

# Health Literacy Skills of U.S. Adults

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**Objectives:** To examine adults' literacy proficiencies in multiple health contexts. **Methods:** One hundred ninety-one (191) health-related items drawn from all large-scale adult literacy surveys before 2003 were scored as an independent health literacy scale. Latent class analyses provide portraits of adults with different health literacy skills. **Results:** Adults without a high school diploma or GED, with health-related

restrictions, with limited access to resources, who are members of minority population groups, and who are immigrants – have lower health literacy skills than do others. **Conclusions:** The distribution of health literacy is not independent of general literacy skills at population or subpopulation levels.

**Key word:** health literacy

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