



Health Literacy

*Vaccine Community Outreach
Train-the-Trainer Series*

Funding provided by the Wisconsin Department of Health
Services.

Overview

- Literacy and health literacy
- Universal precautions to improve understanding
- Nine tips to communicate health information so that it is easier to understand and actionable

Background

- Multi-year initiative to address vaccine hesitancy through improved health, digital, and science literacy
 - Training
 - Resources
 - Support
- **Health literacy train-the-trainer:** Provide communication and engagement strategies for community based organizations to improve health literacy and reduce barriers to Covid-19 vaccination.

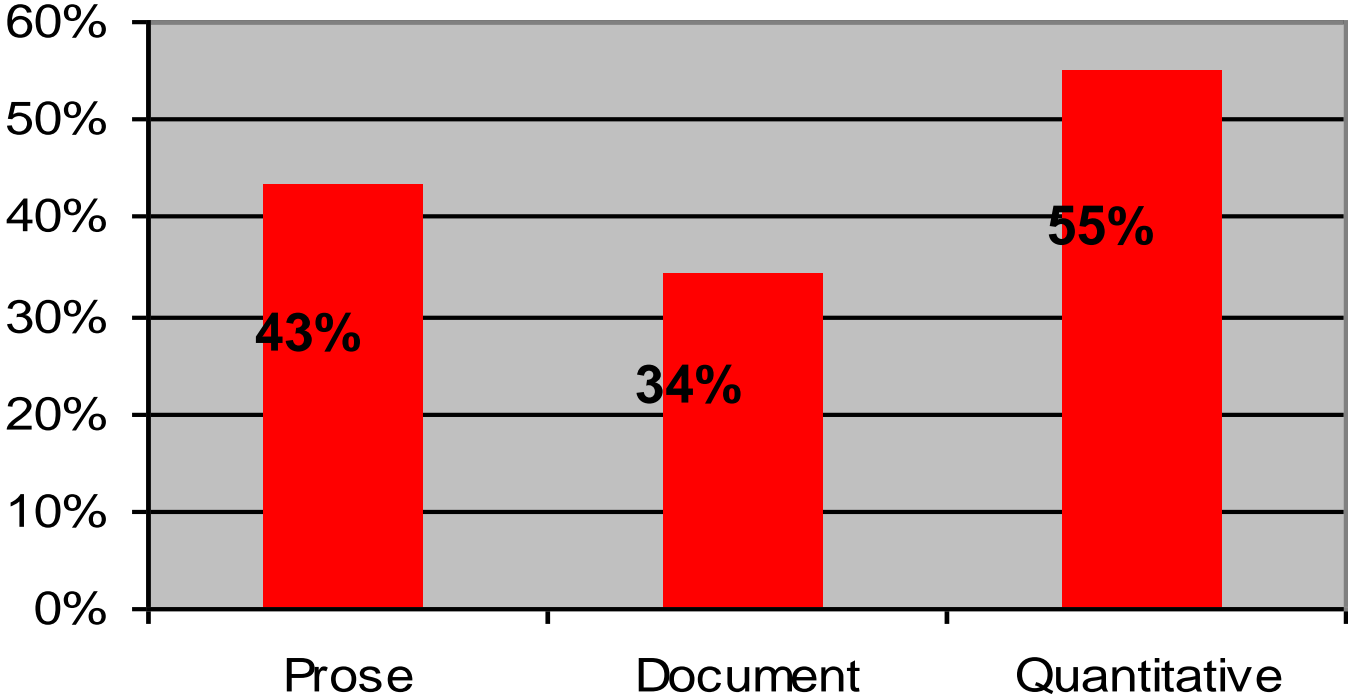
What is Literacy?

“Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.”

(National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL 2003))

Adult Literacy Levels

34-55% of adults are at below basic and basic literacy levels



What does that mean?

Lowest Level Literacy Cannot:

- Enter information on a social security card application
- Locate an intersection on a street map
- Calculate the total cost on an order form

Next Lowest Level Literacy Cannot:

- Use a bus schedule
- Balance a check book
- Write a short letter explaining an error on a credit card bill

Literacy in the U.S.

