## Checklist for easy-to-understand print materials

Use this checklist to ensure the print documentation and handout materials you provide to clients will be easy to understand. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends testing materials for usability through focus groups or individual interviews before writing the first word and continuing through the final draft. *(See story, p. 2.)*

### Message content
- Have you limited your messages to three to four messages per document (or section)?
- Have you taken out information that is “nice to know” but not necessary?
- Is the most important information at the beginning of the document?
- Is it repeated at the end?
- Have you identified action steps or desired behaviors for your audience?
- Have you post-tested your materials?

### Text appearance
- Does your document have lots of white space? Are margins at least 1/2 inch?
- Is the print large enough (at least 12 points)? Does it have serifs?
- Have you used bold, italics, and text boxes to highlight information?
- Have you avoided using all capital letters?
- Is text justified on the left only?
- Did you use columns with a line length of 40 to 50 characters of space?
- Have you post-tested your materials?

### Layout and design
- Is information presented in an order that is logical to your audience?
- Is information chunked, using headings and subheadings? Do lists include bullets?
- Have you eliminated as much jargon and technical language as possible?
- Is technical or scientific language explained?
- Have you used concrete nouns, an active voice, and short words and sentences?
- Is the style conversational?
- Have you post-tested your materials?

### Translation
- Are the language and content culturally appropriate?
- Are the visuals culturally appropriate?
- Have you had the piece back translated?
- Is the translator fluent in the same linguistic variation as the intended audience?
- Have you post-tested your materials?

### Understandability
- Have you tested the complexity of the language used in your material for comprehension?
- Have you pre-tested your materials with members of your intended audience?
- Have you post-tested your materials with members of your intended audience?

*Source: CDC*