UCSF California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center

California Department of Public Health
OFFICE OF ORAL HEALTH

Share & Learn: Strategies for Effective Oral Health Communication

May 16, 2024

Speakers
Anthony Eleftherion, MFA, Health Research for Action at UC Berkeley
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Facilitator
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Housekeeping

- Meeting is being recorded and will be posted on the COHTAC website and YouTube channel – follow up materials and recording link will be emailed
- Questions, comments, and resource sharing are welcomed in the chat box and will be answered at the end of the presentations – please stay muted until called on
- As always, we appreciate your feedback – please take a minute at the end to complete our evaluation survey
- **Disclaimer: The presentations today are the content of the speakers and do not necessarily represent the views of the Office of Oral Health or the California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center (COHTAC).**

Learning Objectives & Agenda

Objectives

- Understand the importance of health literacy and information design.
- Use information design to communicate health information clearly.
- Apply evidence-based health literacy techniques for social media.
- Answer questions about collaborating with dental hygienists, especially between LOHPs and schools.

Agenda

- Strategies for effective oral health communication – Anthony Eleftherion
- Collaborating with dental hygienists – Jennifer Frusetta & Travis Tramel
- Q & A
- Wrap up

Strategies for Effective Oral Health Communication

Anthony Eleftherion

Strategies for Organizing Oral Health Communication

Presenters

- **Anthony Eleftherion**
  Director of Communications
  Health Research for Action

Disclosure

- Presenter does not have any conflicts of interest to disclose.

Session Objectives

1. Understand importance of health literacy and information design
2. Use information design to communicate health information

Overview

- What is Oral health literacy
- Universal precautions approach
- Using plain language
- Strategies for organizing information
- OHL resources

What Is Oral Health Literacy?

Health Literate Professionals

- Present information in ways that improve understanding and make it easier for people to act on health information.
- Aim to:
  - Lower barriers to understanding
  - Reduce feelings of fear or shame
  - Use empathy

Health Literate Organizations

- Provide shame-free and equal access to healthcare and health information.
- Apply HL principles to every touchpoint, including:
  - Written communications
  - Verbal communications

Why Health Literacy Is Important

- **Literacy is the single best predictor of a person's health status,** correlating more closely than age, income, employment status, education level, or racial or ethnic group.

Low Health Literacy and Health Outcomes

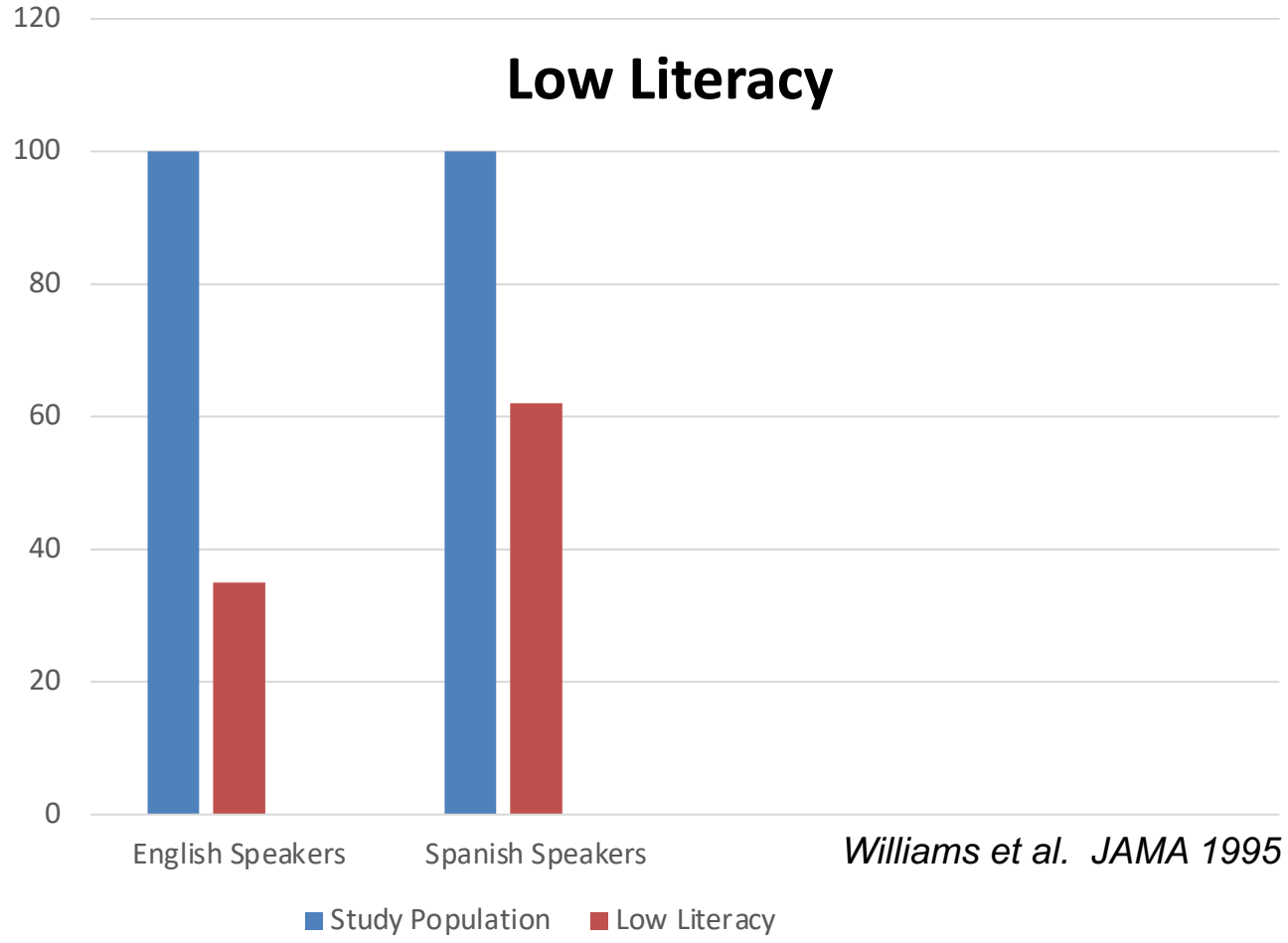
- Poorer health status.
- Less engagement with healthcare providers.
- More hospitalizations and higher healthcare costs.
- Less use of preventive services.
- Higher mortality rates.

