

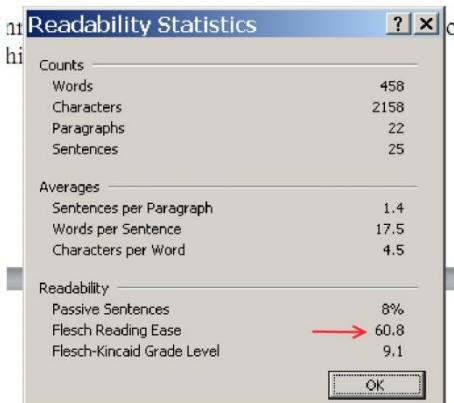
# Brief contributor guidelines

## Language guidelines: key points at a glance

- Keep it short, clear and concise.
- Avoid medical jargon and clinical terms that the public doesn't use. Use fewer abbreviations and acronyms (a word formed from the initial letters of other words, for example, GST).
- **Use plain English.** If it's essential to use clinical language, always explain it in plain English as well.
- Avoid elaborate heading styles or complex numbering of paragraphs.
- Use New Zealand or UK English spelling (not US or Australian English).
- No capital letters for things that are general descriptions (community, iwi, health sector, nursing, hospital). No capital letters for job roles and titles in the flow of text (group manager, clinical director, consultant).
- Use capital letters for the names of services, departments, specialities, facilities, wards, projects and committees (Planning and Funding, Urology Department).
- Keep bullet-pointed lists to six items or fewer – break up longer lists or rewrite.
- Aim for a **650 to 750 word limit** for any topic (page). If it's longer, break it into several smaller topics.

The site is aimed at the general public so we must use language the general public can easily understand. All topics should have a minimum Flesch Reading Ease score of 65 to 70 (higher is even better). This score shows how easy text is to understand: 65 to 70 means someone with a reading age of 12 can understand it; 50 to 55 means you need a university-level reading age to understand it. **If text has a score lower than 65, we'll rewrite it.** To access the Flesch Reading Ease score within Word, go to File > Options > Proofing. Click "Show readability statistics" on.

Your readability statistics will show once you complete a spelling and grammar check of your document.



Readability Statistics	
<b>Counts</b>	
Words	458
Characters	2158
Paragraphs	22
Sentences	25
<b>Averages</b>	
Sentences per Paragraph	1.4
Words per Sentence	17.5
Characters per Word	4.5
<b>Readability</b>	
Passive Sentences	8%
Flesch Reading Ease	→ 60.8
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	9.1

You can also use this web-based tool to check readability [readable.com](http://readable.com).

For more detailed advice on writing style, see the *Contributor guidelines on writing style* on [www.healthinfo.org.nz](http://www.healthinfo.org.nz).

To better understand HealthInfo style, read some existing HealthInfo pages before you start writing.



## General content guidelines

### Sources

Other clinicians want to know where your information has come from. Provide sources in the following formats:

- Where possible, follow the APA referencing style. There are many overviews of APA referencing. See [University of Canterbury APA Style](#) for one of them.
- The format for referencing websites is: *Organisation name – Document title (with a hyperlink on the document title), retrieved month year*, e.g. Podiatry NZ – [Orthotics](#), retrieved June 2016. The hyperlink should be to the **page you sourced the information from**, not the home page.
- For unpublished sources, the format is: *Author's name, author's title, Source document name and purpose* (for example, patient information leaflet) followed by *(unpublished)*. If the author doesn't give permission for this, HealthInfo may not be able to use it as a source.
- We prefer to have one sources file for an entire section, rather than different sources files for each page.

### Photos, diagrams and illustrations

- If you're providing photos, please provide the **original jpeg file separate from your text document**. If you embed the illustration in your document, make sure you also send the original jpeg or illustration file.
- We need written or emailed permission from the copyright holder (usually the photographer, artist or publisher) to use photos or illustrations. **We can't use photos or illustrations from other publications or websites without that permission.** We can link to the web pages they appear on without permission.
- We may not be able to use your photo or illustration if the quality is too low or if it doesn't fit the HealthInfo format. But we may be able to create our own illustration based on what you provide.
- HealthInfo doesn't publish graphic clinical photos – the general public is squeamish!
- If it's your photo and the subject is identifiable, make sure you gain their written or emailed consent to publish it on HealthInfo. Store that consent safely. We will ask you to confirm you have consent.

### Referencing other websites

- If we're reproducing text or images from other websites on HealthInfo, we need permission.
- We don't need permission to simply link to another website.
- HealthInfo doesn't link to or provide endorsement for commercial websites unless they're the sole provider of a product or service or have a DHB contract to provide that product or service.

### Local, practical content

HealthInfo is for the people of Canterbury, South Canterbury, Southern and the West Coast. Try to localise your copy by including links to and contact information for local services. Check that the advice is consistent with advice on HealthPathways.

Practical content is good – ensure people can actually use the information you provide and don't include too much academic detail. We want to help people self-manage their conditions, albeit with advice about when to seek help and from who.

### Best practice versus evidence-based

Where possible the advice given should be evidence-based (with the evidence, reference or guideline being one of the sources – see above). Where there isn't a reliable evidence base, use local expert guidance or best-practice guidelines, again listing sources where possible. If there's controversy or there are treatments that aren't publicly funded, it can be useful to address this, as long as there's a clear explanation and alternative options.

If you have any questions, please email [info@Healthinfo.co.nz](mailto:info@Healthinfo.co.nz) for advice.

*Written by HealthInfo clinical advisers. Last reviewed September 2020.*