

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

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

<p><b>Navigation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access needed services, and get coverage and benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application forms</li> <li>• Statements of rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• Informed consent forms</li> <li>• Benefit packages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate facilities</li> <li>• Apply for benefits</li> <li>• Fill out forms</li> <li>• Offer informed consent</li> </ul>
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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.