

# Digital health literacy

## Health Literacy Survey Switzerland 2019-21

### (HLS<sub>19-21</sub>-CH)

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Digital health literacy is the degree to which individuals are able to obtain, understand and judge health information from digital sources and use it to make decisions about their health.

**72 %** of the Swiss population has difficulty dealing with digital health information.



**7 in 100** Swiss residents have excellent digital health literacy.

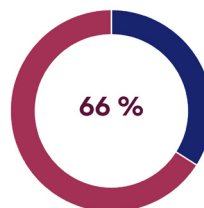
**21 in 100** Swiss residents have sufficient digital health literacy.

**28 in 100** Swiss residents have problematic digital health literacy.

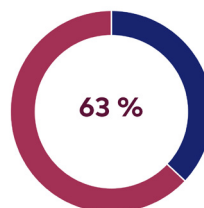
**44 in 100** Swiss residents have inadequate digital health literacy.

#### What causes the greatest difficulty?

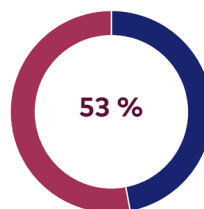
The following percentages of the surveyed Swiss residents find it (very) difficult...



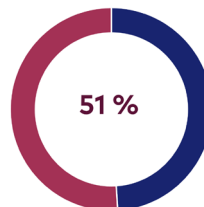
...to judge whether the information is reliable.



...to judge whether the information is offered with commercial interests.



...to use the information to help solve a health problem.



...to judge whether the information is applicable to them.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
 Federal Office of Public Health FOPH

In a total of **38%** of respondents, general health literacy (HL) is at the same level as digital health literacy. In around half of the population (**54%**), general health literacy is slightly higher than digital health literacy.

### Which population groups are more likely to have difficulties?




Low digital health literacy particularly affects people...

-  ...who are elderly.
-  ...with a chronic disease.
-  ...living in financial deprivation.
-  ...who have difficulties with the local language.
-  ...with little social support.

### People with high digital health literacy...




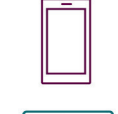

- ...report a better self-perceived health.
- ...are less likely to have chronic diseases or health problems.
- ...feel less restricted in their activities if they do suffer from a chronic disease or health problem.

### First source of information when seeking health information

-  Digital resources: **60%** of people with low HL vs. **51%** with high HL
-  Health professionals: **25%** of people with low HL vs. **34%** with high HL
-  Written materials: **6%** of people with low HL vs. **9%** with high HL

### Use of digital resources for health information

Percentage of respondents who use the following digital resources in a typical week:

-  **74 %** websites
-  **39 %** social media
-  **32 %** digital devices
-  **30 %** health apps
-  **29 %** digital interaction with health system

### Source:

De Gani, S. M., Jaks, R., Bieri, U., Kocher, J. Ph. (2021). Health Literacy Survey Schweiz 2019-21. Schlussbericht im Auftrag des Bundesamtes für Gesundheit BAG. Zürich, Careum Stiftung. *(Final report commissioned by the Federal Office of Public Health FOPH. In German with an English summary).*

### More information (in German):

[www.careum.ch/studie-gesundheitskompetenz](http://www.careum.ch/studie-gesundheitskompetenz)



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