

Leaflets



Raising awareness of individual specific conditions is one of the primary aims of many national groups. To do this many groups produce a leaflet, or a selection of leaflets, on different aspects of the condition.

Sources of medical information include:

- medical text books
- articles from medical journals
- the Internet
- the group's medical advisor
- the entry from the Contact a Family Directory of Specific Conditions, Rare Disorders and UK Family Support Groups – dated and authored (please acknowledge source)

Different types of leaflets

Leaflets can have many purposes but essentially they tell people about your group and the health condition you cover. Leaflets can be used on their own, as additional information included with letters you send, or as something to take away from a display.

Your leaflet should be simple and accurate. Remember that too much text can be difficult for the reader to take in.

You might consider having a range of leaflets for different purposes:

1. an introductory leaflet for parents which would contain:
 - the group's name
 - the group's aims and main activities
 - a short simple description of the condition
 - a contact name and address and/or
 - telephone number

contact a family

209-211 City Road London EC1V 1JN

Tel 020 7608 8700 Fax 020 7608 8701 www.cafamily.org.uk info@cafamily.org.uk
Freephone Helpline 0808 808 3555 (Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm) Minicom 0808 808 3556

2. a medical leaflet giving:
 - alternative names for the condition (if any)
 - information on the condition
 - inheritance patterns (if appropriate)
 - pre-natal diagnosis (if appropriate)
 - access to advice services i.e. genetic counselling

As the group grows you could branch out with leaflets on a range of subjects which may include:

3. education
4. information for affected children/siblings
5. information for teachers and other appropriate professionals
6. diet and feeding
7. fundraising

You may wish to include a form to request further information as a tear off section of the leaflet.

Who can help?

Before you start the leaflet think about the resources within the group. Does anyone have access to:

- a computer for word processing
- a computer for desk top publishing
- photocopying or printing facilities
- stationery supplies
- logos, illustrations or graphics (a role here for any artistic group members)

Consider resources outside the group:

- the local C.V.S. (Council for Voluntary Service) and community groups may be producing their own newsletters and be able to advise and/or help
- local charitable groups may help with production costs and facilities
- local companies may be helpful especially if an employee is also one of your group members

Layout and design

The aim should be to produce an attractive and 'reader friendly' leaflet.

Desk top publishing

A computer with a DTP programme can make this job easier but many groups have made very effective leaflets with a simple word processing package.

If you are photocopying the leaflet it is worth buying some special art paper for the final printout from the computer. This will give better definition for copying. If you are using a commercial printing company check with them which format you should use. Additionally it is possible to give the commercial printer a computer disk of any artwork you use. This will produce a higher standard but may be more expensive.

Design tips

1. Don't squeeze too much on a page. Use a clear font and reasonable font size - probably 12 or 14.
2. *'You can put quotations in italics and shorten the column width to help break up a page of text'*

3. Or you could put quotations between ruled lines to make them stand out. Have a look at other publications to see how they deal with them.

4. CAPITALS ARE FINE FOR HEADINGS BUT THEY LOOK UGLY AND CAN BE A STRAIN TO READ IF USED FOR LARGE SECTIONS OF TEXT
5. For emphasis it is usually better to use **bold text** rather than underlining which can be difficult to read.
6. Justified text is stretched by varying amounts so that the end of each line is at the right hand edge of the column. It can look very neat and prevents the right hand edge of the text from having a ragged look.

However, if your text contains several long words or if the columns are narrow then this can give an undesirable appearance with large gaps appearing between words. It can also be much harder to read.

7. Use photographs, illustrations and text boxes to break up large areas of text. This will make the newsletter more attractive to the eye and people are more likely to read it. Make sure you leave a reasonable space between the text and the lines of the box.

8. If you are photocopying your newsletter be aware that photographs will not come out very well. It may be better to use illustrations and 'clip-art'.

9. If you are using a commercial printer they will be able to “screen” photographs, but this may cost upwards of £10 per picture.

10. Shaded boxes can make even **bold** text difficult to read – use them sparingly.

Distribution

Make the most of your leaflet by distributing it where it will be most useful. It is possible to reach other families by arranging to distribute the leaflet through:

- GP surgeries
- hospitals
- regional genetic centres
- specialist hospitals where children with the disorder are diagnosed

This guide is part of the Contact a Family Group Action Pack. For more information please visit www.cafamily.org.uk or telephone 020 7608 8700.

Last updated: July 2003