Understanding medicine labels is important

However, half of US adults misunderstand prescription medicine labels, which can lead to unsafe medicine use!

Why are medicine labels so confusing?

- Instructions for how to take the medicine may not be clear and easy-to-understand
- The information on the label can be different in different states
- The design of labels can make them difficult to read

What influences what goes on a medicine label?

- US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines
- State regulations
- Local pharmacy design

How can labels be more patient-friendly?

- Appropriate organization: The most important information front and center, like the medicine name and how to take it
- Limiting unnecessary information: Only information about how to take the medicine or what you need to do
- Careful language choices: Clear and simple words in the language you speak
- Improved readability: Large, dark font to make the words easier to read
- Direct instructions: Clear directions for how much medicine to take and when

Sources: Medication Literacy Series: Prescription Drug Container Labels, AARP, 2022; Literacy and Misunderstand Prescription Drug Labels, Annals of Internal Medicine, 2006

To learn more, visit: aarp.org/rxlabels