
Health-Literate Website Redesigns: Set Yourself Up for Success

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Today you'll learn how to:

- Identify and involve your users in your site redesign
- Set goals for your website
- Create a content strategy that prioritizes health literacy
- Practice inclusive design

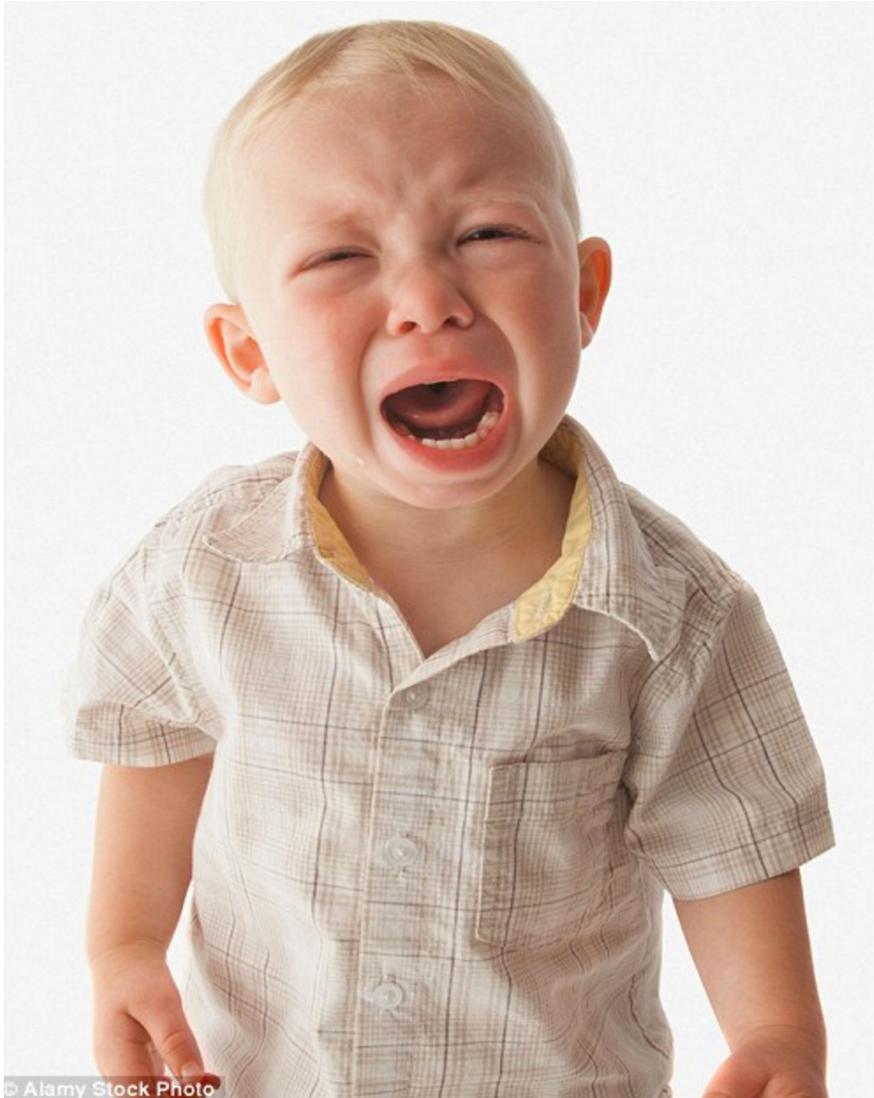


The Challenge



**We struggle with
complex health
information.**





Highly personal

Stressful

May be pain/discomfort



72% of internet users looked online for health information in the last year.



