Health Literacy Website](#)
- [Victorian Primary Care Partnership's Online Health Literacy Course](#)

For further support, please contact Provider Support (providersupport@primaryhealthtas.com.au).

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¹ ACSQHC. (2015). *Health Literacy: A summary for Clinicians*. Sydney: ACSQHC.

² *ibid*