

Writing for the Web Guide

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Follow the tips below to help make your website information more reader friendly.

Writing Your Information

Follow the inverted triangle when writing your website text, giving the most important information and actions first. Follow on with explanatory information and nice to know facts.



Example:

“You must always wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after you handle food. This will help to prevent the spread of germs which can be carried on food and make you and your family ill.”

Limit the number of messages you give per page. If you’re writing a page on what to do when you have a cold, stick to the basics and don’t go off topic.

Try to give information in a positive way; patients are more likely to respond to positive commands than negative commands.

Example:

Good: “Always wash fresh fruits and vegetables before you eat them.”

Bad: “Never eat unwashed fresh fruits and vegetables.”

Don't talk down to your audience; people are less likely to act on health information if they are made to feel bad about their current behaviour or health situation.

Keep it simple. Sentences should be short and easy to understand.

Example:

Good: "High blood pressure can be caused by having a large amount of salt in your food."

Bad: "Hypertension can be caused by an individual's excessive consumption of salt."

Use the news tickertape on your homepage to lead people to your latest news topics, avoid using 'click here' to link to items as search engines don't recognise these links.

Example:

Good: View our latest Patient 2014 Survey...

Bad: Click here to view our new survey

When providing a link to a specific document, try to provide the document with as accurate a title as possible. This helps both people and search engines to find the information they are looking for.

Example:

Good: View the latest [Friends and Family Test Guidance](#).

Bad: This [link](#) goes to the latest information on the friends and family test.

Appearance Matters

- Try to avoid the following:
 - Underlining words
 - *Italics*
 - **Placing text in red font**

Underlining and making text red and italic can make it harder for patients to read.

- Use grammatically correct punctuation and always proof read your text
- Use **bold type** to emphasise words or phrases
- DO NOT USE ALL CAPS, AS THIS IS HARDER TO READ, than text written using correct capitalisation.
- Use attractive graphics and pictures to illustrate actions and healthier choices, this makes your website appear friendlier.

Example:

Good: This promotes healthier eating and shows patients what they should be consuming in an attractive way.



Adding more healthy foods to your diet such as tomatoes can help improve your health.

Bad: This only shows them what they shouldn't eat and doesn't give a visual prompt on what to eat. X is not a universally known sign for 'no' and might be misinterpreted.



Do not eat junk food such as cake.