Health Disparities

- Age
- Income and education level
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Culture
- Language

Literacy and Spanish Language

- Low literacy in preferred language:
  - 35 % of English speakers.
  - 62% of Spanish speakers.



Oral Health Literacy Improves Lives

- Lower rates of dental caries and periodontal disease.
- More use of preventive services.
- Better participation in their own care.
- More likely to get the care they need.

Health Literacy and Spanish Materials

- Translated materials retain qualities
- HL materials are easier to translate and ensure clarity

OHL Helps Everyone

Anyone can have difficulty in an oral healthcare encounter:

- Terms and subject matter can be new.
- Stress or anxiety can limit how much we hear, understand, or remember.

Universal Precautions Approach

- Treat everyone as if they have limited health literacy skills.
  - Helps reduce communication errors.
  - Ensures needs of all community members are met

What Is Plain Language?

- Not always clear what is and is not plain language.
- Doesn’t mean to write less precisely or “dumb down.”
- Doesn’t mean to leave out necessary technical terms.

Using Plain Language

- Simple, everyday words
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Give context

Substitute short, simple words

- Choose simple everyday words.
- Replace or define complicated terms using simple language.
- Use as many words as you need to make it clear.

Longer	Shorter
geriatric	older, elderly
medication	medicine, drug
examination	exam
febrile	feverish
regarding	about
approximately	about
determined	found, learned
physician	doctor

Strategies for Organizing Information

Information Design

- Organizing and presenting content
- Choosing the order in which the content is revealed

