



Use the Teach-Back Method With Your Patients



Patients often do not understand or forget at least half of what is discussed in a typical office visit. Confirm understanding through teach-back.

The teach-back method:

- Involves asking the patient to repeat back their understanding of the information you have discussed.
- Can be used to confirm that the patient can demonstrate a new skill.
- Takes about a minute and is one of the most important things you can do when counseling patients.

There are a few key steps to performing an effective teach-back.

1. First, make it normal so the patient does not feel singled out.
Example: "I do this next part with all my patients."
2. Second, put the burden on your shoulders. It is your job to explain things clearly.
Example: "I want to be sure I explained things clearly today."
3. Third, be specific about what you want the patient to tell you.
Example: "We talked about starting a new medicine today. Please tell me your understanding of why it is important... Ok, now please tell me your understanding of how to take it."
4. Fourth, if the patient's explanation is insufficient, reteach the information and reassess understanding.
Example: "I must not have explained that very well. The new medicine is for... I'd like you to take it... Now, let's see if I did a better job explaining it that time. Please tell me again what the new medicine is for and how you should take it?"
5. Teach-back can also be used to assess a skill.
Example: "Please show me how you would use this inhaler."

Resource: www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com

