

The Anatomy of Effective Patient Education Illustration & Design

It is important when creating patient education materials that the illustrations and design are clear and easy to understand. Below are several tips and tools showcased within a layout indicative of effective patient education materials.



Paragraph line length: 60 - 70 characters

For paragraph text, keep the characters per line at 60-70. Creating paragraphs with more characters than 70 per line will make it harder for the reader to follow from line to line.

Use simple lines

Keep your drawings simple with minimal textures and background elements.

Showcase the area of focus within the context of the human body

The outline of the body gives the patient a feeling of familiarity to the drawing and indicates where the area of focus is located.

Use colour sparingly

Colour should be used minimally to give focus to an important area. Colour can also be used to group objects. For instance, in this layout, all headings are coloured in blue to define them as headings.

Keep line angles to a minimum

Arrange Pointing Devices and lines at one angle if possible. This will keep the layout clean and uncluttered.

Use white space

White space shows the reader how the page is organized and allows the eyes to rest between sections.

Create drawings with high contrast

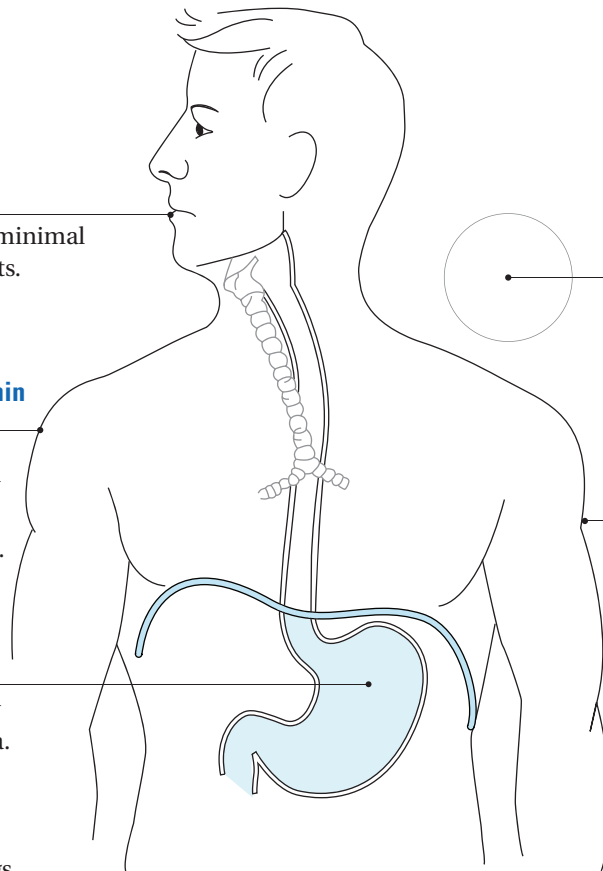
Drawings dark in colour set against a light background are easiest to see.

Use captions and labels

Captions and labels help to further describe the content and direct the eye where to focus

Align elements

Align your labels, captions and other layout elements along the left or right side, top or bottom to keep the layout clean and tidy.

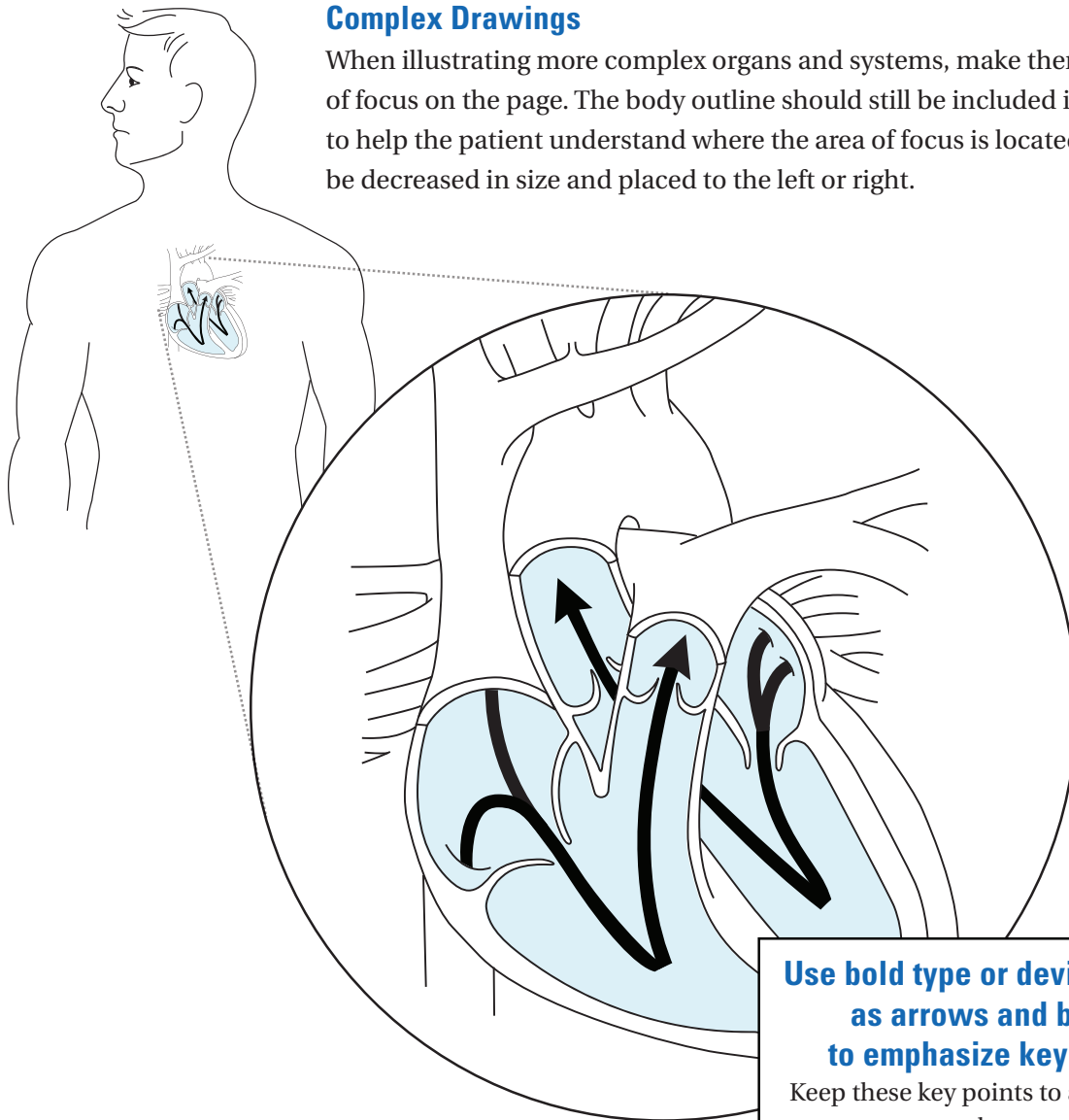


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Further Tips and Tools

Complex Drawings

When illustrating more complex organs and systems, make them the area of focus on the page. The body outline should still be included in the layout to help the patient understand where the area of focus is located, but it can be decreased in size and placed to the left or right.



Use bold type or devices such as arrows and boxes to emphasize key points

Keep these key points to a minimum as too many can become distracting.

Fonts

Choose fonts that are easy to read. They should be 12 points in size or larger. Make your subheadings larger than your body text, and your main headings the largest. Avoid ALL CAPS, and italic as they can be difficult to read.

Patient survey results found the fonts, Arial and Times New Roman as easiest to read.

Use left justification

Left-justified text is easiest to read because there are no uneven spaces between words, and it is easy to follow from line to line.