

Care Transition

When I left the hospital, I clearly understood the purpose for taking each of my medications.

QUESTION DEFINITION

This question measures patients' perceptions of the degree to which health care professionals effectively explained the reasons for taking each medication the patient would be required to take at home. Patients will consider how much time health care professionals took to explain each medication and if possible side effects were discussed; if benefits of taking the medication were presented; if the necessary duration for taking each medication was explained; etc. Patients will also consider how much opportunity they were given to ask questions about each medication.

VOICE OF THE PATIENT

As I was getting ready to go home, the nurse went over each of my medicines with me. I appreciated her taking the time to do that. There's so much to remember.

I was prescribed all of these drugs, and I have no idea why I need so many. Confusing.

IMPROVEMENT SOLUTIONS

Essential Behaviors

- Provide information in easily digestible amounts. Teach patients about one medication at a time and then stop to assess the patient's understanding about each medication before moving on to the next one. See information about the "teach-back" method below. This method can be used to assess a patient's understanding about a medication.
- Provide patients with access to multiple resources explaining the purpose of each medication they'll need at home, including written materials they can review on their own. This gives patients the opportunity to go beyond the essential information you wish to share in the hospital and become as knowledgeable about each medication as they wish. Resources can include:
 - Reliable websites
 - Information from health care foundations
 - Material created by the hospital
 - Access to videos

Processes/Operations

- Train health care providers to use the teach-back technique to assess patients' level of understanding about the purpose for taking each of their medications before they go home. To use the teach-back technique, ask patients to repeat (in their own words) what they understood from your explanation about the purpose of each medication. If a patient cannot repeat important

information provided about the purpose of each medication, the information provided should be clarified and then the patient's understanding should be reassessed (by trying the teach-back technique method again).

- Keep preprinted sheets about commonly used medications readily available for nurses and physicians to distribute to patients or to aid any discussions about the purpose of medications. Each sheet should cover a specific drug. Be sure to include:
 - Purpose of the medication
 - Common names often used for the drug
 - Possible side effects associated with this medication
 - Important things to know about this medication, such as the importance of taking the medication with food
- Provide patients with an alphabetized list of all of the medications they're taking and the appropriate dosages. Encourage patients to update this list and carry it with them to all of their doctor's appointments, ER visits, etc.
- Train staff on the basic principles of adult learning theory to educate patients about the purpose(s) of their medication(s). Adult learning theory tells us how adults learn best. Train staff on the CARE principle to apply the basic principles of adult learning theory to medication education for patients.
 - **Control.** Restore autonomy to patients by giving them control over the situations in which they are learning about their medication(s). This can be done by giving them choices about:
 - How to learn about their medication(s). Patients can listen to explanations from nurses about the purpose(s) of their medication(s), read literature about the medication(s) provided by hospital staff, watch a short video about the medication(s), review the medication's purpose and other details in a back-and-forth exchange with a nurse, etc.
 - When to learn about their medication(s). Patients may feel more focused and ready to learn after eating lunch or before tests and treatment, for example. Give patients choices about when to learn about the purpose(s) of their medication(s) to restore autonomy and reduce unnecessary suffering caused by the anxiety of having to learn something new.
 - Where to learn about their medication(s). Patients might feel more comfortable learning about their medications if sitting close to a family member who can talk through the details with them, or by sitting up in bed and making eye contact with a health care provider (rather than lying down and looking up).
 - **Active.** Adults learn best when their education includes them. Create interactive education that allows patients to solve a problem, rather than listen to a lecture about a medication. For example, a nurse could invite a patient to choose which condition or disease a medication is intended to cure. After having the opportunity to choose the correct answer, the nurse could reveal which condition or disease is correct.
 - **Relevant.** Adults are more interested in learning about subjects that have immediate relevance to their lives. They are ready to learn when new knowledge and skills can be applied immediately. For example, a patient recently diagnosed with diabetes would benefit from learning to check his or her own glucose levels immediately after a nurse has provided verbal instructions for doing so.
 - **Experience.** Experience provides the basis for learning activities. In order to make something "stick," an educator must link training to learners' prior experiences. Health care staff, for example, could use a patient's experience with overcoming a previous

sports injury to the work it will take to recover from surgery. The staff member might say something such as, “Remember when you had to exercise every day after your golf injury? You’re going to have to do very similar activities to recover from surgery.”

IMPROVEMENT PORTAL RESOURCES (LOGIN REQUIRED)

[Medication Review Worksheet](#)

[UP! Webinar: A Dose of Medication Education and Comfort Techniques to Improve HCAHPS Performance](#)