

# Low Patient Survey Scores Happen

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Low patient survey scores happen when patients don't get what they want, right? Wrong!

There's an old belief continuing to make the rounds among physicians who conduct patient satisfaction surveys, and it goes like this: "If I don't give my patients what they want (read narcotics or antibiotics), they'll rate me low on the survey."

As a company that conducts patient satisfaction surveys and shadow coaches low-scoring physicians, we can assure you the notion that the only way to avoid poor scores is to "give the lady what she wants" is baseless.

Our research shows patients return to, refer others to, and rate highly those physicians they like. But even more importantly, they do the same to doctors they believe like them.

In fact, patients switch providers or score them low on surveys when those providers come across as insensitive, impersonal, disinterested or uncaring.

Simple strategies for conveying that the doctor likes the patient include:

- Using the patient's name when entering the exam room,
- Apologizing for delays and thanking the patient for waiting,
- Commenting on a bit of information the patient shared previously (vacation, hobby, etc.),
- Sitting down as soon as possible to convey you're not rushed,
- Making good eye contact or explaining what you're doing on the computer,
- Responding empathetically to the chief complaint,
- Using non-technical language suitable for laypeople, and
- On departure saying "Take care" and patting the patient on the shoulder.

It's vital that patients believe their doctors like them and want what's in their best interest.

It's simple: physicians who have their patients' trust and confidence don't see satisfaction scores in the cellar.

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