**Fundamental Definitions:**

**Consumer Health Information:** Information designed to help individuals understand their health and make health-related decisions for themselves and their families. (source: Healthy People 2010 project)

**Health Literacy:** The degree to which people have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions. (source: Healthy People 2010 project)

**Health Information Literacy:** The set of abilities needed to: recognize health information need; identify likely information sources and use them to retrieve relevant information and its applicability to a specific situation; and analyze, understand, and use the information to make good health decisions. (source: Medical Library Association, 2003)

**Patient Education:** A planned activity, initiated by a health professional, whose aim is to impart knowledge, attitudes and skills with the specific goal of changing behavior, increasing compliance with therapy, and thereby, improving health. (source: “The Provision of Consumer Health Information”. Medical Library Association, 1996)

**Plain Language:** Documents written in plain language have sentences that are short and use active voice. Common, everyday words are used, and unavoidable jargon or specific terminology is defined. Text is broken up into chunks, using lots of bullet points and white space between paragraphs. The goal of using Plain Language is conveying information that is clear, simple, direct, and easy to read.

**Suggested Reading:**

**Articles:**


**Book:**


To locate more books, or other library materials on the subject:

Go to MEDCat, the Library's Online Catalog (http://medcat.med.nyu.edu).

Select a SUBJECT search. Search for “patient education” (quotes not necessary).

**NOTE:** Don’t do this as a keyword search – it will retrieve too many irrelevant titles.