



Instruments to Assess Health Literacy³

Tool Acronym	Tool's Full Name	Time to Administer	Pros	Cons	Scoring
FSSQ	Duke-UNC Functional Social Support Questionnaire	Depends on Clinician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies social support issues. Assesses a person's need for and perception of their social support.² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not resolve social support issues. Does not include other barriers to medication adherence.² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions scored on a 1-5 scale. Scores from all 8 questions are tallied and divided by 8 to get an average. The higher the score, the greater is the need for social support²
Medication Knowledge Survey	Medication Knowledge Survey	Depends on Clinician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses a person's knowledge of each medication they are taking Helps in developing a plan for improving knowledge² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The patient needs to bring all their medication bottles to the appointment at the time of the test² 	Mark each correctly answered question. Incorrectly answered questions should be used to identify knowledge gaps and develop a knowledge improvement plan. ²
MMAS-8	Morisky Medication Adherence Scale	Depends on Clinician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies adherence problems⁵ Used to monitor adherence over the course of treatment⁵ Measures specific medication-taking behavior⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to recall bias⁵ Subject to overestimation of adherence⁵ 	<p>1 point for every yes.</p> <p>Score of 8 = Highly adherent Score 6-8 = Medium adherers Score 0-6 = Low adherers⁵</p>
NVS	Newest Vital Sign	3 minutes ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is available online It is in English and Spanish³ Correlates with TOFHLA The test is limited to 6 items³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It can only be validated in primary care settings³ It only assesses reading nutritional labels, not general written text³ 	<p>0-4 questions correct= low literacy 5-6 questions correct= patients likely do not have low literacy⁴</p>
Readiness Ruler	Readiness Ruler	Depends on Clinician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess readiness to change (motivation) for a specific activity² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not specifically discuss how to address barriers² 	The patient marks their own readiness on a scale of 0-10. A score above 5 shows that a person is ready to change. ²



REALM-R	Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine, Revised	Depends on Clinician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a long version and a short version³ Assesses adult literacy related to health² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only available in English³ Can only be used to test adults³ Limited to word recognition, not reading comprehension³ 	Tally of the correctly pronounced words. A score of less than 6 may indicate poor health literacy ²
SAHLSA-50	Short Assessment of Health Literacy for Spanish Speaking Adults (Based on the REALM-R)	5 minutes ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This test is designed for Spanish speakers³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is only for adults³ 	Tally of correct Answers ⁴ . A score below 37 indicates poor health literacy ¹
TOFHLA	Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults	Long: 22 minutes ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are English and Spanish versions³ It has been used in numerous clinical trials³ It is more effective than word recognition alone.³ It can gauge a person's understanding of a health-related passage by assessing reading comprehension and numerical ability^{3,4} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The original version is too lengthy³ 	One point per correct answer. ⁴ <i>In the long version:</i> 0-59=Inadequate health literacy 60-74= Marginal Literacy 75-100= Adequate Literacy <i>In the short version:</i> 0-53= Inadequate health literacy 54-66= Marginal health literacy 67-100= Adequate health literacy ⁴
STOFHLA	Short Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults	7 minutes ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a shorter version⁴ It has a shorter administrative time⁴ It was tested on diverse populations⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even the shorter version has a longer administration time than other tools⁴ 	One point per correct answer. The 36-point scale of the S-TOFHLA is divided into three categories of functional literacy: Inadequate (0-16), Adequate (17-22) and Functional (23-36). ⁷

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. [SAHLSA](#).
- [American Society on Aging and American Society of Consultant Pharmacists Foundation. Assessment Tools.](#)
- Evangelista et al. (2010). [Health literacy and the patient with heart failure- Implications for patient care and research: A consensus statement of the heart failure society of America](#). Journal of Cardiac Failure, 16(1): 9-16.
- HIV Clinical Resource. [Health Literacy Screening Tools](#).
- Morisky, et al. (2008). [Predictive validity of a medication adherence measure in an outpatient setting](#). J Clin Hypertens (Greenwich). May 2008; 10(5): 348–354.
- Morris et al. (2006). [The single item literacy screener: Evaluation of a brief instrument to identify limited reading ability](#). BMC Family Practice, 7(21).
- Resources Centers for Minority Aging Research. [Health Literacy](#)