

AIDET®: A Protocol for Long-term Success in Urgent Care



AIDET® stands for Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation and Thank You and is a tool for improving patient communication in urgent care settings.

Unlike medical specialists who typically get their patients through referrals from other physicians, urgent care centers appeal directly to consumer decision makers through high-visibility retail locations with strong signage, adjacencies to popular grocery and big box retailers, conventional advertising like radio and direct mail, and Internet SEO/SEM efforts. Because self-triaging consumers typically choose urgent care on their own, it's critical for a center's long term success that patients have the quality of experience that not only leads them to return to the center for services themselves, but to tell others to do likewise. A center simply cannot be successful without loyal, repeat patients who spread positive word-of-mouth in the community.

One mechanism we have learned from our clients in increasing patient satisfaction is AIDET®, which is a framework for urgent care staff to communicate with patients and each other. AIDET® stands for Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation and Thank You:

Acknowledge: Whenever a provider or a staff member first encounters a patient, he/she should greet the patient with a smile and, if possible, by name. *"Good morning Mr. Ayers, welcome to our urgent care center."*

Introduce: Tell the patient who you are and how you are going to help them. *"My name is Joni and I am the medical assistant who will be measuring your vitals and asking you a few questions about your medical history and what brought you in today."*

Duration: Because time spent waiting is the most frequent complaint of urgent care patients, it's important to set an expectation as to when the patient can expect to see the doctor, both when the patient arrives and with updates whenever that wait time changes. *"Dr. Smith is finishing up with another patient and he wanted me let you know it should just be a couple more minutes. We should still get you out of here by 10 o'clock. While you're waiting can I offer you a coffee or bottled water?"*

Explanation: Patients want to be engaged in the care they are receiving and thus it's important for a provider and/or staff member to explain to the patient what he/she is doing, how the procedure works, and what the next steps are. *"For your pre-employment drug screening today, this is a chain of custody form that is the paper trail to assure the test sample is not tampered with. I am removing the bar-coded stickers from the form to attach to your sample, here. You will need to sign the form and initial here..."*

Thank You: When a patient chooses one urgent care center over other treatment venues in the community, it's important to thank the patient for their patronage and invite them back the next time they have an urgent care need. *"Thank you for stopping in today. You should be feeling better in the next couple of days, but if not, or if you have any questions...please don't hesitate to call."*

When used properly, AIDET® can give an urgent care center's providers and staff the guidance needed to effectively address any problems that occur during a patient's visit. While the acronym is easy to remember, centers find the greatest success when training via role-playing exercises in which providers and staff mimic patient interactions to demonstrate how AIDET® is applied in the day-to-day workflow.

Practice Velocity is committed to helping urgent care centers succeed with its award-winning electronic medical record (EMR) that incorporates "best practice" processes that assure patients are seen quickly, that documentation is thorough, and that coding is optimized according to the documentation. Using *Chartlet*, the most frequent urgent care presentations can be charted in under a minute, thus maximizing the number of patients a provider can see each hour and reducing patient time in center. A fully integrated practice management solution assures seamless billing, maximizing reimbursement and collections.

The AIDET® communication framework is a registered trademark of Studer Group.

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