

Health Literacy

Developed August 2025 with input from members of the NEO QI Hub Patient Advisory Council to help health care teams provide more patient-centered diabetes care.

Communication

Try This:

- Using plain language
- Reinforcing with written and/or visual aids (e.g., handouts, schedules, diagrams)
- Reassuring with supportive tone ("You are not alone")



Instead of This:

- Using jargon
- Overloading patients with technical details or rushed explanations



Building Trust

Try This:

- Listening actively and showing empathy
- Asking open-ended questions (e.g., "What concerns do you have?")
- Fostering long-term relationships with continuity of care



Instead of This:

- Treating visits as rushed transactions



Follow-Up and Support

Try This:

- Using patient portals for results, reminders, and/or secure messages
- Making follow-up calls or text messages to reinforce care plans
- Offering peer groups, classes, or educational videos



Instead of This:

- Assuming patients will remember or manage alone after the visit



Guiding Patients to Reliable Information

Try This:

- Recommending credible sources (e.g., National Institutes of Health, Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins, PubMed)
- Reviewing and validate patient-found information, including content from AI-based and/or online search services, which may contain inaccuracies or misleading guidance
- Helping patients identify reliable sources and verify key health information
- Encouraging patients to prepare questions in advance



Instead of This:

- Dismissing patient research without discussion



Shared Responsibility

Try This:

- Empowering patients as active partners in care
- Involving family/support persons when helpful
- Ensuring system-level commitment to clear communication (i.e., using a team approach)



Instead of This:

- Placing the full burden of understanding on patients



This resource is part of the AHEAD Initiative Diabetes QI Clinical Toolkit. For access to this toolkit and additional resources, please visit NEOQIHub.org.

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