

Health Activities, Materials, and Tasks

[*Literacy and Health in America*](#) offers a schema for examining health materials, tasks, and skills within five commonly used groupings: health promotion, health protection, disease prevention, health care and maintenance, and navigation. The table below offers a brief description of each of these groups of activities with examples of a range of materials that adults use and the associated tasks they undertake.

Health Activities	Focus	Materials Adults are Expected to Use	Tasks Adults are Expected to Accomplish
Health Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and maintain health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label on a can of food or recipes. • Articles in newspapers and magazines • Charts and graphs such as the Body Mass Index. • Health education materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase food • Prepare a dish from a recipe • Plan exercise • Maintain healthy habits [nutrition, sleep, exercise] • Take care of one's health and that of family members
Health Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguard health of individuals and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A newspaper chart about air quality • A water report in the mail • A health and safety posting at work • A label on a cleaning product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide among product options • Use products safely • Vote on community issues • Avoid harmful exposures

Disease Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take preventive measures and engage in screening and early detection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postings for inoculations & screening • Letters [test results] • Articles in newspapers and magazines • Graphs, charts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take preventive action • Determine risk • Engage in screening or diagnostic tests • Follow up
Health Care & Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek care and form a partnership with a health professional such as a doctor or dentist or nurse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health education • Health history forms • Labels on medicine • Develop plan for taking medicine as described • Health education booklets • Directions for using a tool such as a peak flow meter • Schedule and keep appointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek professional care when needed • Describe symptoms • Follow directions • Measure symptoms • Maintain health with chronic disease [follow regimen, monitor symptoms, adjust regimen as needed, seek care as appropriate]

Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access needed services, and get coverage and benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application forms • Statements of rights and responsibilities • Informed consent forms • Benefit packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate facilities • Apply for benefits • Fill out forms • Offer informed consent
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This table is drawn from: Rudd RE, Kirsch I, Yamamoto K. *Literacy and Health in America*. ETS Policy Report #19. Princeton NJ: Educational Testing Services. 2004.