# Accessibility FAQ

Ensuring that people with disabilities can access and engage with health education content is at the core of our commitment to being inclusive. We fulfill this responsibility by making sure our content is accessible, designing applications that support accessibility through technology. This document answers questions about how our applications and content are tailored to help people with disabilities, ensuring compliance with key accessibility standards.

## What is WCAG?

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are a set of guidelines to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. This includes people who have visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning, and neurological impairments.

WCAG 2.0, 2.1, and 2.2 accessibility standards are based on four core principles. They are:

- **Perceivable:** Ensuring information and the user interface are presented in ways that people can perceive. This includes alt (alternative) text for images and screen readers.
- **Operable:** Giving people the ability to navigate and operate the interface using keyboard or assistive technology.
- **Understandable:** Providing content that is easy to read, understand, and navigate, especially for people with cognitive disabilities.
- **Robust:** Making sure content is compatible with current and future assistive technologies.

These principles are broken down into specific criteria, or levels of compliance, that websites need to meet to be accessible. They are:

1. **Level A –** The most basic web accessibility features. This is the minimum standard.
2. **Level AA –** Addresses the biggest and most common barriers for people with disabilities. This is often the target standard for many organizations. It applies to our consumer-facing websites.
3. **Level AAA –** The highest and most complex level of web accessibility. It's often not possible to meet all Level AAA criteria for all content.

There are updated versions beyond 2.0:

- WCAG 2.1 builds on the 2.0 standard compliance by adding more criteria, especially for people with mobility, cognitive, and low-vision disabilities. The focus is on the mobile aspect.
- WCAG 2.2 further expands the guidelines with more detailed criteria, again focusing on people with cognitive disabilities and ensuring better overall usability.

These versions are backwards-compatible. This means that anything compliant with WCAG 2.1 also meets WCAG 2.0, and so on.

## What is the VPAT?

VPAT stands for Voluntary Product Accessibility Template. The main purpose of a VPAT is to give people with disabilities information about a product's level of accessibility. This helps organizations make sure that their products — such as software, hardware, or services — comply with regulations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

A completed VPAT results in an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR).

## What is an ACR?

An ACR is a document that summarizes how well a digital product, like software or hardware, and the technology supporting it, meets accessibility standards based on a completed VPAT. The ACR is a valuable tool that helps organizations ensure that their products are accessible to people with disabilities and provides an inclusive experience for all users.
The ACR includes:

1. **A summary of conformance:** An overview of the product's level of accessibility and compliance with required standards.
2. **Detailed section evaluations:** A breakdown of specific criteria and the product's compliance level, such as "supports," "partially supports," or "does not support."
3. **Remarks and explanations:** Comments that provide context or information about why the product may not fully support specific criteria and how the vendor plans to address those gaps, if needed.

## What are Accessible Applications?

Our digital platforms and applications are built to support accessibility features.  This allows people with disabilities to interact with the content without barriers.
These features include:

- **Screen reader compatibility:** Our applications are tested with screen readers — such as NVDA, JAWS, and others — to ensure that the content can be navigated using auditory or Braille outputs.
- **Keyboard navigation:** For people with mobility impairments who can't use a mouse, we ensure that all interactive elements, such as forms and buttons, can be accessed and used with keyboard shortcuts.
- **Closed captions and transcripts:** Multimedia content comes with closed captions and transcripts. This makes videos accessible to people with hearing impairments.
- **Web accessibility guidelines:** Our consumer-facing applications meet the AA-level compliance of WCAG 2.1 standards, ensuring that they are accessible to a wide range of people, including those with visual, auditory, and motor impairments.

# What is Accessible Content?

We design our content with an emphasis on accessibility to serve people with a wide range of disabilities. Key accessibility features in our content include:

- **Alt text and images:** We ensure that images have meaningful alt text or null text for decorative and lifestyle images. Our medical illustrations include alt text that provides the same value to visually impaired users as the original image provides to sighted users.
- **Screen reader support:** Our content structure uses proper tagging for headings, lists, and tables. This makes sure screen readers can navigate effectively. Screen readers can quickly scan through headings, links, and lists to provide a seamless experience for users with visual impairments.
- **Video accessibility:** Videos have closed captions, transcripts, and narration.  This ensures that users with hearing impairments can still engage with  multimedia content.
- **Plain language:** Our content developers are trained in using plain language to make health information more accessible, understandable, and relatable to all users, including those with cognitive disabilities or low health literacy.
- **Language diversity:** Content is available in multiple languages. This ensures that language is not a barrier for those with disabilities related to literacy or who are non-native English speakers. We currently provide translations in over 18 languages.

By following these guidelines, we not only meet but exceed accessibility standards to ensure that people with disabilities can fully engage with our content.

# What is Inclusive Visual Design for Accessibility?

Our content includes visuals that address various disabilities. We ensure that our medical illustrations and imagery have:

- **Diverse representation:** Illustrations and graphics include people of different ages, genders, abilities, skin tones, and body types. This allows people to "see themselves" in the content.
- **Clear visuals:** Visual content, including graphics, tables, and instructional images, is simplified to focus on key concepts. This helps people with cognitive or visual processing challenges better understand the information.

# How are we committed to continuous improvement?

We recognize that accessibility is an evolving field, and we are dedicated to continually improving how we address the needs of people with disabilities. Our commitment includes:

- **Continuous monitoring:** Our organization regularly monitors WCAG guidelines to ensure that our websites and content meet stringent guidelines.
- **Training:** Our content developers are trained in accessibility best practices, ensuring that they are up-to-date with the latest guidelines and technologies.
- **Testing and feedback:** We conduct regular testing with real users, including people who are underserved or who have a disability, to ensure that our content remains accessible and relevant.

By embedding accessibility into every stage of content and application development, our goal is to remove barriers and ensure equitable health education for all people, regardless of their abilities.