

## Teach-Back

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### What is Teach-Back?

It is an evidence-based technique to confirm that a message has been understood. In health care, it has been shown to help people improve blood sugar control, avoid readmission in heart failure, and decrease time for people taking a blood-thinning medication to get the medication dose right.

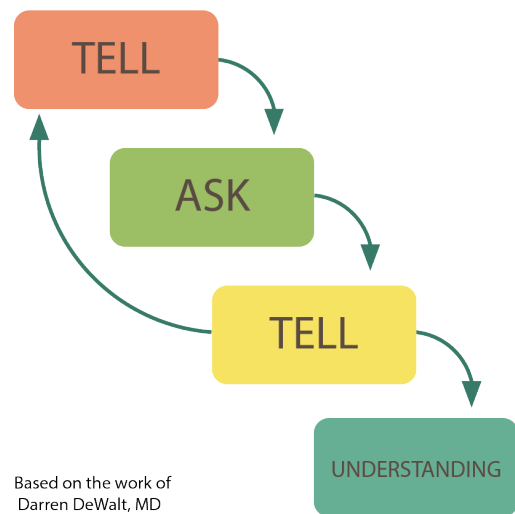
### Key points:

- The responsibility is on the person giving information to make the message clear.
- Teach-Back should be used periodically during a conversation if more than one important message or instruction is being given.
- Give only 2-3 important messages during any interaction.
- Don't ask "Did you understand" because most people will say yes even if they didn't.

### Tips:

- Use plain language ("living room" words)
- Try pictures or drawings
- Write key points down
- Create a system of who will do teach-back, when, and where

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Based on the work of  
Darren DeWalt, MD

### Teach-Back Options:

After information or instruction has been given, say:

1. "Could you tell me back what we just talked about to see if I was clear?" OR
2. "After you leave this appointment a family member or friend might ask you what happened today. What are you going to tell them about what you are going to do?"

If teaching a skill, use "Show me."

1. "Show me how you are going to do this at home so I know if I was clear."

For more information about teach-back and improving health literacy:

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US) Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit at [www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy/](http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy/)