



Dear Dr. Smith,

I have a hearing loss which can have life or death implications if I misunderstand your treatment options or instructions. Because hearing loss is an invisible condition, it is imperative that I self-identify that I have a hearing loss and then provide information on how we can effectively communicate.

Before communicating with me:

1. Reduce background noise and distractions as much as possible.
2. Leave a light on so I can see your face to speech read.
3. Touch me lightly to get my attention.
4. Stand or sit next to me within a 3 feet radius.
5. Make certain that I am looking at your face before you begin speaking and then keep eye contact with me at all times.
6. Make certain that your lips are clearly visible. Sit or stand at eye level, do not put your hand in front of your lips, do not wear a mask, and do not multitask.
7. If I wear hearing aids and glasses, make certain that they are in and on. Also, if I have assistive listening devices, use them.
8. Create opportunities to have a trusted person with normal hearing present during the conversation to assist with understanding and remembering the information.
9. Make sure there is a pad and pencil nearby.

While communicating with me:

1. Speak distinctly and clearly. Do not shout as this will distort the shapes of words on your lips.
2. Use gestures, spelling or writing as needed. Ask me if there is anything else needed to ensure effective communication.
3. Ask me to summarize to help identify misunderstandings.
4. Provide me with a written summary of important points.

I appreciate your efforts and know that this information ensures best practices when it comes to providing equal access medical care to your patients with hearing loss. Equal access is a win-win. It keeps me safe by reducing medical errors and keeps hospitals safe from being penalized by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as a result of excess readmissions based on communication misunderstandings.

Thank you so much for caring!