

# CAHPS Survey

Use this guide to help make a positive impact on every patient's experience.



Each year, the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) survey gathers feedback about a patient's experience with their health plan and health care providers. This insight is then used to learn more about opportunities to better serve patients and improve their health and quality of life. The following offers more details about the survey and useful ideas to help you and your staff make the most out of every office visit.

## How does CAHPS work?

From February through June, CAHPS surveys are sent to a random sample of health plan members and participation is voluntary. The surveys are administered by vendors certified by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

## What is the value of the CAHPS survey?

UnitedHealthcare® uses the survey results to work with physicians and health care partners to help drive quality improvements and help enhance the patient experience.

## Here are some CAHPS questions specifically tied to a patient's experience with their care provider:

### Annual Flu Vaccine

- Have you had a flu shot?

### Getting Needed Care

How would you rate your ease and timeliness of:

- Getting appointments with specialists?
- Getting the care, tests or treatment you needed?

### Getting Appointments and Care Quickly

How often have you...

- Gotten urgent care as soon as needed?
- Gotten appointments at your doctor's office?
- Been seen within 15 minutes of your appointment time?

### Care Coordination

Has your personal doctor or doctor's office...

- Managed your care among different providers and services to your satisfaction?

### Overall Ratings

On a scale from 0 to 10, how would you rate your...

- Overall health care?
- Personal doctor?
- Specialist seen most often?

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## Tips to Help Improve the Patient Experience.

### 1. Make a personal connection.

Everyone in your office has an important role to play in creating a great health care experience for your patients. A smile at the front desk or a quick “How are you doing?” can make a big difference.

### 2. Fight the flu.

Ask patients if they’ve gotten their flu vaccine. If they haven’t, explain the benefits and work on a plan to help them get it.

### 3. Make it easy.

To help your patients get the care they need, consider extending office hours and providing multiple services during a single visit. Verify their contact information and submit prior authorizations when they’re in the office, if possible.

### 4. Pick the right care provider.

Help patients get care more quickly by connecting them with the best care provider for their needs at that time, whether it’s a doctor, a nurse or a physician’s assistant.

### 5. Watch the wait times.

Shorten wait times by limiting the number of same-time appointments. Approach a waiting patient every 10 minutes or so to touch base and let them know they haven’t been forgotten.

### 6. Be a good host.

When a patient arrives, make sure you greet them. If there’s a long wait, apologize and explain the reason for the delay. Provide options that may include rescheduling. Remember the customer service you appreciate — treat each patient the way you’d like a loved one to be treated.

### 7. Get the complete picture.

Ask your patients to sign an authorization form so you can get their medical records from other clinics or care providers. Remind them to bring in health care paperwork from other specialists, as well as all medications and over-the-counter drugs.

### 8. Explain recommended tests and pass along results promptly.

Thoroughly explain any recommended tests that your patient needs. Let them know when and how you’ll share their results. When you discuss results, be sure to flag any follow-up care that’s needed. If there are any delays in getting the results, proactively let your patient know.

### 9. Go the extra mile.

Whatever your role, make an extra effort to help every patient get the care and support they need. A patient’s experience can be improved when you greet them warmly, listen to their questions, provide clear answers and help them with next steps. It can be that simple.

**Contact us to learn more.** For more information about the CAHPS survey, contact your UnitedHealthcare representative or visit [cahps.ahrq.gov](https://cahps.ahrq.gov).