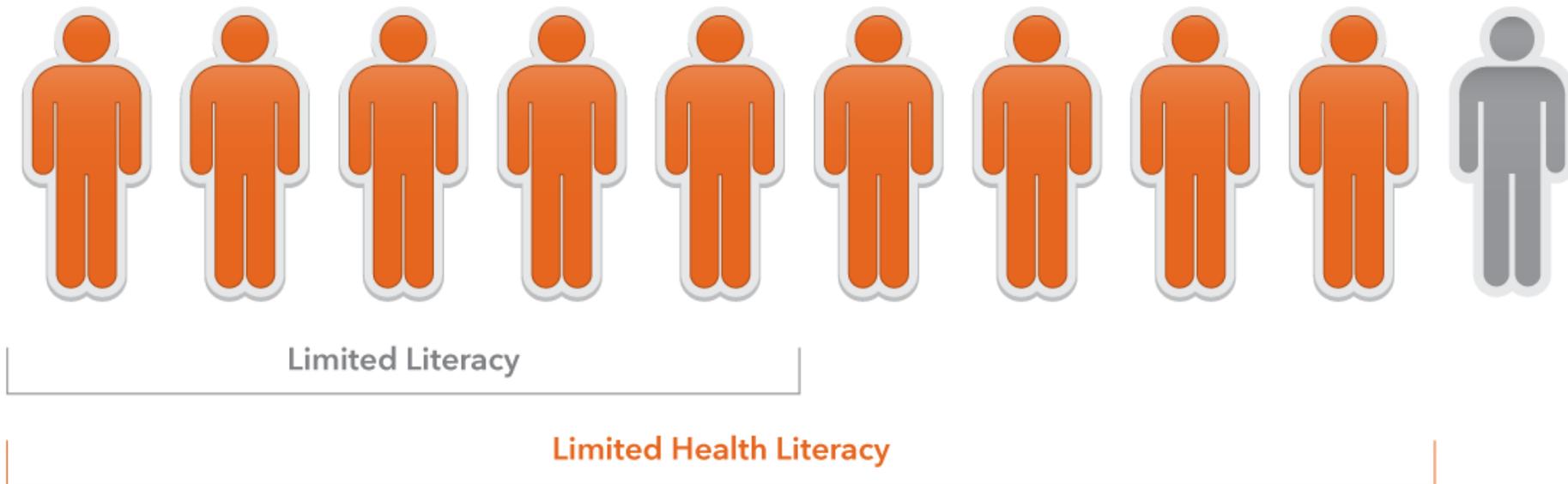
60% say their most recent search had an **impact** on their health or the way they care for someone else.



Only **42%** of consumer health websites follow basic usability best practices.



