



## TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PATIENTS WHILE WEARING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Patients will have difficulty understanding you when you are speaking through a protective mask. Here are some tips to help bridge gaps in communication:

### Define Yes And No Signals

- Establish a clear YES/NO signal (ex: head nod/shake, thumb up/closed fist, eye blink/eyes squeezed tight, look up/eyes shut).
- Post a sign so all providers know the YES/NO signal.
- Confirm the patient's response – ask if you got it right.

### Establish Connection

- Get the patient's attention by touching shoulder or arm and locking eyes.

### Make It Easy To Be Heard

- Speak loudly, slowly and clearly.
- Speak in simple phrases, like a television announcer. Repeat important words.

### Use Visuals While You Talk

- Point and gesture.
- Write key words or phrases with bullet points on a paper.
- Point to pictures or phrases on a communication board while asking questions about needs or symptoms.



Improving Communication with Non-Speaking ICU Patients. (M. Happ, PI).  
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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF NURSING

Helene Fuld Health Trust National Institute for  
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