Benefits of Information Design

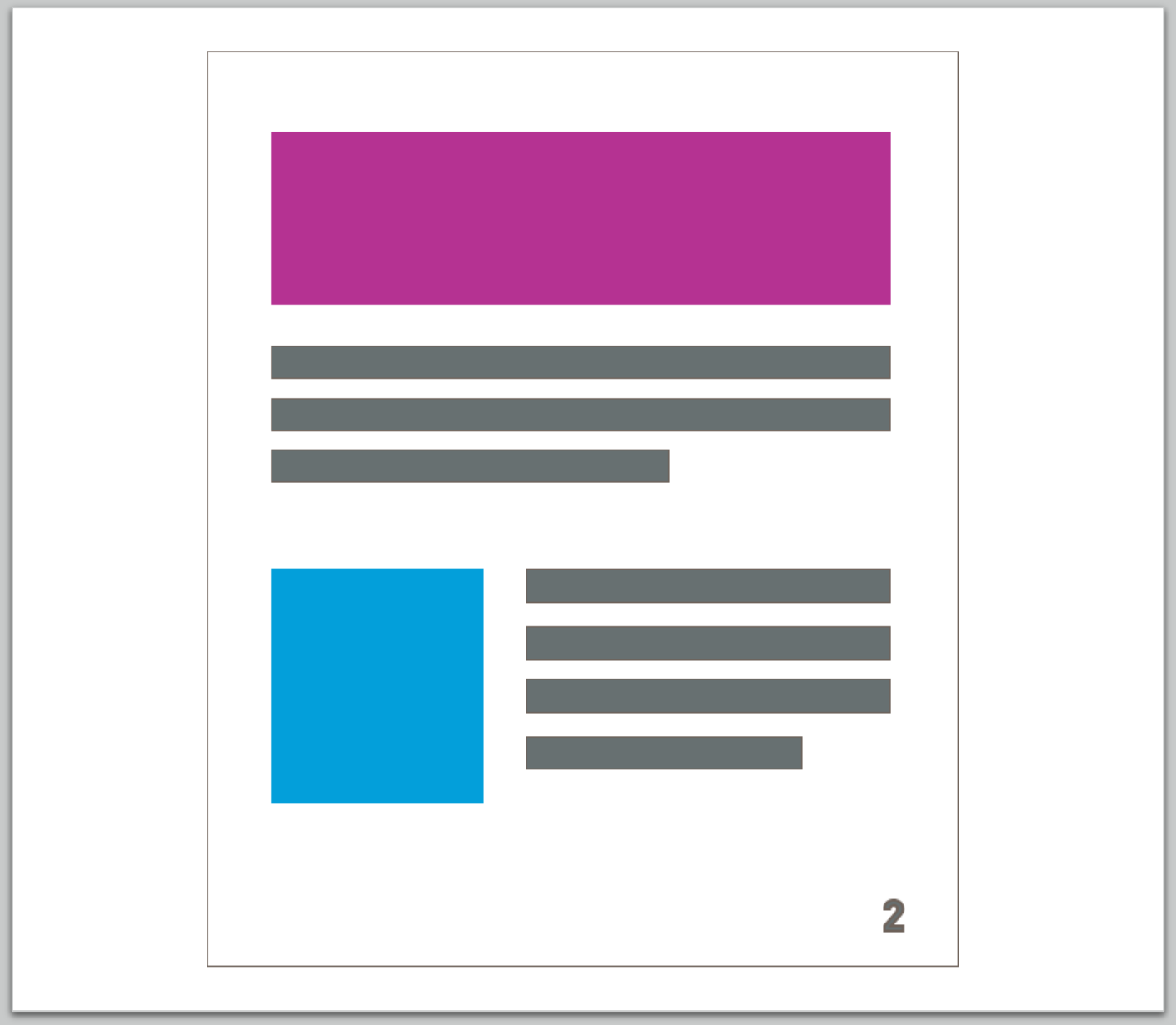
- Explains what the subject is right away
- Makes for less work
- Promote ease of use
- Provides encouragement and confidence

Design for scanning

- Dense text is discouraging.
- People with limited HL may not engage at all.

Design for scanning

- Easy to scan materials are more inviting and inclusive.



Put important information first

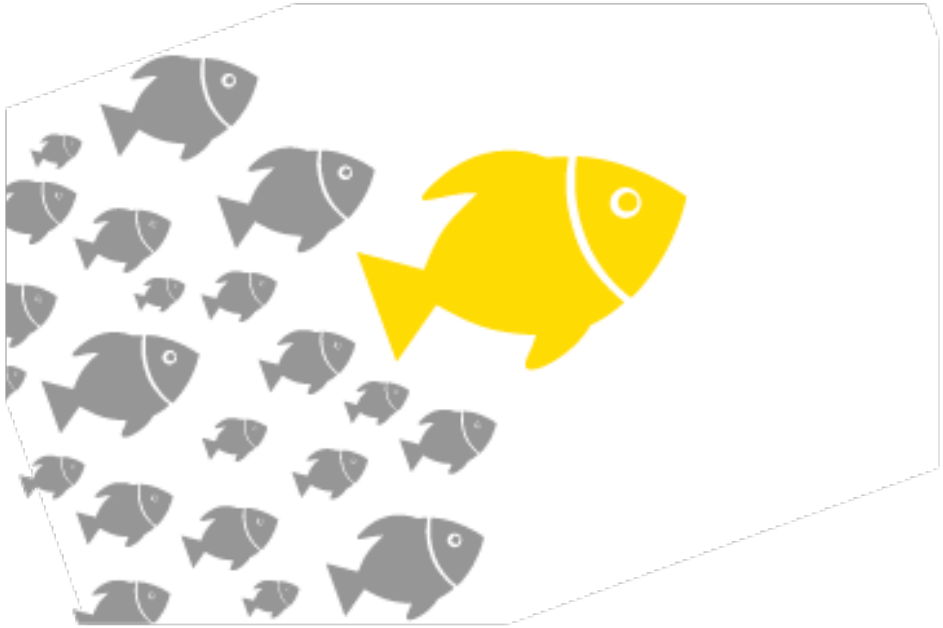
- People tend to remember the first part of a sentence or paragraph.
- Put your key messages where they will make the strongest impression.

