

# Teach-Back

## **What is Teach-Back?**

Teach-back is an effective method of checking if educational instructions have been explained clearly.

## **Why use Teach-Back?**

Teach-back provides an opportunity to clarify meaning and improve patient understanding and adherence. Teach-back is a method of instruction that includes chunking material, using plain language, and closing the loop of communication.

## **Did you know?**

40-80% of the medical information patients are told during office visits is forgotten immediately, and nearly half of the information retained is incorrect.

## **When do we use Teach-Back?**

Use teach-back with each patient/family interaction when providing instructions. Education should always be tailored to the patient's specific needs; activation level, learner readiness, literacy level, and paced as tolerated for optimal learning and skill development. Use teach-back frequently to build your skills as a patient educator.

## **Resources**

Always use Teach-back <http://www.teachbacktraining.org/> (training modules and tool kit)

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (2015) Use the teach-back method: Tool Kit # 5. Retrieved from

<https://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/qualityresources/tools/literacy-toolkit/healthlittoolkit2-tool5.html>

# Using Teach-Back

- Use plain language
- Ask the patient to explain back what you have taught using their own words
- Signs and symptoms they should call their doctor about
- What their medicines are, why they use them, when they use them, how they are taken
- What activities they do to take care of their condition
- Avoid questions that are answered with a Yes or No, use open-ended questions
- Use more than one educational medium, reinforce with visual aids
- Ask the patient to show you or demonstrate actions
- Include family and informal caregivers whenever possible
- Clarify/rephrase until understood and reinforce

## Examples

Incorrect: Do you take you inhalers daily?

Correct: Mr. C, I would like know what puffers you take during the day, could you show me which inhalers you use and how you take them?

Incorrect: Mr. C, we have covered a lot of information today, did you understand everything?

Correct: Mr. C, we have just talked about heart failure and monitoring daily weights, I would like to make sure that I have explained it in a way that will help you, please tell me in your own words what you will be doing to monitor your weights.