Lower than in 12 countries:

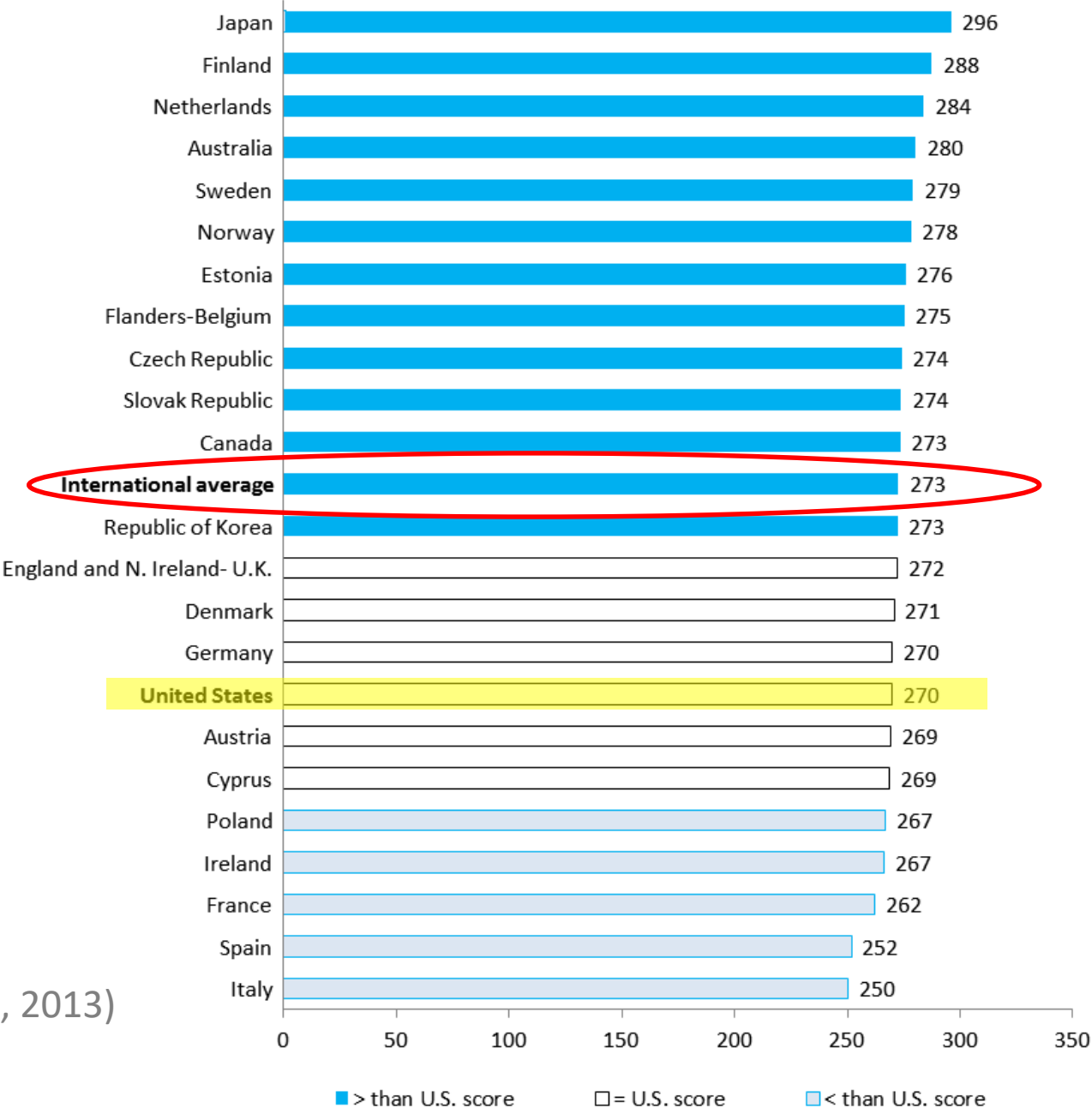
Japan, Finland, Netherlands, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Flanders-Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Canada, Republic of Korea

Not significantly different than in 5 countries:

