Health information should help you do things you want to do

Good health information is practical. Good information:

- gives clear steps
- uses examples to help explain the information or what to do
- includes a summary if it is long
- has been checked by the people it was made for.

Here are 4 questions you can ask to check if health information is practical.

Does the information have clear steps that you can follow?

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Good information explains things step by step. This helps you know what to do first, next, and after that.

Clear steps might tell you:

- what to do
- when to do it
- who can help.

For example, good health information might tell you what medicine to take and when. It might say who can help you remember to take the medicine. If the medicine makes you feel sick, the information might say what to do next.

If information is confusing or skips important steps, it may not be good information.

Are there examples that explain the information?

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Examples help make information easier to understand. Examples show how something works in real life.

Examples can be:

- social stories
- pictures that show what to do
- a common problem and how to fix it
- videos or virtual reality experiences.

Examples can help you feel more confident to try something yourself. For example, a social story about going to a doctor to have a health check could help you get ready to have a health check.

Is there a summary?

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Health information that is hard to understand or remember should have a summary.

A summary:

- says the most important parts
- uses simple words
- helps you remember the information.

In written information, the summary might be called:

- “Key points”
- “What you need to know”
- “Tips”
- “Things to remember”
- or something else.

During a health appointment, you can ask your health professional for a summary of the most important information.

Say something like:

- “That is a lot of information. It might be hard for me to remember. Could you tell me the important parts again?
- “Can I record you while you speak, so that I can listen again later?”
- “Can you write down the parts I need to remember?”

Was it checked by the people it was made for?

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Good health information has been checked by the people who will use it.

This might mean:

- people with intellectual disability have checked the information
- they said what was easy or hard
- changes were made to make it better.

Health resources that are co-designed have been made by and for people who know about the health need. It could be:

- people with intellectual disability
- people with the health experience
- other people with good knowledge.

Co-designed information might be easier to understand and use.

[FEATURED LINK] Co-design on Our Health Space

This resource is part of a series

How to check if health information is good and right for you

Everyone needs health information that is good and meets their needs, but it can be hard to know what information you can trust.

One of the ways you can get health information is from health resources. Health resources can be things like:

- fact sheets about a health problem
- guides that teach you how to do something good for your health
- videos that explain something about health
- apps that help you take care of your health.

Researchers asked people with intellectual disability, family members and health professionals what makes health resources good to use.

Together, they made a list to help people check health resources.

Resource Quality and Accessibility Checklist for People with Intellectual Disability and Their Supporters

We have used ideas from the Checklist to write about how you can check if health information is good and right for you. In the links below, you will find examples and practical advice to help build your knowledge and skills.

Often, the best information comes from a person who knows a lot about health and knows things about you too. For example, GPs and other health professionals give good health advice.

The advice we give here should be helpful to most people, but it is not specific to you. Talk to a health professional if:

- you are worried about your health
- you can't decide if some health information is good and right for you.

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The National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health (the Centre) works to improve health services and the health system so people with intellectual disability can live their best, healthiest lives.

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