Limited health literacy is prevalent

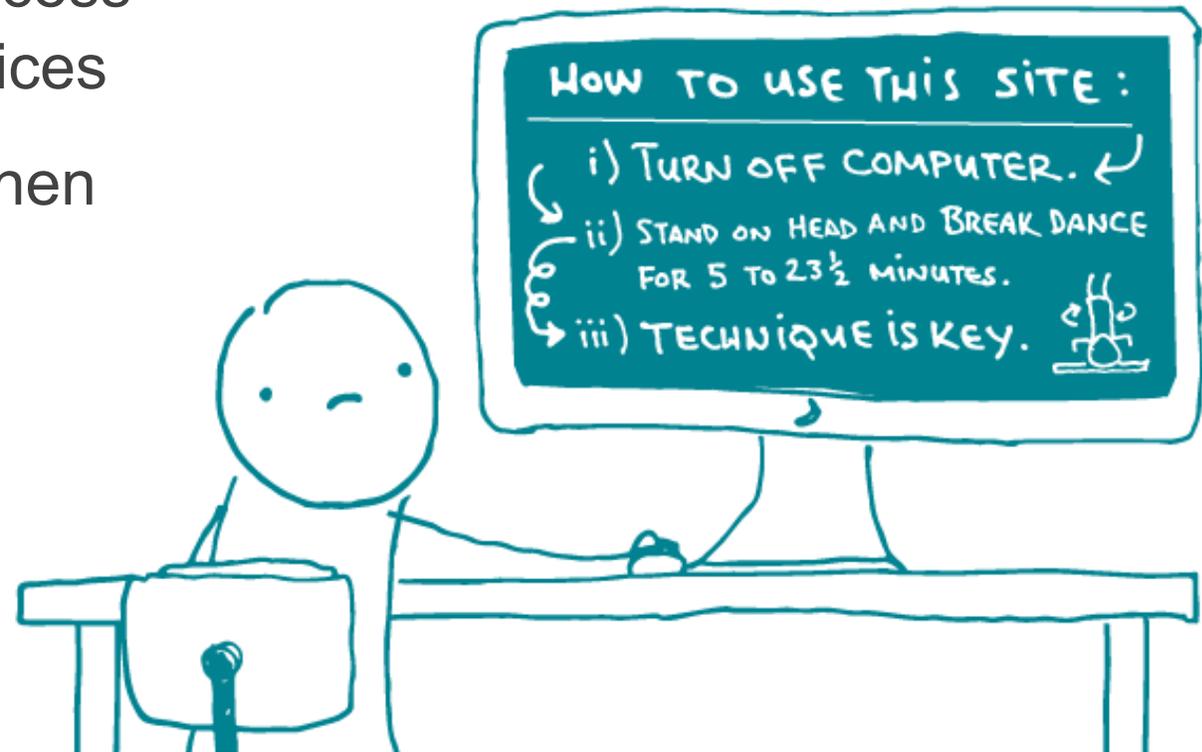


The Opportunity



Users with limited literacy skills are:

- Willing to use the web to access health information and services
- Able to accomplish tasks when websites are designed well



All users benefit from improved usability

Comparing time-on-task on the original site with a prototype (designed to support users with limited literacy skills):

Time on task (Mean)	Original site	Prototype	Improvement
High literacy	14:19	5:05	+182%
Low literacy	22:16	9:30	+134%
All users	17:50	6:45	+164%

High literacy users:

- **3 times as fast** with the revised site
- **93% success rate** on revised site (compared to 68% with original)

Source: Summers, K., & Summers, M. (2005). Reading and navigational strategies of Web users with lower literacy skills.



What strategies can we use to ensure websites meet the needs of these users?

1. Identify and involve your users
2. Create a content strategy that prioritizes health literacy
3. Practice inclusive design