England and Northern Ireland- U.K., Denmark, Germany, Austria, Cyprus

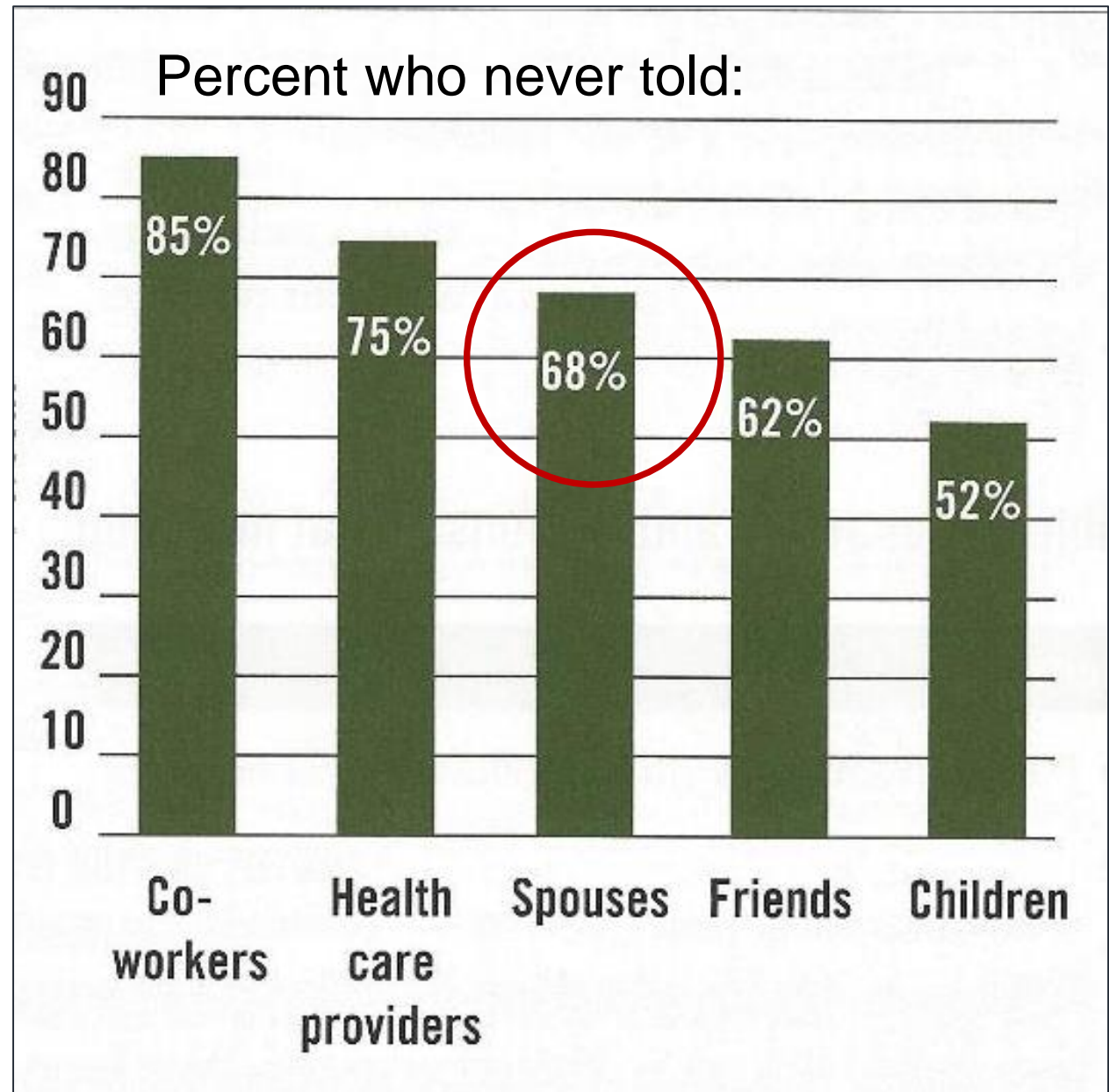
Higher than in 5 countries:

Poland, Ireland, France, Spain, Italy



(PIAAC, 2013)

A Silent Problem



Parikh, N.S., et al. Patient Educ Couns, 1996

Health Literacy:

