

Strategies for Improving Patient Education

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http://www.medscape.com/content/2002/00/43/20/432047/432047_tab.html

Table 2. Strategies for Improving Patient Education^[2,3,6-8,31,45,46,49,56,64,67,68]

General concepts

- Create a shame-free environment and offer assistance when needed.
- Use simple and clear language.
- Link information to previous knowledge.
- Personalize the message.
- Establish an open relationship with the patient.
- Tailor information to the individual by giving examples and explaining relevance.
- Reinforce and repeat information often.
- Invite family members or friends to participate in patient visits.
- Ensure understanding through open-ended questioning, demonstration techniques, and other strategies.

Written materials

- Anticipate reading ability at least two grade levels below last grade completed.
- Use simple words with one or two syllables.
- Use short sentences with 8-10 words/sentence.
- Use simple large-font print with a mixture of upper- and lowercase letters.
- Use ample "white space" to avoid a cluttered look.
- Use bullets for lists.
- Reduce content to what patients really need to know.
- Avoid large amounts of background information, statistical information, and technical jargon.
- Give priority to patient action and motivation.
- Tailor information to the individual by writing his or her name on the materials.
- Highlight or underline important concepts.
- Reinforce with verbal instructions.
- Use illustrations to attract attention and reemphasize text.
- Use simple illustrations appropriate for the intended audience.