

## Teach-back Method

**Start Slowly.** Initially, you may want to try it with the last patient of the day.

**Plan your approach.** Think about how you will ask your patient to teach-back information based on the topic you are reviewing. Keep in mind that some situations will not be appropriate for using the teach back method.

**Use handouts.** Reviewing written materials to reinforce the teaching points can be very helpful for patient understanding.

**Clarify.** If patients cannot remember or accurately repeat what you asked them, clarify your information or directions and allow them to teach it back again. Do this until the patient is able to correctly describe **in their own words** what they are going to do, without parroting back what you said.

**Practice.** It may take some getting used to, but studies show that once established as part of a routine, it does not take longer to perform.

### Tips

#### Suggested Approaches When Using Teach-back

“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, and I want to make sure that I explained things clearly. So let’s review what we discussed. What are three strategies that will help you control your diabetes?”

“What are you going to do when you get home?”

## Track Your Progress

### Assess results of the teach-back method with staff and patients.

The Teach-Back Self-Evaluation and Tracking Log provides a method for staff to document their experience using the teach-back method. Encourage staff to use the logs, and hold a discussion about their experience. This will allow people to share teach-back strategies that worked best. In addition, it is helpful to ask patients if they find the teach-back interaction positive and helpful during the patient encounter.

### Assess how often the teach-back is used.

A few weeks after first trying the teach-back, track how many clinicians or staff members are using it. Have each individual keep a log of when and how it was used over the course of a few days.

