



Teach Back

Research has shown that 40-80% of the health information we teach or give to patients is not understood or remembered, or is remembered incorrectly. The reasons for this “poor health literacy” are many, and the implications clear. We need to stop teaching at patients and start teaching with them.

The Teach Back Method:

- Enables you to check for understanding and, if necessary, re-teach the information.
- Creates the opportunity for dialogue in which you provide information, then encourage the patient to respond and confirm understanding before adding any new information.

For Effective Teach Back:

1. Give information, and then ask the patient to respond and confirm understanding *before* adding any new information.
 - Re-phrase if a patient is not able to repeat the information accurately.
2. Ask the patient to teach back the information again, *using their own words*, until you are comfortable they really understand it.
3. If they still do not understand, consider other strategies:
 - Ask the patient to explain or demonstrate understanding in a way that is not demeaning or in a way that takes pressure off the patient.
 - Do not appear rushed, annoyed, or bored during these efforts – your actions should agree with your words.

For more information and video demonstrations on the Teach Back method go to:

www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy/

<http://nchealthliteracy.org/teachingaids.html>