

Tips for Collecting Patient Satisfaction Survey Data



Clinic staff can use these tips to increase participation in patient satisfaction surveys.



1. Keep it short.

Make your survey succinct to help ensure that patients fill it out completely. It's better to ask one or two survey questions and get consistent, complete feedback from patients rather than to ask a lot of questions that patients gloss over or abandon part-way through.

Sample language: *"What is one thing we could have done to make your visit better today?"*

2. Make a personal request.

Take the opportunity to tell patients during their visit (in-person or virtual) that you are actively looking for ways to improve and welcome their constructive suggestions. Explain how important the patient's feedback is and that their feedback is anonymous.

Sample language: *"We are actively trying to improve how our patients experience care at our clinic, and we'd really appreciate it if you could take a couple minutes to let us know how we could improve. Any suggestions or observations you have are helpful. All responses are completely anonymous. Would you help us improve by filling out our survey today? Thank you so much!"*

3. Provide a convenient way to fill out and submit the survey.

Be aware that surveys administered at the time of the visit generally have higher response rates (~75%) compared to surveys administered after the visit (~40%). If you ask patients to complete a paper survey, make sure they have access to a clipboard, pen, and seat, and provide a box or envelope in which they can return the survey anonymously. Alternatively, consider collecting electronic responses using a computer or tablet.

If you ask patients to complete an online survey, send it immediately after the visit while their experiences are fresh. Use a mobile-friendly survey platform, and plan to send at least one reminder email.

Sample language: *"When you've filled it out, you can just drop it in the envelope over there." Or "Click here for the 2-minute feedback survey."*

4. Set a routine and stick to it.

Determine which staff member/role will offer and collect the surveys, and ensure they do it consistently—in the same way, at the same point in the visit, for all patients.

Sample language: *"Please fill out this survey while I work on checking you out. When you're done, you can drop it in the box over there. Thanks!"*

References:

1. Dommeyer, C.J., P. Baum, R.W. Hanna, and K.S. Chapman. (2004). Gathering faculty teaching evaluations by in-class and online surveys: their effects on response rates and evaluations. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 29(5), 611–623.
2. Nulty, D. (June 2008). The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: what can be done? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(3), 301–314.

This publication was supported by the Office of Population Affairs (Grant FPTPA006030) and the Office on Women's Health (Grant ASTWH200090). The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.