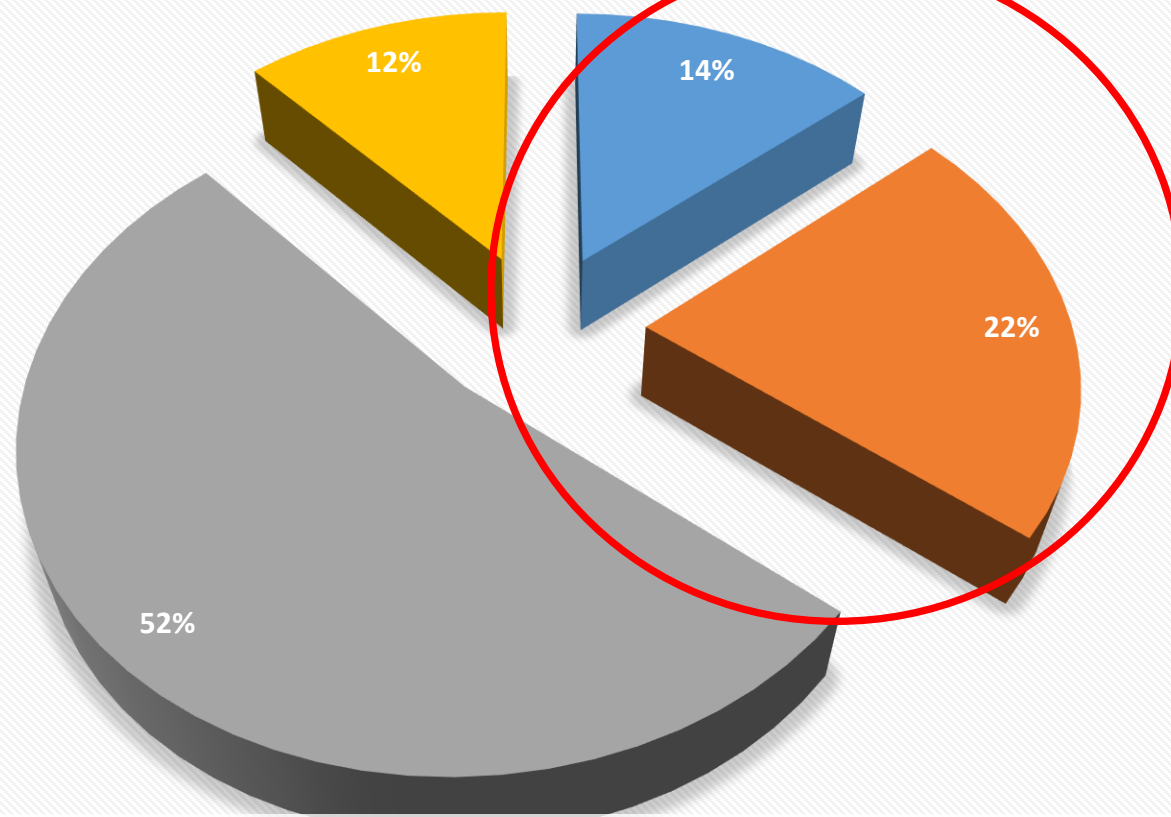
- find, understand, evaluate, communicate, and use information.
- the use of a wide range of skills that improve the ability of people to act on information in order to live healthier lives.
- these skills include reading, writing, listening, speaking, numeracy, and critical analysis, as well as communication and interaction skills.

Calgary Charter, 2008

2 sides to health literacy

- A person's ability to access, understand and use health information
- The *other person's* ability to clearly communicate how to access, understand and use health information for better health

Health literacy of U.S. Adults



■ Below Basic ■ Basic ■ Intermediate ■ Proficient

NAAL, 2003

Health literacy

- Impacts health behaviors
- Trusted messengers are needed
 - Effective engagement
 - Tailored delivery and topics
- Situational and fluid

Adopt Universal Precautions

- Since you can't always tell by looking....



- Take actions that minimize risk for everyone

9 Steps to Better Communication



Create a shame free environment

Even highly educated people prefer simple, understandable health information.



