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Appendix: The Listenability Style Guide

Listenability domain	Recommended language or discourse practice	Example
Oral-based sentence structure	When you link clauses, use coordinating conjunctions when possible. Don't overuse subordination.	To help this medication to work better, and you should eat a low fat diet, and you should exercise, and you should not smoke. NOT: In addition to eating a proper diet (such as a low-cholesterol/ low-fat diet), it is known that this medication will work better if life style changes include exercising, losing weight if overweight, and stopping smoking.
	When you do use subordinate clauses, put them at the ends of sentences.	People with hypertension should avoid fast foods, because fast foods contain a lot of salt. NOT: Fast foods, because they contain excessive salt, should be avoided by hypertension patients.
	Keep clauses to moderate length. Avoid many long phrases, which are really "reduced clauses."	Don't eat grapefruit and don't drink grapefruit juice while you are taking this medicine. But listen to your doctor's instructions about this grapefruit rule. NOT: Absent your doctor's instructions to the contrary, avoid consumption of grapefruit products while under this medication.
	Make your sentences express actions by using verb forms. Avoid dense noun forms that derive from verbs.	Consume lots of liquids so you don't dehydrate. NOT: Consumption of plentiful liquids prevents dehydration.
Oral-based vocabulary	Use personal pronouns to evoke a face-to-face context. Imperative sentences (understood <i>you</i>) also work well.	The day after your surgery your knee and lower leg might swell. So keep your leg raised.

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Appendix (continued)

Listenability domain	Recommended language or discourse practice	Example
Features of face-to-face conversation	Repeat content nouns and verbs across sentences. Don't aim for diverse vocabulary for its own sake (low lexical diversity).	<p>NOT: Swelling in the knee and lower leg is common 24 hours after surgery. Raising the leg will help reduce that symptom.</p> <p>To see if your tumor contains malignant cells, your doctor will do a needle biopsy. The needle biopsy will draw out a small section of the tumor that your doctor can examine under a microscope.</p> <p>NOT: Your doctor will perform a needle biopsy on your tumor. This procedure allows microscopic examination of sampled cells to search for malignancies.</p>
	Use everyday words (but don't be afraid of using specialized language if it is common to the patient/consumer community)	<p>Your incision from the surgery may turn red for a day or two. It's okay so long as the redness does not spread.</p> <p>NOT: The surgical incision may become inflamed for a day or two. You need to become concerned only if the inflammation spreads to surrounding tissue.</p>
	Use contractions freely.	<p>You've got to take it before breakfast. This medicine won't work if you don't take it on an empty stomach.</p> <p>NOTE: This medication will not function properly if administered with milk or milk products.</p>
	Use questions to focus attention.	<p>Now would you like to know some of the easiest ways to keep your blood sugar steady all day long?</p> <p>NOT: Several strategies are available to reduce fluctuations in blood sugar levels.</p>
Use conjunctions at the beginning of sentences to create conversational flow.	<p>And so you've probably heard a lot about the importance of getting lots of calcium for women's bones to stay strong.</p>	
Use tag questions.	<p>There is so much conflicting advice about the value of back surgery, isn't there?</p>	

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Appendix (continued)

Listenability domain	Recommended language or discourse practice	Example
	Use simple and common idioms	When you spend too much time being a couch potato, it'll get you in the end. NOT: Sedentary life styles carry health risks.
	Periodically call your interlocutor by name	I'll tell you, Ms. Lawson, you really know a lot about how insulin works.
Considerateness toward listeners	Use internal summaries	So now we've talked about two different ways to keep your child's teeth from going bad. One way is for you to give your child more water to drink and less soda. The second way is to get your child's teeth sealed at the dentist's office. Now here's a third thing you can do to keep your child's teeth healthy.
	Give listeners "advance organizers" to help them predict what information will follow.	In this little talk I'm going to cover three simple things you can do to reduce the chance of getting a stroke. You can cut back the amount of red meat that you eat. You can walk 1000 steps every day. And you can take one baby aspirin at night. First let's talk about the meat in your diet.
	Explicitly signal transitions between topics	So that's what I wanted to tell you about causes of reflux. If you don't have any more questions, let's talk now about what you can do about it.
	Announce important topics.	Vitamin A. Vitamin A in vegetables like carrots can keep your eyes healthy.
	Convey information in little stories	I know this one lady, my neighbor Rosie, who didn't even want to walk up her driveway to get her mail her knees hurt her so much. At first she was just using ice on her knees, and it helped at first, but then icing stopped working for her. So she starting using heat. Finally she figured out that the best thing for her was to switch between ice packs and heating pads. NOT: Alternating heat and cold can sometimes relieve chronic knee pain.

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Appendix (continued)

Listenability domain	Recommended language or discourse practice	Example
	Be redundant. State and then paraphrase important points	<p>Suppose you lose consciousness or you can't stay awake during times when you are usually awake. If that happens, you should go back to the emergency room. Abnormal sleepiness or blacking out are absolutely reasons to return to the hospital right away.</p> <p>NOT: Loss of consciousness and inability to remain awake are signs that it would be wise to return to the emergency room.</p>
	Convey information with vivid analogies to everyday objects and events.	<p>So you see, using an expired prescription is a little like eating spoiled food. It doesn't give you the benefit you need, and it can actually hurt you.</p> <p>NOT: Expired prescriptions often fail to deliver the necessary therapeutic effect and may cause additional harm.</p>