

Ensure Patient Understanding through Teach-Back Technique

What is Teach-Back?

Teach-back is a research-based health literacy intervention that promotes adherence to medications, any type of doctors orders or recommendations, quality of care, and patient safety. It is a way to make sure the patient understands what you tell them; it is not a test or quiz of patients.

How Do I Use Teach-Back?

1. Ask the patient (or family member) to explain what they need to know or do using their own words.
2. If the patient is not able to teach-back correctly, explain it again and re-check.
3. Once the patient has explained everything to you, reaffirm the directions by stating, “Yes, that’s correct.”

Tips for Using Teach-Back

- **Ask** open-ended questions.
- **Avoid** questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
- **Emphasize** that the responsibility to explain clearly is on you, the provider.
- **Use** reader-friendly print materials.
- **Document** the patient’s response and use of teach-back.

Sample Teach-Back Questions

- “I want to be sure I explained everything clearly. Can you explain it back to me so I can be sure I did?”
- “What will you tell your husband/wife about the changes we made to your medications today?”
- “We’ve gone over a lot of information. In your own words, please review with me what we have talked about?”
- “I want to make sure that I have answered all of your questions; what questions do you think that your family members may ask of you about your doctor’s visit?”
- “Can you show me how you will check your blood sugar levels?”

“Communication: Communicate with Courtesy, Respect and Listening.” Patient Experience Learning Series, Press Ganey, 2024, www.cahpsprovider.com/.