Example

- Puts key message first.
- Still a lot here to unpack

- **You can help lower your blood pressure** by lowering your salt intake to less than a teaspoon a day.

Advanced Organizers



Advanced Organizers

- A statement that gives “advance” notice of a topic.
- Education strategy that promotes learning with children and adults.
- Allows readers to scan the subject of forthcoming information.
- Establishes hierarchy of information.

Advanced Organizers

- Top level header indicates what the page is about.
- Sub-heads indicate what each section is about.
- In some cases, the first sentence also signals to the reader what content is up ahead.

About Viruses

Viruses are a kind of germ. There are millions of viruses in the world, but only a small number of them can make people sick. Our bodies learn to recognize viruses and other germs, then our bodies develop ways to fight the germs off.

What Viruses Are Not Very Serious?

Many viruses usually don't make people very sick. This includes the ones that cause common colds. But a virus can affect people differently depending on their age, overall health and other factors.

What Viruses Are Very Serious?

For young babies, even a cold virus can be serious. When your baby is 3 months or younger, call their doctor if they seem sick.

The flu, measles, whooping cough and chickenpox are diseases caused by viruses. These diseases can have long-term health effects or cause death. But all of these diseases can be prevented with vaccines.

About COVID-19

COVID-19 is the illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. People started getting sick with this virus in late 2019. COVID-19 can spread very easily, partly because many people's bodies don't recognize the virus. COVID-19 makes some people very sick, and some people die from it. There are ways to avoid spreading COVID-19, and vaccines are available.

Scan to learn about caring for your children during coronavirus.

Embedded information

An embedded clause:

- Interrupts another clause in a sentence.
- Mashes multiple ideas together.
- Is especially unfriendly to readers.

Example

- Embedded info interrupts reading flow.
- Put the embedded info at the beginning or end.

Before:

- It is very important to take your pills, whether at dawn, noon, or night, correctly.

After:

- It is very important to take your pills correctly, whether you take them at dawn, noon, or night.

Example

- Put the embedded info in a separate sentence.
- Delete the info if unnecessary.

After #2:

- It is very important to take your pills correctly. Some should be taken when you get up. Other pills should be taken at midday or night.

After #3:

- It is very important to take your pills correctly.

Short-term Memory

- Human working memory can only hold 3–5 items at a time.
- Fewer if you are stressed, older, or don’t understand some of the words.

Creating Paragraphs

- A collection of related sentences.
- Deals with single topic.
- Topic is clear and easy to follow.

Paragraph Tips

- Introduce a new idea
- Break up complex material
- Give reader/listener a break

Chunking

- Less to remember.
- Easier to process.
- Confidence to learn.

Chunking

- 3–5 sentences per paragraph or section.
- One main idea per paragraph or section.
- Try not to write more than 100 words per section.

Chunking Examples

- Sections & paragraphs discuss just one topic.
- Paragraphs and sentences are short.

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What Is Cal MediConnect?

Cal MediConnect is a new kind of health plan. It combines all your Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits into a single plan. This makes it simpler for you to get the services you need. It also helps you live independently.

Cal MediConnect health plans make it easier for you to manage your health. These plans also offer extra benefits, such as transportation and vision care.

Cal MediConnect health plans coordinate all your health care needs, including:

- Medical and vision care.
- Mental health care.
- Home- and community-based services (such as In-Home Supportive Services and Adult Day programs).
- Prescription medicines.
- Medical equipment and supplies.
- Substance abuse programs.

Who can join Cal MediConnect?

You can join if:

- You have both Medicare and Medi-Cal.
- You live in one of these counties:

  Los Angeles
  Orange
  Riverside
  San Bernardino
  Santa Clara
  San Diego
  San Mateo

Joining is free.

- To join, call Health Care Options at **1-844-580-7272**, Monday–Friday, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- TTY users can call **1-800-430-7077**.
- When you call, you can talk to someone who speaks your language and can help you enroll.
- You can also call the plan directly.

Have a question? Call HICAP at 1-800-434-0222.

