

TALK ABOUT “CHATting”

ASSESSING APPROPRIATENESS AND PROVIDING TAILORED PATIENT EDUCATION

The 3 prime questions (3PQs), within the “chat” tool, are open-ended questions used to gather information from the patient to help you assess the appropriateness of all prescriptions (new, refill, adapted) and provide tailored patient education. Instead of asking patients “Do you have any questions?” or “Have you had this before?” you should ask these 3 prime questions to initiate dialogue and gather pertinent information. Even if the patient has taken the medication before, it is important to have a dialogue to ensure that the therapy is still appropriate. The order of the 3PQs does not matter.

TIPS AND SCRIPTS FOR CHATting

- **Tailor the 3PQs** to the patient and the situation.
- **Start with familiar patients** and during quieter periods.
- **Explain to your patient** why you need to ask these questions.

CHAT ABOUT PURPOSE

Pharmacists found that out of 10 patients, one or more provided an unexpected medication purpose when they asked this question.

1. Purpose

What did your prescriber tell you your medication is for?

- **Don’t assume** you already know the answer; however, don’t ask the question if you do know the answer.
- **Be conscious of how you phrase** the question. To avoid appearing unfamiliar with the drug therapy, you may want to inform the patient of the type of drug that was prescribed and that you would like to confirm the purpose of the medication with them.

Guirguis, Lisa and Shao Lee. “Patient assessment and documentation integrated in community practice: chat, check, and chart.” *JAPhA* Volume 52, Issue 6 (2012): 241-251.

Guirguis, Lisa, Shao Lee, and Ravina Sanghera. “Impact of an interactive workshop on community pharmacists’ beliefs toward patient care.” *IJCP* Volume 34, Issue 3 (2012): 460-467.



“I would like to ask you a few questions before I get this medication ready. I will double check your prescription, answer your questions, and give you the information you need so you will be ready to go when the prescription is ready.”

“I noticed you switched blood pressure medications. I would like to ask you a few questions to help make sure this one works for you.”

“I want to ask you a few questions to make sure I don’t go over information you already know.”

“This prescription can be used for a few different things. What are you using it for?”

“What did you see the doctor for?”

“This antibiotic can treat several infections. What type of infection do you have?”

“Remind me again what you’re using this for?”

“To double check, what condition are you treating?”

“I don’t think we’ve ever talked about why you’re taking this.”

CHAT ABOUT DIRECTION

2. Direction

How did your prescriber tell you to take the medication?

- **Don't be offended if the patient answers with "doesn't it say on the bottle?"** Agree and let the patient know that you would like to confirm their understanding of the directions and answer any questions they may have.

"I want to make sure what the prescriber told you matches your prescription. How were you told to take this medication?"

"How are you going to fit this medication into your day?"

"A few patients have difficulty getting this prescription into their schedule. How have you been taking it?"

CHAT ABOUT DIRECTION

3. Monitoring

What did your prescriber tell you to expect?

- **Ask about side effects or expectations.**
- **Ask during refills.** Keep in mind the patient's health will change and the same medication may have different effects over time.
- **Ask close-ended questions** if you want to know something specific.

"How will you know if this medication is working?"

"What side effects will you watch for?"

"Since you started this medicine, what have you noticed?"

"How is your blood pressure?"

"This is the second time you're taking it; how did you find it?"

"Do you have dark stools?" or "Have you had any muscle aches and pains?"



TIPS

When asking the 3 prime questions, remember to tailor the questions to the patient and the situation.