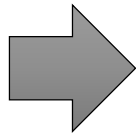


Use plain language techniques

Simplify terms

Disease

Prevent



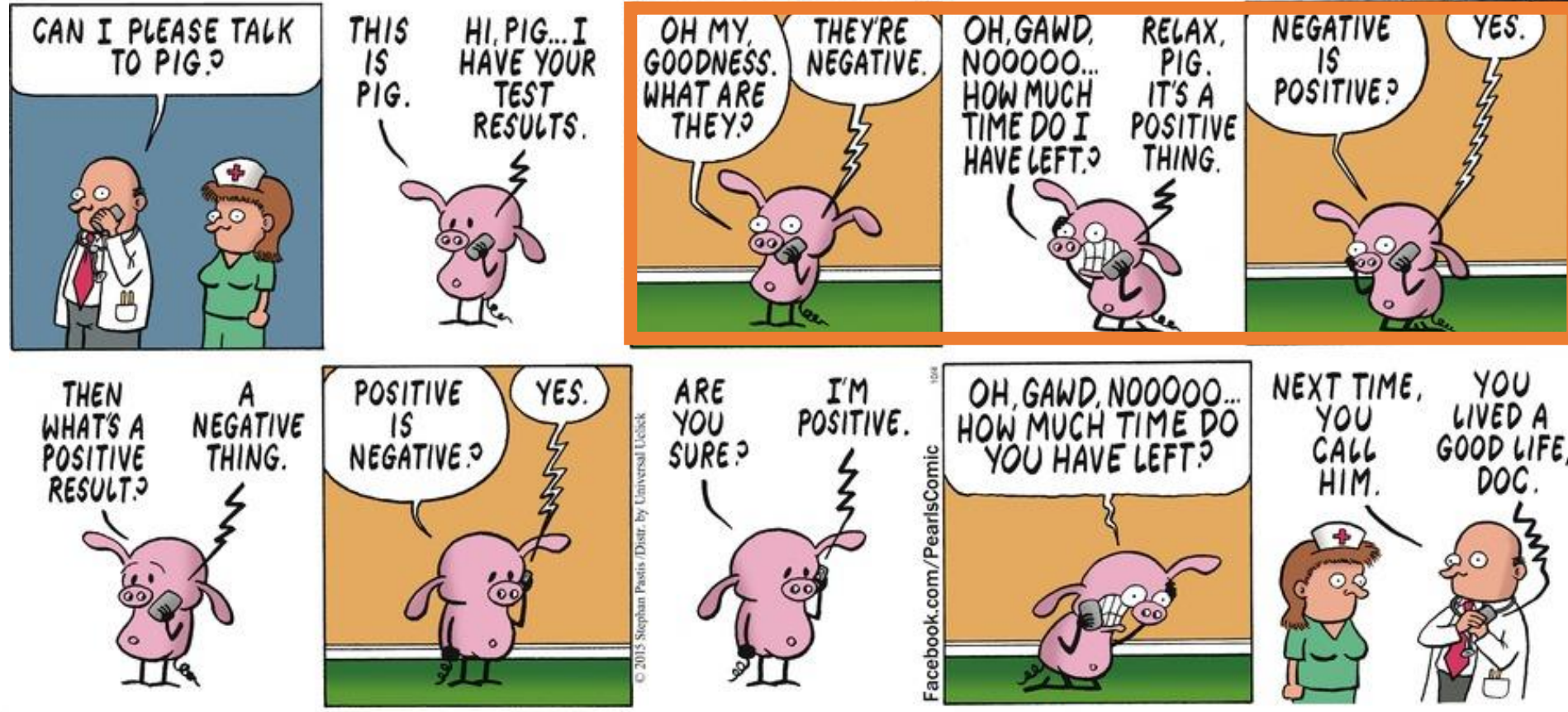
Illness, sickness

Stop, keep from happening

Avoid jargon: we have plenty of it!

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEPHAN PASTIS



Explain terms

- **Immune system** = part of our body that is made to fight an illness
- **Immunity** = when our body keeps us from getting a virus
- **Immunized** = when we get a shot (vaccine) to help us from getting an illness
- **Vaccine** = helps your body from getting an illness, or fights against an illness

Explain acronyms

DHS

Department of Health Services

FDA

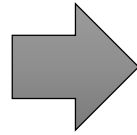
Food and Drug Administration

CDC

Centers for Disease Control

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions



Use shorter words & sentences

- You can get your vaccine at ____.
- You do not need health insurance.
- There is no cost for the Covid-19 vaccine.
- A booster will help stop you from getting sick.
- Take a picture of your vaccine card.

