# Closing the loop (teach back)

# Ensure patients understand the care plan

When you *tell* patients information, how do you know that they understood? Closing the loop is a technique where patients repeat back the information you just provided in their own words. Health coaches can close the loop with their patients using an after-visit summary prepared by the provider.

The script below is an example of how to use the teach back technique. Note that the coach confirms that the patient understands all parts of the physician’s instructions.

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| Coach | You have been trying very hard to improve your diet and exercise, but your A1C has only come down from 10 to 8.5. Dr. Arana thinks you should take your metformin pills twice a day rather than once as day as you are doing now. What do you think? |
| Patient | That’s fine. |
| Coach | How did Dr. Arana want you to take your metformin? |
| Patient | I don’t really remember. Can you remind me? |
| Coach | Instead of once a day as you are doing now, she wanted you to increase it to twice a day, once after breakfast and again after dinner. |
| Patient | That’s right. Okay. |
| Coach | Just to make sure I was clear, can you tell me how you will start taking your metformin tomorrow? |
| Patient | Twice a day rather than once. |
| Coach | And when will you take the metformin? |
| Patient | One pill after breakfast and one pill after dinner. |
| Coach | Great! That’s right. Can I call you in a week to see how you are doing? |
| Patient | Please do. Thank you. |

*Source: AMA. Practice transformation series: health coaching. 2016.*