Many patients diagnosed with cancer receive chemotherapy. Oncology nurses are responsible for educating patients prior to the chemotherapy experience. Studies have examined what topics should be covered for such patients and how education should be delivered, but little literature exists regarding how to help nurses organize the data and perform education. This article examines how a community oncology practice developed a checklist to assist oncology nurses in organizing and delivering chemotherapy education to patients. Principles of adult education are reviewed briefly. The principles can aid nurses in understanding how adult patients learn and how sessions can be most effective.

At a Glance

✦ Adult learning is task or problem oriented and is motivated by internal pressures.
✦ Using the principles of adult learning, nurses can alter presentation to meet the needs of patients.
✦ A checklist can ensure completeness and consistency of educational sessions and provide a means of documenting that education was conducted, in addition to what was reviewed and discussed.

Funding the complex information that must be relayed to patients prior to chemotherapy. Learning plans sometimes are based on academic models, but adults do not always learn best under such models.

However, nurses may not be aware of certain adult-learning principles when educating their patients. Padberg and Padberg (1990) reviewed five years of clinical nursing literature and found very little mention of the use of instructional theory. They found that most journals focused only on what clinical information should be provided to patients. Although detailing clinical information that is important to patients is critical, understanding