Tribal/Urban Indian Local Dental Pilot Project

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Communicating with Your Patient—Using Teach-back
Problem

- 40-80 percent of the medical information patients receive is forgotten immediately.
- Nearly half of the information retained is incorrect.
- Patients with low literacy tend to ask fewer questions.

Solution

- **Teach-back**—a way to confirm that you have explained what the patient needs to know in a manner that the patient understands.
Teach-back is…

- A dialogue with the patient in which the provider gives information, then asks the patient to respond and confirm understanding *before* adding any new information.
- Asking patients to repeat in their own words what they need to know or do, in a non-shaming way.
- An indication of how well YOU communicated the information, NOT a "test" of the patient.
- The patient confirms understanding when they explain it back to you correctly.
- As you practice, you will identify explanations and communication strategies that are more successful.
Teach-back Testimonial

“I decided to do teach-back on five patients. With one mother and her child, I concluded the visit by saying, ‘So tell me what you are going to do when you get home.’ The mother just looked at me without a reply. She could not tell me what instructions I had just given her. I explained the instructions again and then she was able to teach them back to me. The most amazing thing about this ‘ah ha’ moment was that I had no idea she did not understand until I asked her to teach it back to me. I was so wrapped up in delivering the message that I did not realize that it wasn’t being received.”

Resident physician, pediatric office
What do Patients Want to Know???

- Tell me what’s wrong (briefly).
- Tell me what I need to **DO** and why.
- Emphasize the **benefits** (for me).
- Focus on “need-to-know” and “need-to-do.”
Key Elements of Effective Teach-back

- Use a caring tone of voice and attitude.
- Use comfortable body language/eye contact.
- Use Plain Language.
- Ask patient to explain back in his own words or show you how to do something.
- Use non-shaming, open-ended questions.
- Avoid yes or no questions.
- Take responsibility for explaining clearly.
- Explain again and re-check for understanding.
- Use reader-friendly materials to support teaching.
- Document use of teach-back.
Talking with Patients & Families

Always:

- Use Plain Language.
- Slow down.
- Break it down into short statements.
- Focus on the 2 or 3 most important concepts.
- Check for understanding using teach-back.
Plain Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of:</th>
<th>Try Saying:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‣ Caries, carious lesion</td>
<td>‣ Cavity, tooth decay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Anterior teeth, molars</td>
<td>‣ Front teeth, back teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Bacteria, plaque</td>
<td>‣ Germs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Primary teeth</td>
<td>‣ Baby teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Gingiva</td>
<td>‣ Gums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Oral</td>
<td>‣ Mouth and jaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Prevent</td>
<td>‣ Keep from happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Susceptible</td>
<td>‣ More likely to get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ White spot lesion, decalcification</td>
<td>‣ White spot on tooth, beginning decay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus on the Most Important Message

- Case example: A 3-year-old child presents with several carious lesions on maxillary anterior teeth. Which message is the most important to convey to the parent?

- Making a dental appointment as soon as possible
- Cutting down on using a bottle at night
- The importance of caring for baby teeth
- The importance of brushing the child’s teeth daily
- The need to do a fluoride varnish treatment
Chunk and Check

- For more than one concept:
  - Teach 2-3 main points for the first concept and then check for understanding using teach-back.
  - THEN go to the next concept.
Teach-Back Questions

› “What are you going to do when you get home?”
› “Let’s make sure I covered everything. Tell me what you’re going to do.”
› “I want to be sure I explained everything clearly. Can you explain it back to me so I can be sure I did?”
› “What will you tell your husband about what we talked about today?”
› “We’ve gone over a lot of information about oral health today. In your own words, please review what we talked about. How will you make it work at home?”
› “I want to make sure we’re on the same page. Can you explain to me what your steps are when you get home?”
What if the Patient did not Understand?

- Say, “I must not have done a good job explaining. Let me try again.”

- Re-phrase if a patient does not understand. **Do not** simply repeat.
  - Create a simple drawing.
  - Show pictures or models.
  - Demonstrate a behavior.
  - Use simpler language.
  - Break up information into smaller segments—“chunking”

- Ask the patient to teach back the information again, using their own words, until you are comfortable that they really understand it.
What if the Patient did not Understand?

› If they still do not understand, consider other strategies like…

  • Including a family member
  • Taking a break or scheduling another opportunity
  • Asking another member of the team to explain
Common Teach-Back Errors

- Quizzing the patient at the end of the conversation.
- Using clinical jargon or other language that the patient may have difficulty understanding.
- Appearing rushed, annoyed, or bored.
- Asking yes/no questions like:
  - “Do you understand?”
  - “Do you have any questions?”
  - “Do you know how to use this toothbrush?”
  - “Are you clear on the steps?”
Teach-Back Challenge

› How can you phrase your teach-back questions? Brainstorm and discuss how we can ask questions as an Oral Health Care Coordinator.
Written Communication

- Written materials, when used alone, will not adequately inform.
- Patients prefer receiving key messages from their clinician with accompanying pamphlets.
- Pictures/demonstrations are most helpful to patients with low literacy.
- Most health drawings are too complicated.
- National Institutes of Health FREE publications
Teach-Back Summary

- Responsibility is on the provider.
- Use a caring tone of voice and attitude.
- Use Plain Language.
- Ask patient to explain using their own words (*not* yes/no).
- Document use of and response to teach-back.
Resources


› Always use Teach-back! Training Toolkit
   http://www.teachbacktraining.org/
Annual DTI Challenge

- $500-$1000 annual award for any program that meets or exceeds their access goal over baseline for each project year.
- The award is for showing a decreasing ratio of treatment to caries prevention for children age 0-20 years.
- We will figure it by dividing the number of children (0-20) enrolled in Medi-Cal for at least 90 continuous days who received caries treatment (the numerator) by the number of unduplicated children (0-20) enrolled in Medi-Cal for at least 90 continuous days who received any preventive dental service.
## Annual DTI Challenge

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2-2.9% increase</td>
<td>At least 3% increase</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4-4.9% increase</td>
<td>At least 5% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>6-7.4% increase</td>
<td>At least 7.5% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>8-9.9% increase</td>
<td>At least 10% increase</td>
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Thank You!

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