



# 10 ESSENTIAL TIPS ---for---

## Reducing wait times

1. Raise awareness of the problem by sharing data about the department's wait times and patient satisfaction scores with unit-based team members.
  2. Help your co-workers understand it is everyone's responsibility to be attentive to members who have been waiting for long periods of time—and recognize co-workers who do this well.
  3. Inform patients of delays by having the receptionist let them know if a physician is running late.
  4. Provide members and patients who have been waiting for extended periods of time with individual attention and updated information by “rounding” in the waiting area.
  5. Put a focus on wait times by posting patient arrival times on exam room doors or having pharmacists call out the wait time in the pharmacy.
  6. Utilize an “all hands on deck” approach so when wait times hit a certain threshold, all available staff members drop what they're doing and help reduce long lines.
  7. Consider shifting employees' schedules to ensure adequate staffing during peak times or to prevent the department getting off to a slow start in the morning.\*
  8. Promote alternatives to in-person visits such as email or phone consultations with physicians and prescription refills by mail.
  9. Rethink the division of labor within the department if part of what is behind long wait times is that employees in only one job category are allowed to do a particular task.\*
  10. Create a quiet zone in pharmacies to reduce distractions for the primary filling technician.
- \* Consult with local unions to ensure proposed changes are in line with the contracts.

These practices are gleaned from reporting done by LMP Communications across Kaiser Permanente regions and from data entered into UBT Tracker. They are intended not as a comprehensive or definitive list but as a starting point for team discussions and brainstorming. Go to [LMPartnership.org/tentips](https://lmpartnership.org/tentips) for links to stories and tools to help you and your team with reducing wait times.

**Who hasn't experienced the frustration of a long wait to get a prescription filled or a lab test done or to see a physician who's running behind schedule? To help keep KP patients and members happy, many unit-based teams are tackling this issue and finding ways to reduce wait times.**