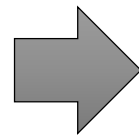
Use active voice

Passive: You will be asked to give information about your medical history.

Active: The pharmacy will ask for information about your medical history.

It shall be signed

You will be notified

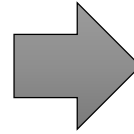


You must sign

We will notify you

Use concrete language

- Talk to a healthcare professional if you have questions about Covid-19 vaccines.



- Talk to your pharmacist. Or, talk to your primary care doctor. You can use the patient portal to send a message or call and leave a message.



Slow down

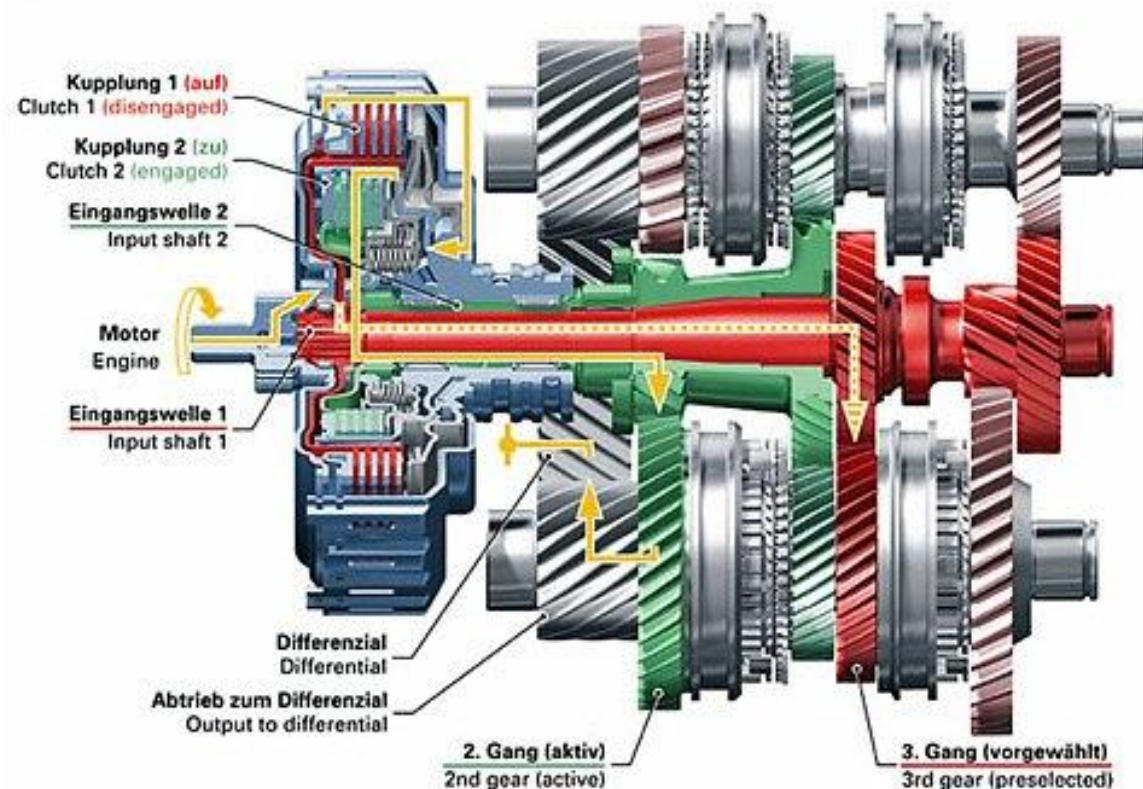
Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.

sorrymyemaillookslikethisbutmycomputerdroppedandmyspacebarbroke



Organize for understanding

Only use need to know concepts



Organization

- Limit information to reasonable amount
- Organize in meaningful “chunks” of reasonable size
- Use headings, subheadings to signal what comes next

- **Covid-19 Variants**

- Covid-19 is a virus
- Viruses usually change or mutate
- When a virus changes or mutates, a new variant of the virus is created
- A new variant is sometimes called a new strain or new mutation
- There are many variants of Covid-19