Strategy 1

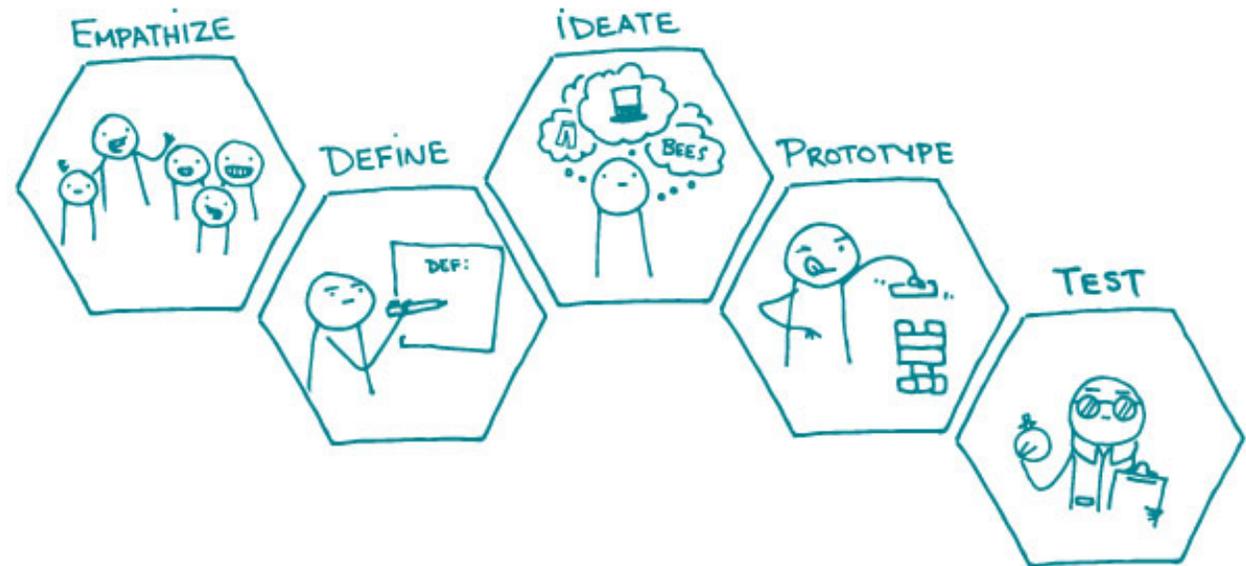
Identify and involve your
users

At CommunicateHealth, we work at the intersection of health literacy and human-centered design (HCD).

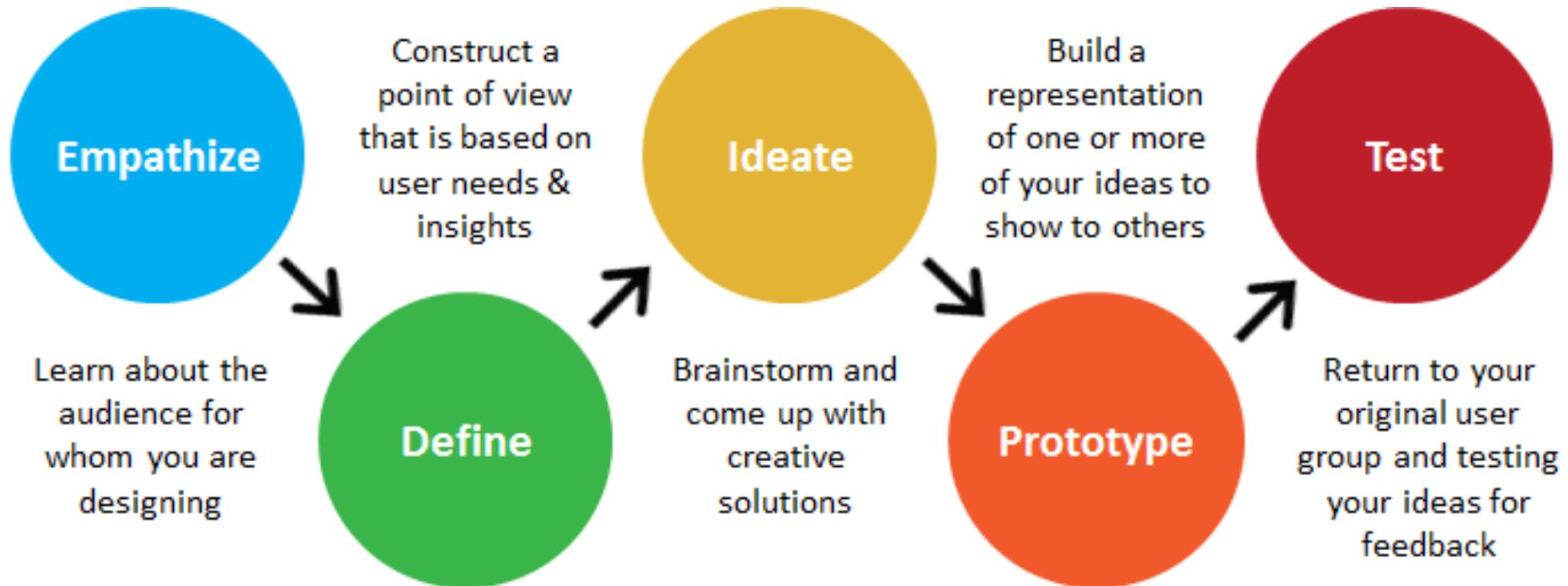


What is HCD?

