

On the Job English

# English for **MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS**

●  
Practical English  
Communication Skills for  
General Medical Professionals



MP3

CARROT HOUSE

# 01

## Taking a History of Present Illness

### Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

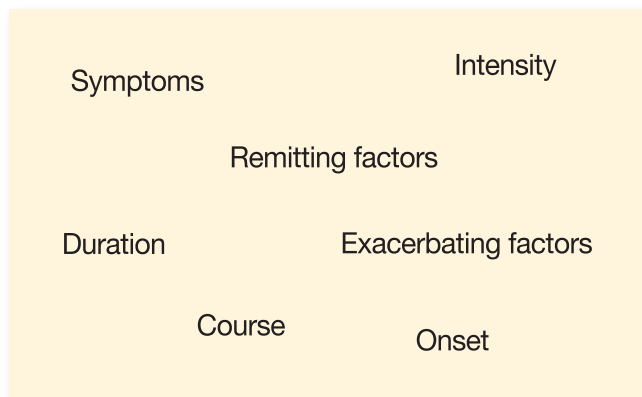
- Ask a patient about their present complaint.
- Ask a patient about their pain.

### WARM UP

1 Please discuss the following questions:

- What are some symptoms of gastritis?
- What are some symptoms of headaches?

2 Match the correct word to each mnemonic and fill in the blanks.



Mnemonics for HPI : “CODIERS”

C \_\_\_\_\_  
O \_\_\_\_\_  
D \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_  
E \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_  
S \_\_\_\_\_

3 How would you collect information from your patient when taking an HPI? Match each question with the corresponding term.

- |                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Chief complaint      | • | a. What lessens the pain?  |
| Course               | • | b. How long have you been experiencing this pain?                      |
| Onset                | • | c. When did the pain begin?  |
| Duration             | • | d. Is the pain getting better, worse, or has it stayed the same?       |
| Intensity            | • | e. What is your medical concern or problem?                            |
| Exacerbating factors | • | f. What is the pain like?  |
| Remitting factors    | • | g. What makes the pain worse?  |
| Symptoms             | • | h. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the worst, how bad is the pain? |

## EXPRESSIONS

- 1 You have a 32-year-old female patient with chest pain. Read the questions asked by the doctor and match them with the appropriate response.

### Doctor says...

1. What brings you in today?
2. Have you taken any medications?
3. When did the pain first start?
4. Are there any other symptoms associated with your chest pain?
5. How would you describe the pain in your chest?
6. Have you experienced similar chest pain before?
7. Can you point to the area of your chest where it hurts?
8. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the worst, how bad is the pain?

a \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Patient says...

- a. I have a pain in my chest.
- b. Last night. I was relaxing at home and it just started.
- c. I haven't ever felt this sort of pain before.
- d. I feel pressure on my chest and I feel like I am about to pass out.
- e. It was a 9 but right now it is about a 7.
- f. It started around my breastbone, and then it spread to both sides of my chest, but mostly to the left side.
- g. I took nitroglycerine, but it didn't do anything.
- h. Any other problems? Well, I'm also having difficulty breathing.

- 2 Complete the dialogue below with the expressions from the box.

- make them worse
- How long have ... been going on
- spread to
- Have you tried
- On a scale of 1 to 10
- brings ... in
- describe the pain

**Doctor** What 1 \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ today?

**Patient** Well, doctor, lately I have had really horrible headaches.

**Doctor** 2 \_\_\_\_\_ your headaches \_\_\_\_\_?

**Patient** I get headaches occasionally, but for the last couple of months they have been really bad.

**Doctor** Could you 3 \_\_\_\_\_?

**Patient** Yes, it is a throbbing pain on the right side of my head.

**Doctor** 4 \_\_\_\_\_ with 10 being the worst, how bad are they?

**Patient** It ranges between an 8 and a 10. They even wake me up at night.

**Doctor** Does anything 5 \_\_\_\_\_?

**Patient** I like to take spinning classes, but lately they have been increasing the pain.

**Doctor** I see. 6 \_\_\_\_\_ any medications?

**Patient** I've taken Tylenol, but it hasn't helped.

**Doctor** Do your headaches 7 \_\_\_\_\_ the left side of your head?

**Patient** No, I don't think so. The pain stays on the right side.



## VOCABULARY

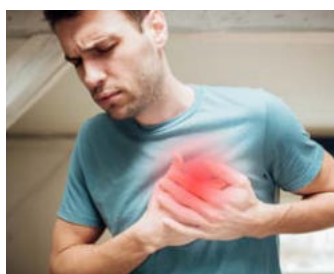
1 Please review the terms below. Draw lines to match each word to the correct definition.

