



# The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) member satisfaction survey

Helpful ways to improve communication with patients

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# What's CAHPS?

CAHPS is a survey that the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) developed to measure patient satisfaction with their health care. It provides patient perspective of the care they received and includes information about their access to medical services, physicians, specialists and behavioral health providers. The survey also asks about communication with their doctor. We participate in these surveys annually for our adult and child members, and the results help us identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

## The survey focuses on these questions and areas of care:



### Understanding and respect

- How often did your personal doctor explain things in a way that's easy to understand?
- How often did your personal doctor listen carefully to you?
- How often did your personal doctor show respect for what you had to stay?
- How often did your personal doctor spend enough time with you?



### Coordination of care

In the past six months, how often did your personal doctor seem informed and up to date about the care you received from your health providers?



### Tobacco cessation discussions

- Do you smoke cigarettes or use tobacco every day, some days or not at all?
- In the past 6 months, how often were you advised to quit smoking or using tobacco by a doctor or other health provider in your plan?
- In the past 6 months, how often was medication recommended or discussed by a doctor or health provider to assist you with quitting smoking or using tobacco?
- In the past 6 months, how often did your doctor or health provider discuss or provide methods and strategies other than a medication to assist you with quitting smoking or using tobacco?



### Flu prevention

Have you had either a flu shot or flu spray in the nose since July 1, 2020?

# Simple steps to better communication



## Know the value

Benefits of effective communication include:

- Physician/patient satisfaction
- Accurate diagnoses
- Adherence to medical advice
- Improved health outcomes
- Lower risk of malpractice



## Use the ALERT model:

This model was developed to help physicians and clinicians keep these important things in mind when caring for patients:

- **A**lways
- **L**isten carefully
- **E**xplain things understandably
- **R**espect what the patient says
- Manage **T**ime perception



## Engage with your patients

- Keep eye contact when patient is talking
- Sit down, lean in and use open body language
- Use reflective statements like “what I hear you say is” or “let me make sure I understand”
- Avoid interrupting, multi-tasking and unnecessary distractions



## Practicing these tips

can go a long way in improving communication between you and your patients.





## Enhance perception about thoroughness and appropriateness of care:

- Explain why tests, treatments, medications or referrals are necessary
- Use simple, easy-to-understand words
- Speak slowly and clearly, and at a volume they can understand
- Don't use medical jargon or abbreviations
- Share goals for treatment and tell them what to expect in their recovery
- Explore specific barriers to their compliance with treatment, medications and follow-up
- Provide resources like handouts, brochures and diagrams
- Check to see if they understand and agree
- Ask if they have questions or need clarification



## Show respect in these easy ways:

- Ask for their input about illness or care
- Find out about how the issue or illness impacts daily life
- Allow them to work with you to find a solution or treatment plan





## We're here to help

If you have questions or want more information:



Visit [ncqa.org](https://www.ncqa.org).



Call us at **1-866-329-4701 (TTY: 711)**.



### Source:

Hardee JT, Kasper IK. [A clinical communication strategy to enhance effectiveness and CAHPS scores: the ALERT model](#). Accessed October 5, 2020.