



A Lot **CAN** Happen in 15 Minutes!

Patient Experience in the Physician Office

PRC has interviewed hundreds of thousands of patients about the experience of visiting their doctor's office, using both the PRC Loyalty Survey and the Clinician & Group (CG-CAHPS) Survey. Time and time again, our research shows that **these four things** significantly impact how patients feel about the overall experience:

Overall Teamwork Between Doctors, Nurses & Staff



Ease through praise – reduce patient anxiety by referring to your colleagues by name and talking openly about their strengths:

- “Sarah is a great nurse, she’s going to make sure you understand how to take your medications.”
- “Dr. Wilson has seen this condition many times and knows just how to treat it so that you will heal quickly.”

- “Amy, at the front desk, is very familiar with the hospital. She will tell you exactly how to get to the radiology department for your MRI.”

Patient care hand-offs – let the patient know what you have told/will tell the next person who will spend time with them, or even involve the patient in the conversation with that person:

- “As I describe your symptoms to Dr. Wilson, please make sure I include everything you told me.”
- “I will explain to Amy the schedule we need for your follow-up appointments, and then she will make those for you.”
- “Dr. Wilson told me that we need to run a blood test for you, so I am going to draw your blood now.”

Respect for Patient’s Privacy



Provide a space – make the patient feel like they have a space of their own while in your care:

- “Room 2 will be yours. Please come in and sit where you feel comfortable while we talk about what’s going on today.”

• “I am going to quickly go through this registration information in a quiet voice to maintain your privacy; please let me know if you have difficulty hearing me.”

Ask permission to have other staff join you in the room

- “I need Dr. Coffey’s assistance to do this procedure, is it okay if I have him join us in your examination room?”
- “I have a medical student observing me today; is it okay if she joins us while we talk about your condition and how we will treat it?”

Doctor’s Explanation of Medical Condition & Treatment



Speak in common language, 4th-5th grade level – even those with advanced reading skills prefer easy-to-read materials.

Use visual aids – medically-accurate photographs, artwork, models that the patient can touch, all can bridge gaps in language and aid with memory.

Invite the patient to take notes – offer the patient pen and paper; note-taking can help patients better remember information and instructions.

Use teach-back – asking the patient to explain what you just told them gives them another chance to hear the information and gives you the opportunity to confirm that they understood what you explained.



Doctor’s Listening Skills

Position is imperative – eliminate physical barriers between you and the patient:



- Keep yourself at eye level with the patient as much as possible; sit down when you are engaged in dialogue.
- Come into the room and talk with the patient at a comfortable distance for general conversation;

face the patient directly to show that you are present in the conversation and not thinking about the next place you need to go.

- If you need to enter notes on an electronic device while you are with the patient, place the device to the side so it is not between you and the patient.

Let the patient have their say

- Let the patient finish the whole story before you begin your part of the dialogue; in most instances, they will only talk for 2-3 minutes, and key information at the end of the story may not have been revealed if the patient didn’t feel like they had the freedom to talk as long as they wanted.
- Eliminate technological interruptions; leave electronic devices outside the room, if you can.

Pay attention to non-verbal cues; yours and the patient’s

- **Yours:** keep eye contact; be aware of your facial expressions; keep your arms down or resting in front of you; stay still.
- **The patient’s:** watch for signs that may indicate that the patient is not fully engaging in a dialogue with you; you can’t listen if the patient won’t talk. Avoiding eye contact, fidgeting or concerned facial expressions may mean that true communication is not happening and a new approach is needed.

