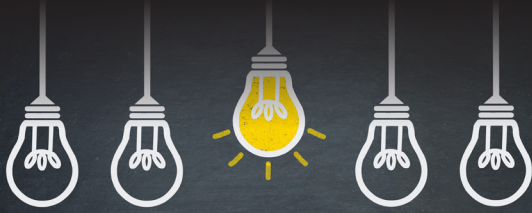




# HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE



## HEALTH LITERACY KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

**CHALLENGE** your Service members and yourself to use at least one of the recommended resources to enhance your health literacy.

### FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

- Health literacy is the **ability to find, understand, and use information** to inform health-related decisions.<sup>1</sup>
- **9 out of 10** adults struggle with health literacy.<sup>1</sup>

### LOW HEALTH LITERACY CAN LOWER READINESS

People with low health literacy skills tend to make less informed health decisions, which can lead to poor health outcomes and reduced mission readiness. These individuals are more likely to:<sup>1</sup>



Skip preventative measures, like flu shots or wellness visits



Make medication errors, like taking the wrong number of pills at the wrong time



Frequent the emergency room



Require longer hospital stays



Mismanage chronic medical conditions

### CONTACT US

For more information on health literacy or other wellness topics, email us at: [tng.ncr.ngb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil](mailto:tng.ncr.ngb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil)

### CNGB & SEA Corner

*Always Ready, Always There*

We all get sick or injured on occasion and need to seek health care from a professional. Understanding how to access reliable medical advice and available treatment options to make decisions about your health ensures you get the best care. When you are well-informed and proactive, you not only enhance your own readiness but also contribute to the overall strength and resilience of the total force.

Review the tips to take charge of your health with the same dedication and discipline you bring to your training.

Stronger Together, Stronger Tomorrow.

*Steven S. Nordhaus John T. Raines III*

Steven S. Nordhaus General, USAF Chief, NGB	John T. Raines, III SEA, USA NGB
---	--

### TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

Even people with high literacy skills can experience low *health* literacy. For example, if you are in pain, it may be hard to follow medical advice. Next time you have a doctor's appointment, consider these tips:<sup>2</sup>

#### Before:

- Compile a list of medications, medical conditions, and past surgeries
- Write down questions or topics you want to discuss with your doctor

#### During:

- Explain your symptoms
- Ask clarifying questions
- Discuss next steps, if needed

#### After:

- Follow doctor's orders
- Fill prescriptions
- Make an appointment for tests or to see a specialist, as needed
- Call your doctor if symptoms change or if you have follow-up questions



## ADVANCING HEALTH LITERACY

### What does it mean?

- Health literacy is not about being smart; it is about being informed and using that information to make good health-related decisions for yourself and others.

### Why does it matter?

- People with high health literacy skills tend to make more informed health decisions, which can lead to better health outcomes. As Guardsmen, your military readiness depends in part on your overall health.

### What can you do?

- Be a careful consumer of the health information you find online. Always use reputable sources with current information that is based on science rather than personal experience.
- Use the **QuestionBuilder App**, in the Resources to Recommend section, to make a list of questions to review with your doctor at your next appointment.
- Repeat the doctor's instructions in your own words to confirm your understanding of the next steps.
- If you need additional clarification, ask. Your doctor is there to support you.
- Consider bringing a friend to your appointment to help remember what was discussed or to catch any details you might miss.

## PAGING DR. GOOGLE

It can be tempting to turn to the internet to seek answers to medical questions. However, there is a lot of misinformation online. Check out these tips to help find health information you can trust:<sup>3</sup>

- Search ".gov," ".edu," or ".org" web addresses as those are usually run by the government, a university, or professional organization.
- Check the author's credentials and look for licensed professionals, like doctors or nurses.
- Consider how old the content is. If it is more than three years old, it may be outdated.
- Know that online chat rooms are typically not monitored by professionals and may contain personal opinions vs. expert advice.



## RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality developed the **QuestionBuilder App** to help patients prepare for their medical appointments. <https://www.ahrq.gov/questions/question-builder/index.html>



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compiled a list of health literacy activities and organizations by State. <https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/state-data/state-data.html>



MedlinePlus offers actionable tips for evaluating health information from a variety of sources. <https://medlineplus.gov/evaluatinghealthinformation.html>



Make Your

## VOICE HEARD

Participate in the 2025 DEOCS

The Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is an anonymous survey and a great way to provide input on your unit and command culture. To complete the survey, look for an email from [DEOCS@mail.mil](mailto:DEOCS@mail.mil).

**All National Guard members are strongly encouraged to participate in the DEOCS to help shape a healthier and more supportive work environment.**



## SPOTLIGHT: OPERATION HEALTHY TENNESSEE

- SSgt Enya Martinez, a public health specialist assigned to the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing, took part in Operation Healthy Tennessee.
- During the clinic, SSgt Martinez helped community members complete medical forms and improve their health literacy skills.
- The clinic was sponsored by Innovative Readiness Training, which enables communities in need to receive no-cost aid from Military Reserve components.



### REFERENCES:

1. National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine. <https://www.nlm.gov/guides/intro-health-literacy>.
2. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. <https://www.ahrq.gov/questions/be-engaged/index.html>
3. National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, MedlinePlus. <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000869.htm>