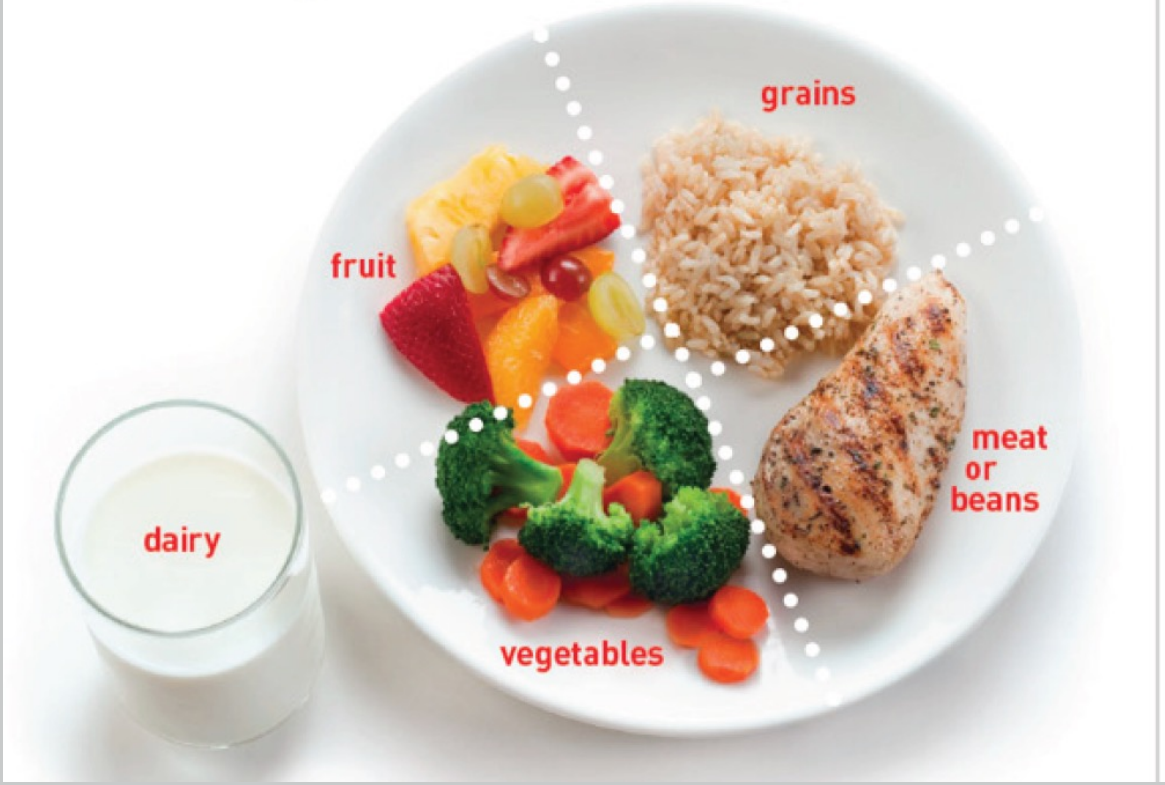
Eat healthy servings of each kind of food.

Here are 2 ways to help you know how much to eat:

1 Balance your plate.

Divide your plate into 4 parts.

- Put vegetables and fruit on 2 parts (half the plate).
- Put a serving of grains on 1 part.
- Put a serving of meat or beans on 1 part.
- Add dairy.



Chunking Exercise

- How can we make this paragraph easier to read/scan?

You can do a lot to have a healthy pregnancy. Start getting medical and dental checkups as soon as you think you are pregnant. This is called “prenatal care.” You can see a family practice doctor, a doctor who specializes in women’s reproductive health and childbirth, a nurse midwife, or a nurse practitioner. If you do not have health insurance, you can get help paying for your healthcare.

Chunking Exercise

- Two short paragraphs are easier to read than one long one.
- Two very short paragraphs are even easier.

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You can see a family practice doctor, a doctor who specializes in women's reproductive health and childbirth, a nurse midwife, or a nurse practitioner. If you do not have health insurance, you can get help paying for your healthcare.

Oral Health Literacy Toolkit

- Basic OHL principles, including communicating clearly and with cultural humility.
- Create a shame-free and fear-free environment.

