1. Three Types of Words to Watch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>The Fix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical, technical jargon</td>
<td>Words, phrases and concepts with meaning only in a clinical context</td>
<td>Abdomen AVS Cardiologist Chronic</td>
<td>Growth Hypertension Lesion PCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>General terms to describe a concept without being specific</td>
<td>Abnormal Clear liquids Empty Stomach Fever Increased risk</td>
<td>Low, normal, high Twice daily Unlikely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Judgement</td>
<td>Have different meanings based on the individual’s perception of the word</td>
<td>Excessive Heavy Negative Persistent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Online Plain Language Dictionaries


3. Tips for Presenting Risks:

- Absolute risks (3 out of 1,000 will have a stroke) increases comprehension over the use of relative risks (50 percent higher chance of stroke).
- Results are mixed as to whether percentage (13 percent) or frequency (13 out of 100) formats promote the greatest understanding. Use with explanation.
- There is general agreement that decimals (its likelihood is .03) should not be used.
4. **Tips for Email Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Do</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Patient Centered** | • Recognize question, concern or needs  
• Be friendly and empathic  
• Personalize |
| **Plain Language** | • Use common words, explain medical, concept and value words  
• Use short sentences & paragraphs  
• Paragraphs cover one topic |
| **Actionable and Motivating** | • What does the patient need to know and do?  
• Break down tasks, use bullets  
• Why is it important? |
| **Connection and Next Steps** | • What should the patient do if they feel worse, better or have more questions  
• Close the loop |

**Examples**

• Sounds like you are worried about...  
• Sorry you’re not feeling better  
• Thank you for your message (opening). In good health (closing)

Bronchitis is when your airways swell and make mucus. That’s what makes you cough. Your coughing and sore throat can last about 3 weeks.

5. **Sutter Health Desktop Medicine Support**

Check out this WIKI for more support with desktop medicine. You will find tips managing your inbox, links to plain language smartphrases, etc.  

6. **Readability Calculators**

Want to test your writing to see what grade level it is? Remember, the average reader reads at the 8th grade reading level.  