- **The Covid-19 Vaccine and Boosters:**

- Can help protect you from getting really sick
- Can stop the creation of more variants if more people get vaccinated

Organization

- Short paragraphs
- Bulleted lists

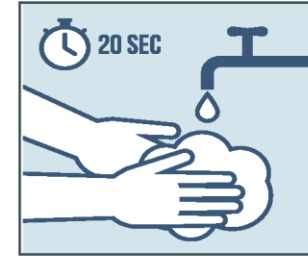
How to Stop the Spread of a Virus

A virus is a germ that can make you sick.

Wash Your Hands

Why? Your hands get germs when you touch things. If you do not wash your hands germs can make you or others sick.

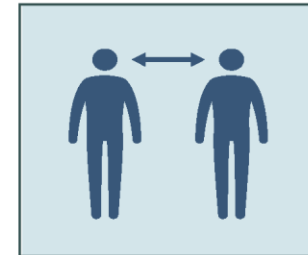
- Use soap and water.
- Scrub hands with soap for 20 seconds.
- Wash after being in public places – example: grocery store or playground.
- Always wash your hands before you touch your face.



Practice Social Distancing: Stay away from others when you or others may be sick.

Why? Being close to people when you or someone else is sick can spread germs.

- Stay 6 feet away from other people.
- **Do not** get together with 10 or more people at the same time.



Most important, stay home when you are sick or if you know many people are sick. Staying home to rest can help you feel better.

Before....

Common Side Effects

You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. On the arm where you got the shot you might have pain, redness, and swelling. Throughout the rest of your body you might experience tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea.

After....

Common Side Effects

On the arm where you got the shot:



- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling

Throughout the rest of your body:



- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Nausea

Source from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html>



Show or draw pictures

Use relevant images

- You can get a COVID vaccine at _____.



Photo by [CDC](#) from [Pexels](#)



Photo by [Alena Shekhovtcova](#) from [Pexels](#)

Photos, graphics

- “A vaccine shows the immune system how to fight a new germ like the coronavirus.”



Photos, graphics

- Support words with graphics





Help with numbers

Less is more

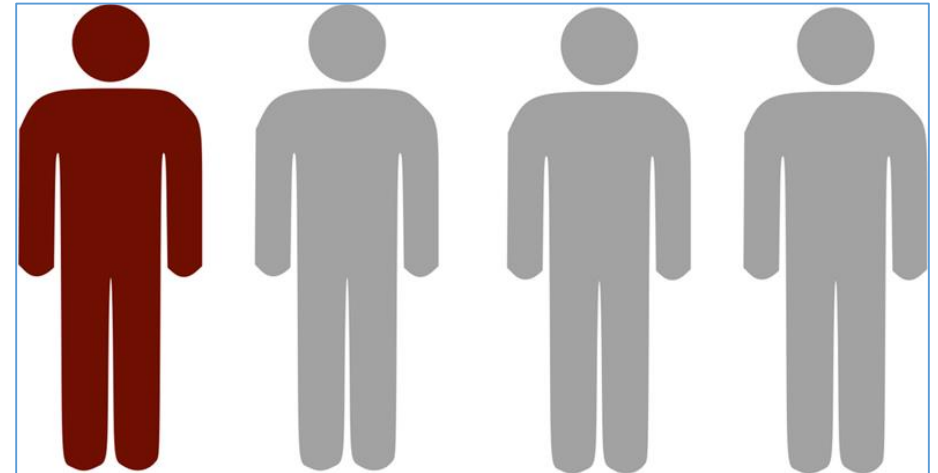
- Only relevant information
- Reduce need for calculations; do the math for them
- Pictographs, diagrams, charts
 - Help interpret



Simple graphic displays

3 ways of saying it . . .