Teach-Back Booklet

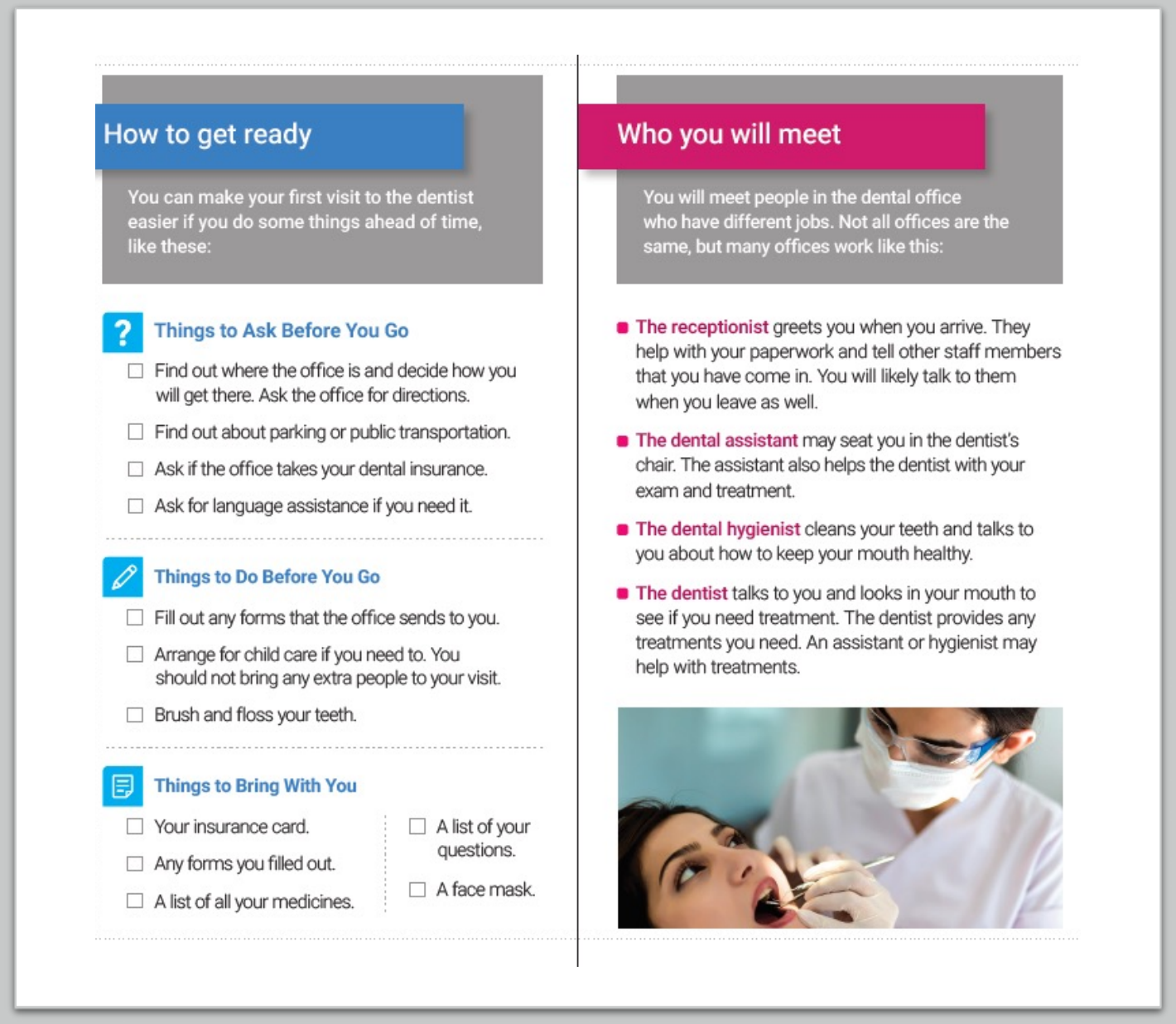
- Contains step-by-step explanation of teach-back method.
- Provides opening lines to help start teach-back conversations.
- Presents example scenarios and scripts.

Spanish-Language Teach-Back Booklet

- Step-by-step explanation of teach-back in Spanish.
- Helps you conduct teach back in Spanish.

The Patient Resource

- Explains the “before, during, and after” of dental visits.
- Explains what to expect & how to prepare for a dental visit.



How to get ready

You can make your first visit to the dentist easier if you do some things ahead of time, like these:

Things to Ask Before You Go

- ☐ Find out where the office is and decide how you will get there. Ask the office for directions.
- ☐ Find out about parking or public transportation.
- ☐ Ask if the office takes your dental insurance.
- ☐ Ask for language assistance if you need it.

Things to Do Before You Go

- ☐ Fill out any forms that the office sends to you.
- ☐ Arrange for child care if you need to. You should not bring any extra people to your visit.
- ☐ Brush and floss your teeth.

Things to Bring With You

- ☐ Your insurance card.
- ☐ Any forms you filled out.
- ☐ A list of all your medicines.
- ☐ A list of your questions.
- ☐ A face mask.