1 How would patients describe abdominal pain?



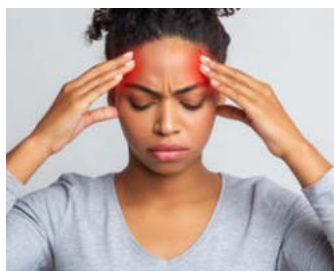
- |         |   |   |
|---------|---|---|
| sharp   | • | a. a feeling as if a part of the body is hot                                  |
| burning | • | b. a harsher pain which is generally more localized in a specific place       |
| nagging | • | c. a pain that continues for a long time and is difficult to decrease or stop |

2 How would patients describe chest pain?



- |                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| pressure-like   | • | a. a feeling of something weighing down on you  |
| stabbing        | • | b. a pain or discomfort when an affected area is touched                                    |
| tender to touch | • | c. a feeling like a pointed object is stabbing the chest; can also be described as piercing |

3 How would patients describe a headache?

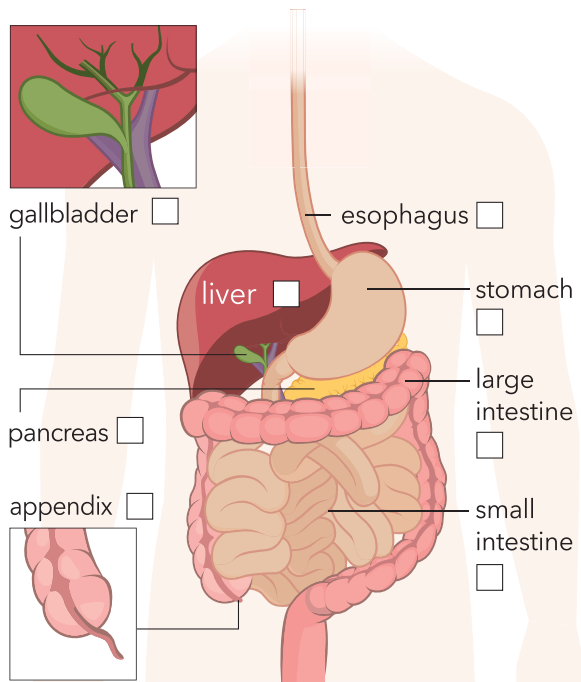


- |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| throbbing | • | a. used to describe chronic or persistent pain, a deep ache felt in an area |
| squeezing | • | b. a feeling as if a band is tightening around the head                     |
| dull      | • | c. a series of regular, painful movements                                   |

2 Read the sentences below and complete them with words from 1.

- 1 I've got a \_\_\_\_\_ pain in my abdomen. It's been there for a long time and it won't go away.
- 2 I have a chest pain that feels \_\_\_\_\_. It feels like an elephant is sitting on my chest.
- 3 I have a \_\_\_\_\_ headache. I feel a pounding and somewhat rhythmic pain.

3 Match the organs with the definitions (A-H).



- A. the muscular tube that carries food and liquids from the mouth to the stomach
- B. the organ that plays an essential role in converting the food we eat into fuel for the body's cells
- C. the organ that makes bile which helps carry away waste and break down fats in the small intestine during digestion
- D. the organ that starts the digestive process when food arrives here
- E. the organ that holds the digestive fluid called bile
- F. also called the colon; part of the final stages of digestion
- G. the organ that helps to further digest food coming from the stomach and absorbs most of the nutrients from what we eat and drink
- H. the organ which is located in the right lower abdomen; the removal of this organ causes no observable health problems

REVIEW

Review the patient's complaint and complete the medical chart.

I have pain in the right side of my belly. It feels like something is stabbing me. I've never had this kind of pain before. It has lasted for about a week now.



**Patient Name:**  
**Jane M. Klein, 41-yr-old, F**

Chief complaint:

\_\_\_\_\_

History of present illness:

\_\_\_\_\_

Past medical history:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

⋮

## LISTENING

1  Listen to the conversation between a doctor and a patient.

2 Read the following statements and mark them as true (T) or false (F).

- 1 Mrs. Smith is describing her present illness. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 The doctor is only asking CODIERS questions. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 The doctor is using empathic communication skills. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Mrs. Smith is talking about her past medical history. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 The doctor is asking about related symptoms. \_\_\_\_\_

3  Listen again and choose the correct answers.

- 1 What other symptoms has Mrs. Smith had?
  - a. vomiting
  - b. fever
  - c. coughing
  - d. diarrhea
- 2 What is the name of the medication she has tried?
  - a. Tylenol
  - b. DayQuil
  - c. Tums
  - d. Synthroid
- 3 Which question does the doctor **NOT** ask Mrs. Smith?
  - a. When did the pain first start?
  - b. Have you had any similar symptoms in the past?
  - c. Where does it hurt in your belly?
  - d. What food have you been eating?

## LANGUAGE POINT

- 1 Check how to use the expressions below and review the example sentences.

### has / have (not) + Past Participle

- 1 used to talk about actions that occurred in the past and have continued into the present

*e.g. I have had this pain since last week*

*e.g. I haven't felt this pain until now.*

- 2 used to ask about experiences we have had in our lifetime

*e.g. Have you ever had belly pain like this before?*

**Note** usually used with “how long”, “before”, “since” or “for.”

*e.g. How long have you been taking Tylenol?*

- 2 Fill in the blanks using the correct form of the verbs in the brackets.

- 1 Have you \_\_\_\_\_ aspirin to reduce your pain? (try)
- 2 I haven't \_\_\_\_\_ surgery before. (have)
- 3 How long have you been \_\_\_\_\_ this medication? (take)

## SPEAKING PRACTICE

- 1 With a partner, act out the roles below by using the expressions from Language Point. Then, switch roles.

### Student A

You are the doctor. Ask Student B about:

- his or her present illness
- how long the pain has been occurring
- what medication he or she has taken

### Student B

You are the patient. Talk to Student A about your pain and answer his or her questions.

- 2  Below are some commonly mispronounced words. Listen carefully and repeat them out loud.

- 1 esophagus [ih-**sof**-uh-guhs]
- 2 duodenum [doo-uh-**dee**-nuhm]
- 3 angina [**an**-juh-nuh]
- 4 abdomen [**ab**-duh-muhn]