

Understanding the Healthy Roads Media Formats – A Guide



These are **WRITTEN** handouts in the PDF (Adobe Acrobat) format. They contain the text that is narrated in the other formats (audio, multimedia and web-based video). It is necessary to have the free Adobe Acrobat Reader (www.adobe.com) installed on your computer in order to be able to use these files, but this is preinstalled on most computers. These handouts can be downloaded so that you can read them, copy them, print them or e-mail copies of them.



This is a **MULTIMEDIA** format. These files have text, audio and graphics. All the non-English multimedia files give you the opportunity to click on a “Click here to see English” box on each screen so that if you do not speak the language that is being used, you will have the opportunity to understand what is being presented. The multimedia materials are EXE files (executable programs) and require no additional software to run. In general caution should be used when downloading and running an executable file if it is not from a reputable site. If you are trying to use these files and can't seem to access them, talk with your IT staff to see if they have put a block on accessing these kinds of files until they can check out the site from which they are being distributed. When you run the program you will have an option of printing a handout. The handouts generated from these multimedia files contain the same information as the separately available PDF handouts but you do NOT need any additional software to print these handouts. These files are highly compressed to limit their size to about 5 MB in order to reduce the time it takes to run them. If you have a slow dial-up internet connection, it can take up to 10-15 minutes for the file to begin to run. This is why they have been designed to be downloadable. Once you have downloaded them to your computer you will be able to quickly access them whether you are on-line or off-line. As with the audio files, some of the advantages to being able to download these files to your own computer is that you can run them without being on-line, copy them, load them on a CD-ROM or laptop, or send them to someone else in an e-mail attachment.



These are **AUDIO** or sound files. They are in the MP3 sound format. These audio files are the narration of the text from the handouts, and the narration from the multimedia and web-based files. The MP3 sound format was chosen because it allows the sound to be highly compressed without losing quality. Also, it is a versatile format because when one of these audio files is selected your computer looks for the sound program you already use on your computer (iTunes, Windows Media, QuickTime, etc.). It will use this program to play the audio file. Also, there are many non-computer devices that are able to run MP3 files. They can be potentially useful in a variety of ways – downloaded to MP3 players, copied onto an audio CD for play on a portable audio CD player, used for local radio programming etc.



This is a **WEB-PAGE VIDEO** format that uses a software program called Flash. About 98% of internet users have the Flash software already installed on their computers. If you don't have Flash, when you try to run one of these files, you will get a message that asks if you would like to download it to your computer. This is a free program and it will self-install. Technology now makes it quite easy to set up web-based video to run for those who have fast internet connections – the size of the screen can be large and any image fuzziness (resolution) can almost be eliminated. However, for people with slow internet connection, the screen size needs to be reduced and there may be some fuzziness in the images. We are working to optimize the settings for this format to make them available to people with slow internet connections, while at the same time ensuring the screen size and image resolution are not too compromised. If you click on one of the web pages that is supposed to have a video and you just see a blank space, wait a few seconds and the video should appear. If you start to run one of these files and it pauses as it runs, then just wait a couple of minutes and start it again. It is actually downloading and being presented at the same time. Sometimes, with a slower connection, the downloading needs to catch up with the presentation. Once you have run a file the first time then it should run without pauses the next time since it now exists on your computer (in something called a computer cache). This is the one format that cannot be downloaded and used off-line. It needs information from the web page that allows it to display.



The **Mobile (iPod) VIDEO** files are in a format known as MP4. These files can be played on a computer or downloaded to run on a video iPod or other hand-held video device. One advantage of this format is that these files can be downloaded for use off-line. Having these videos available on a small portable device helps increase access to multilingual health information in many settings where the Internet is unavailable, unreliable or where access speeds are slow. Another advantage to this format is that a video iPod can be cabled to a portable DVD player or television so that the presentation screen is larger. This is helpful in group settings and also in settings where there is no access to computers. Lastly, videos on an iPod can be arranged into custom playlists with specific topics so that a series of videos of a specific length can be run or looped. This can be helpful in waiting room settings.