



Residents as Teachers - Patient Education Tips

Helpful tips for dealing with patients considering health literacy:

- Use simple/ plain language – use words with less than 3 syllables, avoid jargon and define medical terms in plain language when needed. Use short sentences.
- Hand out printed materials that reinforce what you are saying or recommend a specific reviewed website that can provide the information needed.
- Speak slower and check in for understanding.
- Write out instructions and read the instructions out loud.
- Present only 2 or 3 concepts at a time.
- Ask if patient would like a family member to be present or there to take notes.
- Ask patient to repeat information or describe what they will do when they go home. (See “Teach Back” below)
- Underline or highlight key points in any patient information handout.
- Follow-up with team members to review instructions and reinforce messages.
- Draw pictures or provide diagrams; can access many online or use an app. You can also use models and do demonstrations or have the patient practice.
- Ensure mutual understanding and agreement on the nature of the problem, next steps and the specific roles (for you and the patient), ie who does what and why?
- Use a variety of approaches to explain things.
- Show videos such as YouTube or others through recommended sites.
- Prescribe a website prescription and then follow up.
- Prescribe an app – follow the CMA policy https://www.cma.ca/Assets/assets-library/document/en/advocacy/cma_policy_guiding_principles_for_physicians_recommending_mobile_health_applications_to_patients_pd1-e.pdf

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