- A creative approach to problem solving
- Starts with people and ends with new solutions
- Tailor made to the needs of users (the people who will use the product or solution)



HCD Process



HCD methods

Empathize	Define	Ideate	Prototype	Test
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Lit. Review○ Survey○ Log Analysis○ Interviews○ Focus Groups○ Contextual Inquiry○ Experience Sampling○ Diary Studies○ Collaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Affinity Diagrams○ Empathy Mapping○ Personas○ Journey Mapping○ Scenarios○ Communicative Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Breadth & Depth Brainstorming○ Card Sorting○ Low-fidelity Conceptualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Information Architecture○ User Flow○ Design Guide○ Mid & High-fidelity Design○ Interaction Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Prototype Testing○ Usability Testing○ Heuristic Review○ Analytics○ A/B Testing

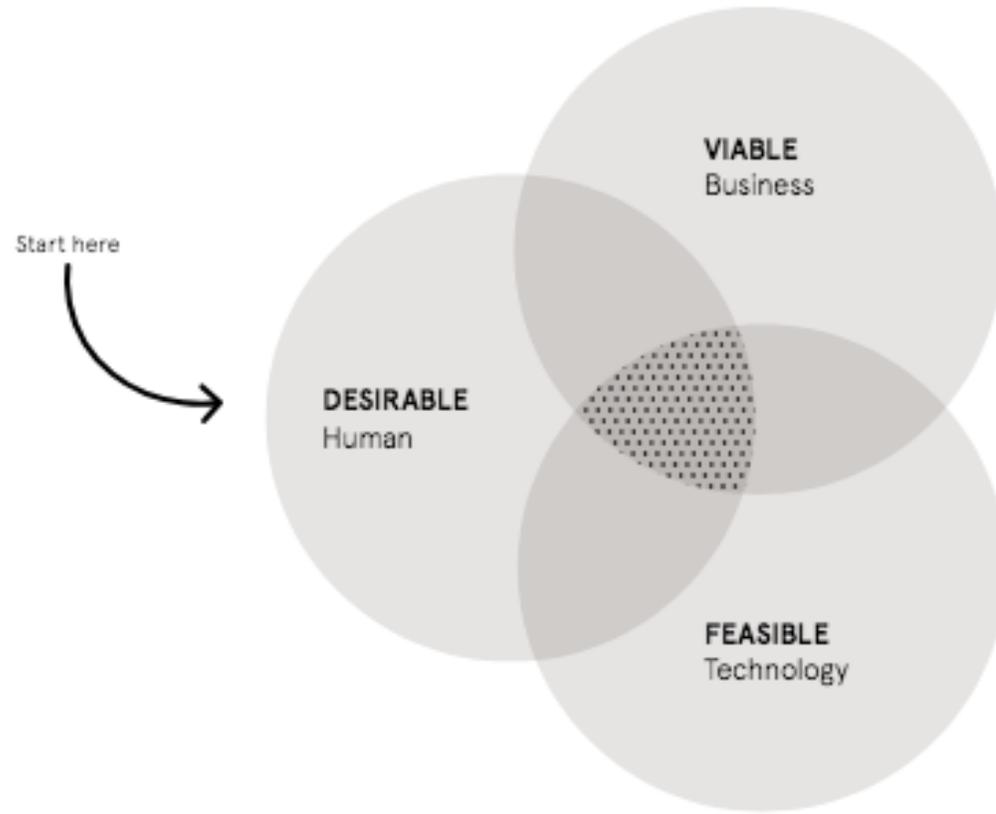


You want your website to be:

- ✓ Usable
- ✓ Useful
- ✓ Appropriate
- ✓ Appealing



You want your website to be:



IDEO, 2015



Planning and goal-setting



Setting goals for your website

- Set goals (the long-term outcomes) for your website
- Break your goals into objectives so you can track progress
- Set goals and objectives at the beginning of a redesign — then track and report



Here's an example:

- Website goal: Ensure National Eye Institute's web content is clear and meets users needs
- Supporting objective: Ensure that any new or revised web content scores 80% or higher on the CDC Clear Communication Index



Pro tips!