25%



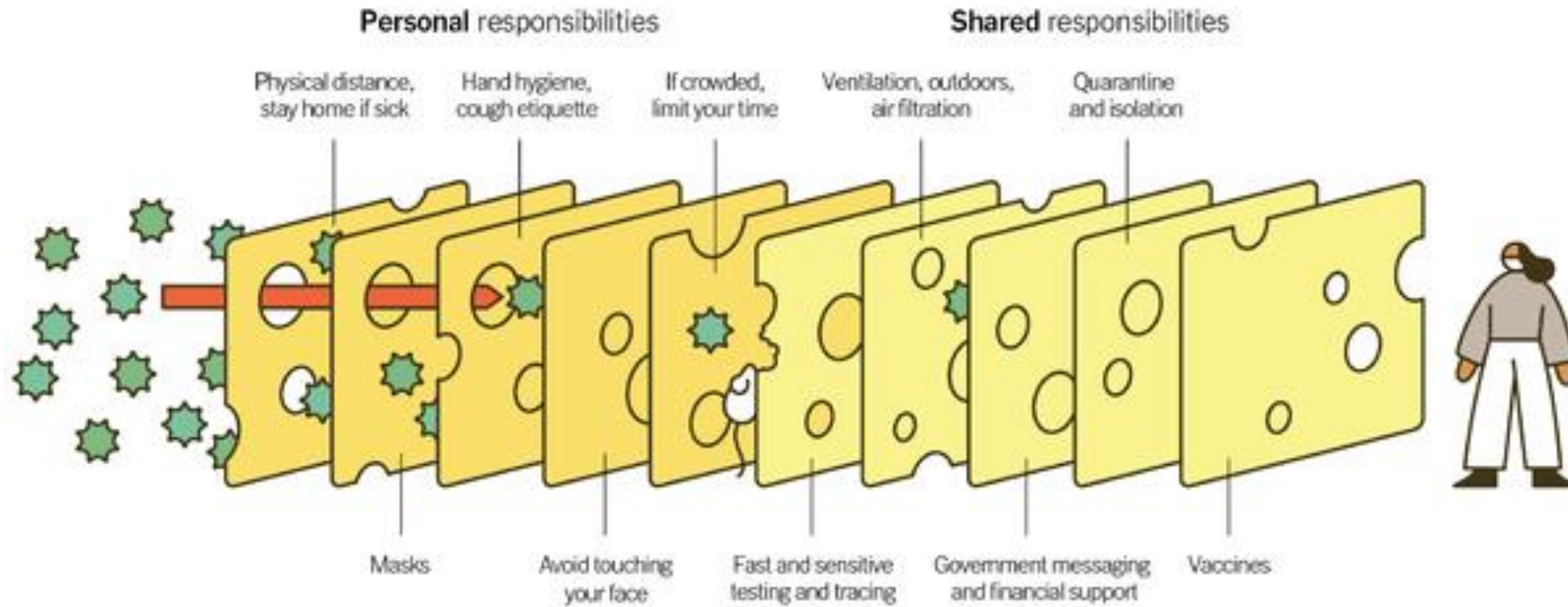
1 out of 4



Use familiar objects as analogies

Multiple Layers Improve Success

The Swiss Cheese Respiratory Pandemic Defense recognizes that no single intervention is perfect at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Each intervention (layer) has holes.



Source: Adapted from Ian M. Mackay (virologydownunder.com) and James T. Reason. Illustration by Rose Wong



Verify understanding using “Teach Back”

What is teach back?

- Asking people to repeat in their own words
- Non-shaming
- Not a test of the person
- Chance to check for understanding

Using teach back...

- Ask to demonstrate understanding
 - “We have gone over a lot of information today. What will you tell your neighbor about vaccines?”
 - “I want to be sure I explained everything clearly. Please tell me, how can you make an appointment.”
- Avoid: “Do you understand?”

Teach back “lite” practice

- Practice using Teach Back:

Pick one:

What should you do if you have a cold?

How to make s'mores

Teach back tips

- Start slowly – practice 1 time a day
- Plan and practice your approach
- Use handouts

Once you get used to Teach Back, it doesn't take any more time. It becomes natural.



Make it a conversation

- Ask open ended questions and actively listen
 - What else would you like to talk about?
- Encourage questions
 - Tell me your questions.
 - What questions do you have?

If you only remember 3 things:

Practice and use

1. Plain language techniques
2. Slowing down
3. Teach back

(3 Best Practices: DeWalt et al, 2010)

What questions do you have?



Thank you!