

Addressing the Challenges of Low Health Literacy

*Creating Easy-to-read Public Health
Education Materials*



March
of Dimes®

Mission Statement

The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. We carry out this mission through programs of research, community services, education and advocacy.



Learning Objectives

- Recognize the need for easy-to-read (ETR) materials for women of childbearing age in English and Spanish
- Identify components of the ETR process using the newly published *My 9 months/Mis 9 meses* magazine as an example.
- Describe copy and design variables to consider when developing bilingual health education materials.



Consumer Education Initiatives

- Print materials on preconception, pregnancy and newborn care topics
- Web sites
 - marchofdimes.com
 - nacersano.org
- Health information specialists—provide one-on-one information via e-mail



Consumer Education Target Audiences

- Primary audience: Women of childbearing age
- Secondary audiences:
 - First-time pregnant women
 - Women contemplating pregnancy (preconception)
 - Moms
 - Dads
 - Bereaved families
 - NICU families



U.S. Statistics

- 90 million adults (age 16 and older) with limited ability to read and understand health information
- 62 million women of childbearing age (age 15 to 44)
- More than 4 million live births each year
- 1 in 4 live births to Hispanic women



Commitment to Health Literacy

- Strategic Plan 2010:
 - Update and field test easy-to-read materials to ensure comprehension for consumers with low-literacy skills
 - Incorporate health literacy concepts into all consumer education print materials to promote a better understanding of health messages
- National office training on health literacy
- Targeted training for staff involved in product development (writers, designers)

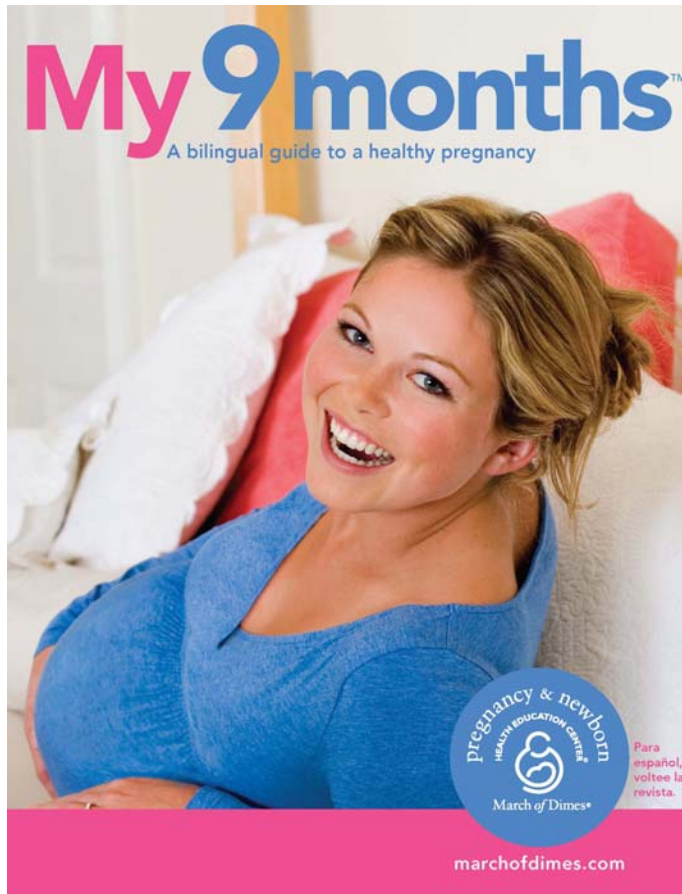


ETR Products Since 2006

ETR is 5th- to 7th-grade reading level.



My 9 months/Mis 9 meses



March
of Dimes®

ETR Process

1. Identify health literacy consultants (English, Spanish).
2. Identify target audience, purpose of the piece, main messages.
3. Draft English copy.
4. Review English copy, including readability analysis.
5. Design English magazine.



ETR Process, Continued

6. Draft Spanish copy (translation house).
7. Review Spanish copy, including readability analysis.
8. Design Spanish magazine.
9. Test magazines with target audiences— first-time pregnant women, marginal readers.
10. Revise magazines per testing results.
11. Print and distribute.



Copy Variables to Consider for Bilingual Products

- Spanish-language adaptation must be culturally and linguistically appropriate for target audience.
- Be aware of idiomatic expressions in English and Spanish.
- Phonetic spellings (in glossary) aren't needed in Spanish.



Design Variables to Consider for Bilingual Products

- Images must be representative of and relevant to the target audience.
- Be prepared to revise design based on feedback from testing.



Lessons Learned

- We couldn't do it without consultants.
- Organizational challenges
 - Health literacy doesn't mean dumbing down.
 - ETR pieces can be beautiful and creative.
 - We have to compromise. Some copy, logos and other style elements have to stay as they are.
- It's a long, but rewarding, process.



Future ETR Plans

Gathering survey results



Tell us what you think.

We hope you've enjoyed reading *My 9 months*. We'd like to find out what you think about our magazine. Your comments are really important to us. Our survey takes only a few minutes.

Please go to:
marchofdimes.com/magazinesurvey

40 marchofdimes.com



Díganos qué piensa.

Esperamos que haya disfrutado el leer *Mis 9 meses*. Nos gustaría saber qué piensa usted acerca de la revista. Sus comentarios son muy importantes para nosotros. La encuesta toma sólo unos minutos.

Por favor vaya a:
nacersano.org/encuestaderevista

40 nacersano.org



March
of Dimes

Future ETR Plans, Continued

- All new consumer education products will be ETR.
 - Fertility treatment
 - Late-preterm birth
 - Interconception
 - Words to know
- Most existing products will be revised to be ETR.
- Eventually, more than 85% of our consumer education portfolio will be ETR.



Consultants

- Wendy Mettger, MA
- Aracely Rosales, BS

Clear Language Group

www.clearlanguagegroup.com

clg@clearlanguagegroup.com

215-248-1080



March
of Dimes

Education & Health Promotion Staff

- Lilliam Acosta-Sanchez, MPH
lsanchez@marchofdimes.com
- Karen Kroder
kkroder@marchofdimes.com