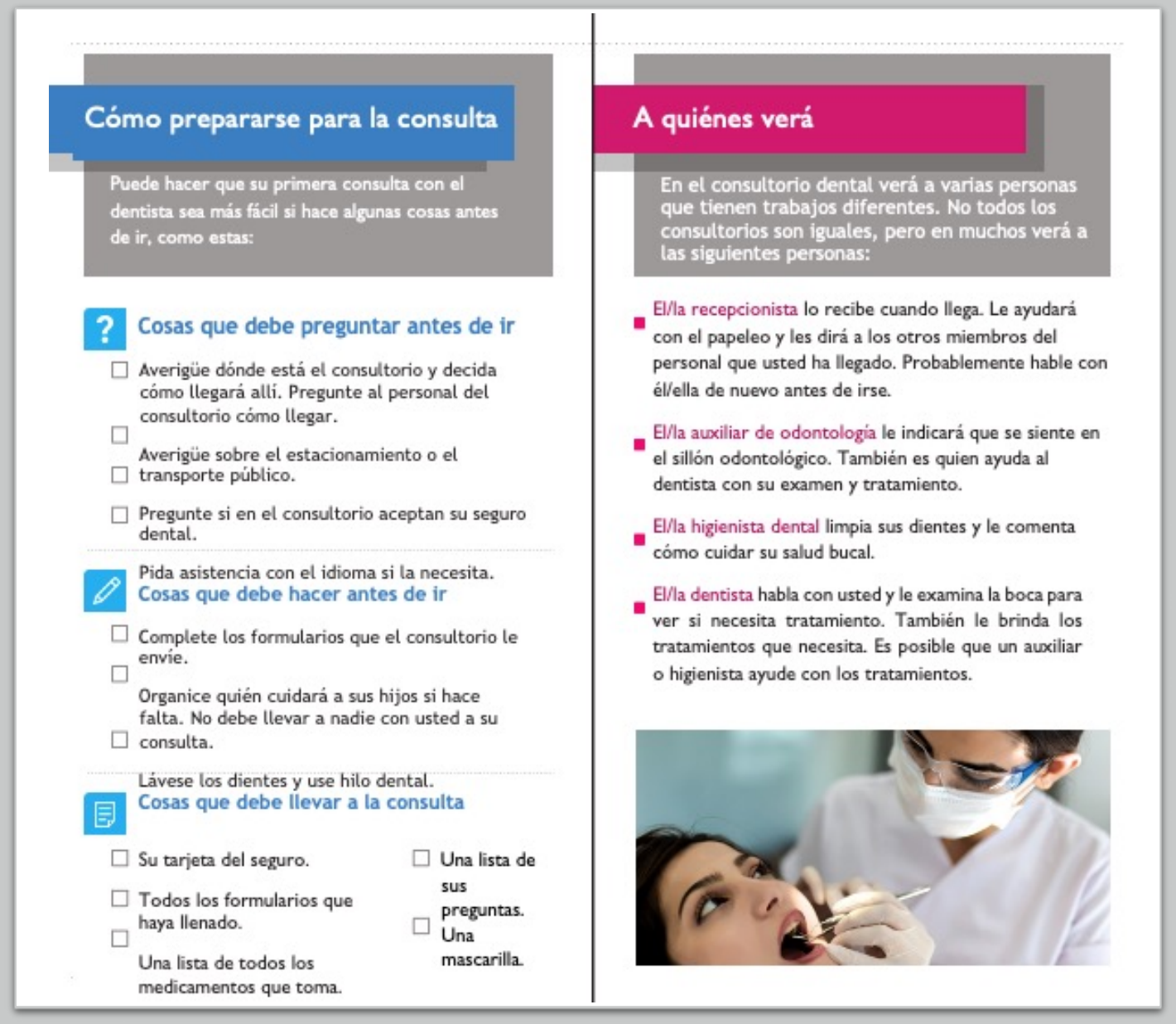
Who you will meet

You will meet people in the dental office who have different jobs. Not all offices are the same, but many offices work like this:

- **The receptionist** greets you when you arrive. They help with your paperwork and tell other staff members that you have come in. You will likely talk to them when you leave as well.
- **The dental assistant** may seat you in the dentist's chair. The assistant also helps the dentist with your exam and treatment.
- **The dental hygienist** cleans your teeth and talks to you about how to keep your mouth healthy.
- **The dentist** talks to you and looks in your mouth to see if you need treatment. The dentist provides any treatments you need. An assistant or hygienist may help with treatments.

Spanish-Language Patient Resource

- Same content as the English version



Cómo prepararse para la consulta

Puede hacer que su primera consulta con el dentista sea más fácil si hace algunas cosas antes de ir, como estas:

Cosas que debe preguntar antes de ir

- ☐ Averigüe dónde está el consultorio y decida cómo llegará allí. Pregunte al personal del consultorio cómo llegar.
- ☐ Averigüe sobre el estacionamiento o el transporte público.
- ☐ Pregunte si en el consultorio aceptan su seguro dental.
- ☐ Pida asistencia con el idioma si la necesita.

