

Teach-Back Method



Overview

- ❖ Studies show that 40-80% of the medical information patients receive is forgotten immediately¹ and that nearly half of the information retained is incorrect².
- ❖ Teach-back is a way to confirm that what you have explained to the patient what they need to know in a manner that the patient understands.
- ❖ It involves asking the patients to explain or demonstrate what they have been told.

Teach-Back Method:

- ❖ **Start slowly:** Only give the patient 2-3 new education items at a time
- ❖ **Keep it simple:** Avoid medical terms. Use simple words that anyone will understand.
- ❖ **Plan your approach:** Think about how you will ask the patient for teach-back information based on your topic.
- ❖ **Use handouts:** Verbally review/read all handouts to the patient and stress the important information.
- ❖ **Clarify:** Clarify your information until the patient can correctly describe in their own words what they are going to do.

Things to keep in mind:

- ❖ **This is not a test of the patient's knowledge:** This is a test of how well you explained the concept.
- ❖ **Use with everyone:** Use teach-back when you think the person understands and when you think someone is struggling with your directions.
- ❖ **Do not ask a patient, "Do you understand?"**
- ❖ **The clinician takes responsibility for adequate teaching:** If the patient cannot explain correctly, assume that you have not provided adequate teaching. Re-teach using an alternate approach.

Examples of Teach-Back education:

- ❖ "I want to be sure that I explained your medication correctly. Can you tell me how you are going to take this medicine?"
- ❖ "We covered a lot today about your diabetes; I want to make sure I explained things clearly. So let's review what we discuss. What are 3 strategies that will help you control you diabetes?"
- ❖ "What are you going to do tomorrow morning before taking you meds?"
- ❖ "When your friends/family asks you about this medication, what are you going to tell them?"

References:

1. Kessels RP. Patients' memory for medical information. *J R Soc Med.* May 2003; 96(5):219-22.
2. Anderson JL, Dodman S, Kopelman M, Fleming A. Patient information recall in a rheumatology clinic. *Rheumatology.* 1979;18(1):18-22.
3. Removing barriers to better, safer care, Health literacy and patient safety: Help patients understand, Manual for clinicians, 2nd ed., Barry D. Weiss, MD 2007 American Medical Association Foundation and American Medical Association.