



## 5 Non-Consumer Ways to Improve Patient Satisfaction

*This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:*  
[How consumerism is changing patient satisfaction](#)

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While consumerism is on the rise, patients don't have control over everything. Here are a few ways that clinics and hospitals can ensure that patients are receiving the best care, even when they have less control over the situation than they might like.

### 1. Reduce anxiety during wait times

Waiting is an inevitable part of the healthcare process, but for patients, the wait can cause more anxiety and trepidation than is necessary.

In one study, patient satisfaction was found to more than double when the waiting room was viewed as "comfortable and pleasant" by patients with the same perceived length of wait. The study also found that patients perceived unoccupied wait times (waiting with nothing else to do, like read or watch TV) as longer and more anxiety-inducing.

Clinics and hospitals should maintain as clean and relaxing of a space as possible and provide patients with distractions to help them during the longest part of their visit.

### 2. Know the patient's story

Another anxiety-reducing factor in the patient experience is connection. Patients who feel that doctors and staff are listening to them and understand their medical background are shown to be more confident in their care.

As one doctor puts it, it's important to "find out about who that patient is, not just their disease."

Asking questions like, "What works for you?" or "What is something that has helped in the past?" can improve patient satisfaction by allowing patients to feel heard and responded to, rather than simply "diagnosed."

### 3. Differentiate your staff

Patients may find it frustrating when they are surrounded by medical professionals but are not sure who to talk to when they have a question or request. This becomes even more frustrating when the patient approaches one employee only to be directed to another.

The easiest way to differentiate your staff is by implementing uniforms or name tags that provide visual cues for the patient, so that they can easily tell who is an RN, who is a PA, who is a physician, and so on.

But additional signs or visual cues may help patients understand where they are supposed to go to ask questions or if they have concerns about their care.

# IntakeQ

## 4. Spend time on patient education

The majority of doctors report that they spend as little as 13 minutes per visit with a patient, even for appointments that stretch out for hours.

While hospitals and medical practices are often busy (doctors can't always spend more time), patients often appreciate extra time and care from other staff, especially if that time is spent on patient education about their condition or care.

If extra time is not possible, giving written documentation for them to take home, like a visit summary or pamphlet, can also settle any unease and help patients feel connected and valued.

## 5. Use the patient's name

While it goes without saying, doctors and office staff should make the effort to use the patient's name when talking about their care.

For front office staff, this may simply be a first name or a last name (to protect patient privacy in front of other people), but personalized care can help the patient feel more at ease in an otherwise scary environment.

Doctors and staff should also wear their name in an easy-to-see location so that patients can also relate names to faces.