Cosas que debe hacer antes de ir

- ☐ Complete los formularios que el consultorio le envíe.
- ☐ Organice quién cuidará a sus hijos si hace falta. No debe llevar a nadie con usted a su consulta.
- ☐ Lávese los dientes y use hilo dental.

Cosas que debe llevar a la consulta

- ☐ Su tarjeta del seguro.
- ☐ Todos los formularios que haya llenado.
- ☐ Una lista de todos los medicamentos que toma.
- ☐ Una lista de sus preguntas.
- ☐ Una mascarilla.

A quiénes verá

En el consultorio dental verá a varias personas que tienen trabajos diferentes. No todos los consultorios son iguales, pero en muchos verá a las siguientes personas:

- El/la recepcionista lo recibe cuando llega. Le ayudará con el papeleo y les dirá a los otros miembros del personal que usted ha llegado. Probablemente hable con él/ella de nuevo antes de irse.
- El/la auxiliar de odontología le indicará que se siente en el sillón odontológico. También es quien ayuda al dentista con su examen y tratamiento.
- El/la higienista dental limpia sus dientes y le comenta cómo cuidar su salud bucal.
- El/la dentista habla con usted y le examina la boca para ver si necesita tratamiento. También le brinda los tratamientos que necesita. Es posible que un auxiliar o higienista ayude con los tratamientos.

Accessing the toolkit

FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA

First 5 California Kit for Parents

First 5 California's Kit for New Parents is available in five languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Order 1 or 100, and it will be shipped to you for free.

Oral Health in the Kit

Advice for Pregnant People

The kit explains why oral healthcare is important during pregnancy and helps parents find a dentist and get care.

Nutrition Information

Offers advice on good nutrition, including eating calcium-rich foods and avoiding sugary snacks and drinks.

Oral Health Advice for All Ages

The kit provides age-appropriate oral health advice. This includes information on:

- How to clean a baby's gums
- How to brush a toddler's teeth
- When children are old enough to brush on own
- When a baby should see a dentist
- Ways to prevent tooth decay
- How to find a dentist and affordable dental care

For Free Bulk Orders

To order the kit in bulk, **email parentkit@first5.ca.gov.** Include all of the following in your email:

- Subject line "Kit bulk ordering account"
- Your organization's name
- Your name, email address, and phone number
- Your county
- Requested quanitity of kit by language

Order for Free Now

To order a single kit, scan the QR code with your phone.

WHAT'S IN THE KIT

The kit comes in a reusable shopping bag and contains these items:

- California Parent Guide
- What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick book
- Touch and feel baby/toddler book
- Poison Control brochure and magnet
- Paid Family Leave brochure
- Brain development card and brochure

Contact

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COHTAC: oralhealthsupport@ucsf.edu

Health Research for Action UC BERKELEY

UCSF California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center

Collaborating with Dental Hygienists

Jennifer Frusetta & Travis Tramel

How do you help to motivate districts/schools to implement oral health programs? And how do you motivate schools, classes, and parents to sign the necessary consent forms for services?

If an in-school provider identifies an urgent case during a school screening and the school nurse is unable to follow up, what is a reasonable expectation and standard protocol for the provider to follow up if they don’t have access to the children’s information?

What are the best ways that LOHPs can support the work you do in districts/schools and your efforts to expand the work you do?

Contract & Payment Questions

If hygienists are employed by an LOHP, how can they be paid through Prop 56 funds for “allowable services/activities” but also bill insurance directly for services at schools (e.g., sealants, FV)?

Do the insurance reimbursements for services provided at schools fully cover all your salary and costs for doing screenings? If not, what other funding sources cover your other costs?

If a hygienist is hired by an LOHP, who handles the claims/reimbursement paperwork? Is it the responsibility of the hygienist or the LOHP?

Do hygienists prefer to subcontract with LOHPs to provide school-based sealants or do they prefer being an employee of the county?

Q & A

Wrap Up

Upcoming Webinars

Office of Oral Health Project Directors' Meeting (PDM):
Oral Health Models for Success: Medical-Dental Integration (FV, Pregnancy) and School-Linked Dental Programs

COHTAC Share & Learn:
Let's Talk About Community Water Fluoridation

SCOHR Corner

System for California Oral Health Reporting (SCOHR) SCOHR AB 1433

- Want to talk about SCOHR with other LOHPs?
  - Participate in peer-to-peer learning
  - Add SCOHR success stories to the Office of Oral Health's Oral Health Bytes quarterly newsletter (under the school section)
  - Highlight SCOHR champions in your LOHPs, schools, school districts, and COEs
- How does SCOHR Corner work?
  - Members provide the content & COHTAC facilitates and provides support
  - To participate, please email COHTAC at oralhealthsupport@ucsf.edu

Thank You