

## Appendix O: Words to Watch

### Medical Word Examples: Words frequently used by doctors and in health care instructions.

Problem Word	Consider Using
Ailment	Sickness, illness, problem with your health
Benign	Will not cause harm; is not cancer
Condition	How you feel; health problem
Dysfunction	Problem
Inhibitor	Drug that stops something that is bad for you
Intermittent	Off and on
Lesion	Wound; sore; infected patch of skin
Oral	By mouth
Procedure	Something done to treat your problem; operation
Vertigo	Dizziness

### Concept Word Examples: Words used to describe an idea, metaphor, or notion.

Problem Word	Consider Using
Active role	Taking part in
Avoid	Stay away from; do not use (or eat)
Collaborate	Work together
Factor	Other thing
Gauge	Measure; get a better idea of; test (dependent on context)
Intake	What you eat or drink; what goes into your body
Landmark	Very important (adj.) Important event; turning point (n.)
Option	Choice
Referral	Ask you to see another doctor; get a second opinion
Wellness	Good health; feeling good

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# Appendix O: Words to Watch

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## Category Word Examples: Words that describe a group or sub-set, and may be unfamiliar.

Problem Word	Consider Using
Activity	Something you do; something you do often, like driving a car
Adverse (reaction)	Bad
Cognitive	Learning; thinking
Hazardous	Not safe; dangerous
High-intensity exercise	Use an example, such as running
Generic	Product sold without a brand name, like ibuprofen (Advil is brand name)
Noncancerous	Not cancer
Poultry	Chicken, turkey, etc.
Prosthesis	Replacement for a body part, such as a man-made arm
Support	Help with your needs – for money, friendship, or care

## Value Judgment Word Examples: Words that may need an example or visual to convey their meaning with clarity.

Problem Word	Consider Using
Adequate	Enough <i>Example (adequate water): 6-8 glasses a day</i>
Adjust	Fine-tune; change
Cautiously	With care; slowly <i>Example (bleeding): if blood soaks through the bandage</i>
Excessive	Too much <i>Example (bleeding): if blood soaks through the bandage</i>
Increase gradually	Add to <i>Example (exercise): add 5 minutes a week</i>
Moderately	Not too much <i>Example (exercise): so you don't get out of breath</i>
Progressive	Gets worse (or better)
Routinely	Often <i>Example: every week; every other day</i>
Significantly	Enough to make a difference
Temporary	For a limited time; for about (an hour, day...)

Excerpted from National Patient Safety Foundation's Ask Me 3™ Words to Watch Fact Sheet. For full document and additional resources, visit [www.npsf.org](http://www.npsf.org).

# Appendix R: Teach Back Techniques

## Understanding the Medication

Here are some examples of open-ended questions to use when discussing medications with a patient:

- Tell me in your own words how you will take this medicine at home.
- When you get home, how many pills will you take? What time will you take them?
- What are some of the side effects to watch for with this medicine?
- What should you do if the side effects become severe?
- Tell me when you should refill this prescription.
- Please show me how you will use the \_\_\_\_\_ (glucose meter, inhaler, etc.).
- When during the day should you take your medicine?
- Because you have to take several of these pills, what will you do if you miss one of your doses?
- When is the best time for you to monitor your blood sugar level? Show me how you will do that.
- Please tell me how many other medicines you are currently taking and when you take them during the day.

## Cautions

Be aware of, and try to avoid, these common mistakes when using the Teach Back technique:

- Quizzing the patient at the end of the conversation
- Using medical jargon, highly technical terms, or language that you think the patient may have difficulty understanding
- Appearing rushed, annoyed, or bored during these efforts
- Asking patients questions that require only a simple yes or no answer, such as
  - Do you understand?
  - Do you have any questions?
  - Do you know how to use this device?
  - Do you know when to take this medicine?

*Source: The Teach Back Technique: Communicating Effectively with Patients  
(developed as an educational resource by Merck)*