Your website goals and objectives will differ in size and scope based on whether you're building a new website or redesigning a current one. For example:

- For a **new website**, you'll likely set big picture goals for how to reach and engage your priority audiences
- For a **website redesign**, you'll likely develop goals and objectives that focus on both broad measures of success as well as some key areas for improvement on the website



Reflect and share

What tasks are users
trying to accomplish when
they visit your site?



Strategy 2

Create a content strategy
that prioritizes health
literacy



What is content strategy?

Planning for the creation, delivery, and governance (taking care of content after it's live) of useful, usable content.



How to create a content strategy for your redesign

1. Understand the content you have now
2. Make a game plan for what you want to achieve
3. Document everything in a content strategy document



Content audit

A content audit will tell you:

- What content do you have?
- Who is it for?
- Is it useful?



Includes quantitative criteria...

- Number of web pages or assets
- URLs and page titles
- Date last updated



...and qualitative criteria

Does content follow health literacy best practices?

- Written in plain language
- Easy to scan
- Most important info first

Other criteria:

- Voice is consistent
- Content is up to date
- Content is in line with priorities



Audit tools

- CDC Clear Communication Index: [cdc.gov/ccindex](https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex)
- Health Literacy Online Checklist:
[health.gov/healthliteracyonline/checklist](https://www.health.gov/healthliteracyonline/checklist)
- Your own internal tools



Documenting your content strategy

A living document that gets the whole team on the same page

Includes:

- Purpose and goals
- Audiences
- Calls to action (messages)
- Voice and tone
- Style guide
- Content structure
- Content workflow
- Content maintenance
- Content standards



Voice and tone

Voice

- The style or personality of the writing
- Constant

Tone

- The mood of the writing
- Flexible

Goal — keep voice consistent while matching tone to the content and user's emotional state



Voice and tone

Conversational voice, friendly tone

Thank you for sending us your immunization form. We need more details from you before we can make the change you requested.

Conversational voice, stern tone

You still haven't paid us the amount you owe on your account. We need to receive a payment for the full amount by December 30, 2016.



Reflect and share

Describe the voice of your website. Is it consistent?



Create site navigation that's simple and intuitive

The screenshot displays the MedlinePlus website interface. At the top left is the MedlinePlus logo with the tagline "Trusted Health Information for You". To the right is a search bar with the text "Search MedlinePlus" and a green "GO" button. Below the search bar are links for "About MedlinePlus", "Site Map", "FAQs", and "Customer Support". A navigation bar contains "Health Topics", "Drugs & Supplements", "Videos & Tools", and a language selector for "Español". Below this is a breadcrumb trail "Home → Health Topics". The main heading is "Health Topics", accompanied by social media icons for email, Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. A descriptive paragraph states: "Read about symptoms, causes, treatment and prevention for over 1000 diseases, illnesses, health conditions and wellness issues. MedlinePlus health topics are regularly reviewed, and links are updated daily." Below this is a section titled "Find topics A-Z" with a horizontal menu of letters from A to Z, plus "XYZ" and "List of All Topics". The content is organized into three columns: "Body Location/Systems" (with icons for Blood, Heart and Circulation; Bones, Joints and Muscles; Brain and Nerves; Digestive System), "Disorders and Conditions" (with links for Cancers, Diabetes Mellitus, Genetics/Birth Defects, Infections, Injuries and Wounds), and "Demographic Groups" (with links for Children and Teenagers, Men, Population Groups, Seniors, Women).

