

10 Elements of Competence for Using Teach-back Effectively

What is teach-back?

- A way to make sure you—the healthcare provider—explained information clearly. It is not a test or quiz of patients.
- Asking a patient (or family member) to explain in their own words what they need to know or do, in a caring way.
- A way to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain and check again.
- A research-based health literacy intervention that improves patient-provider communication and patient health outcomes.¹

▶ For more information, visit <https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-safety/reports/engage/interventions/teachback.html>

1. *Use a caring tone of voice and attitude.*
2. *Display comfortable body language and make eye contact.*
3. *Use plain language.*
4. *Ask the patient to explain back, using their own words.*
5. *Use non-shaming, open-ended questions.*
6. *Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.*
7. *Emphasize that the responsibility to explain clearly is on you, the provider.*
8. *If the patient is not able to teach back correctly, explain again and re-check.*
9. *Use reader-friendly print materials to support learning.*
10. *Document use of patient response to teach-back.*



¹Schillinger, 2003