

The Right Way to Introduce Yourself to Patients

When you meet a patient, introduce yourself. The way you introduce yourself is important. Your introduction forms the basis of your patient-provider relationship. Your words and your tone of voice, and your body language are important. It's estimated [...] that about 85% of communication between healthcare workers and patients is mostly nonverbal. Being friendly, upbeat, and empathetic is essential when interacting with patients.

Here are some tips for a great personal introduction.

Check ✓ this box
if you think this is
good advice for
you in your job.

1. **Start with a greeting** When you enter a patient's room, if the patient is awake and looks up at you, say *hello, good morning, good afternoon, or good evening*.
2. **Make eye contact and shake their hand.** Making eye contact and shaking their hand helps you come across as friendly and personable.
3. **Address them by a title.** Address your patients as "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Ms.," and other polite titles, unless they ask you to address them by their first name.
4. **Make sure nonverbal communication is positive.** Your facial expressions, body posture, and degree of eye contact send out social signals. Sit or stand in a position where you're close to being eye to eye with the patient. Lean slightly toward them and avoid crossing your arms or legs.
5. **Use the right tone of voice.** Make sure your tone comes across as interested, polite, and empathetic. Speak clearly, at a pace that is neither too fast nor too slow. Avoid using too much jargon.
6. **Explain why you're there.** It's helpful for the patient to understand why you're seeing them. For example, "I've come to take your blood pressure today." or "I've come to clean your room for you."
7. **Ask the patient if they have any questions.** Patients are sometimes hesitant to actively ask questions or bring up their concerns. Inviting them to do so can encourage them to open up. You can ask, "Do you have any questions?"
8. **Ask if they need anything else.** Before you leave, ask the patient if there's anything else they need from you. Again, they may hesitate to bring it up on their own. Ask, "Can I do anything else for you?"
9. **Say thank you and explain what will happen next.** Saying "thank you" before you leave is only polite. You should also explain what's going to happen next. For example, "I'll see you tomorrow." or "I think your lunch will be here soon."