MedlinePlus
Trusted Health Information for You

Search MedlinePlus **GO**

[About MedlinePlus](#) [Site Map](#) [FAQs](#) [Customer Support](#)

[Health Topics](#) [Drugs & Supplements](#) [Videos & Tools](#) [Español](#)

Home → Health Topics

Health Topics

[✉](#) [f](#) [t](#) [g+](#)

Read about symptoms, causes, treatment and prevention for over 1000 diseases, illnesses, health conditions and wellness issues. MedlinePlus health topics are regularly reviewed, and links are updated daily.

Find topics A-Z

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [XYZ](#) [List of All Topics](#)

Body Location/Systems	Disorders and Conditions	Demographic Groups
Blood, Heart and Circulation	Cancers	Children and Teenagers
Bones, Joints and Muscles	Diabetes Mellitus	Men
Brain and Nerves	Genetics/Birth Defects	Population Groups
Digestive System	Infections	Seniors
	Injuries and Wounds	Women



Home

Health Information

Browse A-Z Health Topics 

- Menopause
- Hyperthermia
- Shingles
- Heart Health
- Depression
- Lewy-Body Dementia
- Advance Care Planning



Organize and label your content

- Organize and label content according to users' needs
- Use terms that are familiar to users



Poll: Which link will have information on asthma triggers?

1. Air Pollution & Respiratory Health
2. Indoor Air Quality
3. Asthma and Allergies



NEI Home

Learn about Eye Health

Healthy Vision ☰

Eye Conditions and Diseases

NEI for Kids

En español

Resources for Health Educators

Grants & Training

Funding Opportunities

How to Apply

Fellowships and Internships

Policies and Procedures

NEI Research Priorities ☰

Contact Grants & Training Staff

Research at NEI

Clinical Trials

Research Labs and Branches

Vision Research Datasets

About NEI

News and Events

Mission and Accomplishments

NEI History

NEI Director

Budget and Congress

Advisory Committees

Donate to NEI ☰

Footer

Contact NEI

Contact Us

Visit Us

Get email updates from NEI

Policies

Accessibility

Privacy

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Disclaimers

For NEI Employees

Intranet

Emergency Information

Staff Directory

nih.gov | HHS.gov | USA.gov



Activity

Organize content

Activity: Organize content

You're setting up a website for a small neighborhood market so people can shop online for curbside delivery. How would you organize the site so people can easily navigate and find what they want?



Activity: Organize content

Bananas

Apples

Toilet paper

Hand sanitizer

Pizza dough

Cheese

Flour

Sugar

Dish soap

Candy bars

Plums

Frozen pizza

Butter

Lettuce

Tomatoes

Hot dogs

Olive oil

Cucumbers

Peppers

Eggs

Paper towels

Salad dressing

Baking powder

Canned beans



Strategy 3

Practice inclusive design



Why inclusive design matters

When redesigning your website, you'll want to ensure it's accessible to everyone, including people:

- With physical disabilities like vision or hearing impairments
- With limited literacy skills or limited health literacy
- With cognitive impairment or neurological conditions
- Living in rural areas with limited broadband service
- Who don't have a computer and access the web on a smartphone



First step: Section 508 compliance

- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that all websites and digital tools created by federal agencies must be accessible to people with disabilities.
- Section 508 and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines provide checkpoints that anyone can use to test digital products and ensure their content is accessible to a wide range of users.



Inclusive design best practices

Health communicators have the opportunity to go beyond 508 compliance.

Here's some ways you can use inclusive design on your website:

- Understand your users' needs first
- Conduct iterative user testing
- Use plain language and a warm, empathetic tone



More inclusive design best practices

- Use white space to reduce visual overload
- Choose a font that's easy to read
- Aim for a color contrast ratio of 4:5:1 or higher
- Ensure your website is mobile-friendly



More inclusive design best practices

- Ensure users are able to successfully navigate the site by using a keyboard, a screen reader, or when using the zoom functionality
- Make sure your website works for users with a slower internet connection
- Repeat for new features and content!



Reflect and share

What are 2 takeaways
that you're going to apply
to your website?



Questions?



Thank you!

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