

Taking a patient's medication history

by Marie McCullagh & Ros Wright

NURSING LESSONS TRANSCRIPT

Nurse Reed is preparing to administer Warfarin to Ms Dorothy Wyatt, 45, who has been admitted with a suspected stroke.

Transcript: Part 1

Nurse: Ms Wyatt?

Ms Wyatt: Yes.

Nurse: I'm Nurse Reed and I'm here to give you your medication. Is that OK?

Ms Wyatt: That's fine.

Nurse: Your doctor has prescribed Coumadin for you, to help thin your blood. You might know it as Warfarin - it's the most commonly used drug for thinning the blood.

Ms W: Yes, er, I think they're the tablets that my father takes for his heart condition.

Nurse: Yes, Warfarin is usually taken in tablet form, but in your case the doctor has prescribed an injection, to get it working more quickly.

Ms W: OK.

Nurse: Now, before I can give you the injection I need to ask you a few questions. Is that alright?

Ms W: That's fine.

Nurse: OK. Are you on any medication at the moment?

Ms W: No. I'm not taking anything.

Nurse: And are you allergic to any medicines?

Ms W: Not as far as I know.

Nurse: Are you taking any oral contraceptives?

Ms W: No.

Nurse: Can I ask you if you might be pregnant?

Ms W: No. Definitely not.

Nurse: Fine. And are you taking any herbal supplements? By that I mean anything from a health shop.

Ms W: Yes. I'm taking Saw Palmetto. I've got polycystic ovary syndrome and it calms down the symptoms.

Nurse: That's fine. Warfarin can cause problems if it's taken with some herbal supplements, but Saw Palmetto isn't one of them. Any other supplements?

Ms W: Sometimes I take a tonic which has ginseng in it.

Nurse: Have you taken it in the last few days?

Ms W: No. Not for a couple of weeks.

Nurse: That's fine; I suggest you keep off it for now. The reason I'm asking is because there are quite a few things which can cause side effects if they're taken at the same time as Warfarin. Apparently, even green tea can interact with it sometimes, though it hasn't been confirmed yet.

Ms W: Well, I think I'll avoid it for the moment, just to be on the safe side.



Taking a patient's medication history
by Marie McCullagh & Ros Wright

Nurse: So just to go over what you've said: you're not on any medication at the moment, you're not allergic to anything, not pregnant or taking oral contraceptives and the only supplement you're taking is Saw Palmetto.

Ms W: Yes, that's right.

Nurse: Once I've given you the injection you will need to start taking it in tablet form, on a daily basis for the next four weeks.

Ms W: I see.

Part II

Nurse: We will have you in again then for a blood test to see whether you will need to continue with it or not.

Ms W: Mmmm.

Nurse: Is that a problem?

Ms W: Not coming in, no. I'm just worried that I will have to keep on taking the tablets, like my Dad.

Nurse: Why is that?

Ms W: Well, he just doesn't like taking them. And they give him nosebleeds. Quite bad ones.

Nurse: Nosebleeds can be a side effect of Warfarin. Passing blood in your urine or faeces is another and sometimes there can be bruising as well. Has your Dad been to the doctor?

Ms W: Yes. He said if he got them regularly he would change him to another drug. But they don't happen too often.

Nurse: So he only gets them occasionally. Every couple of months or so?

Ms W: Yes. But they are pretty bad when they happen.

Nurse: Well, you both need to keep an eye on them. Let the doctor know how you're getting on with them. If you're not happy, there are other drugs we can try.

Ms W: OK.

Nurse: OK. Can I ask you to roll up your sleeve please and make a fist for me?

Taking a patient's medication history

by Marie McCullagh & Ros Wright

A Professional usage

1. Before you listen, in the table below, note the points you think important for a nurse to check with the patient before administering the medication.

Check	Patient response	Rationale
<i>Patient's temperature</i>		

2. Now listen to Part I and check, completing the 'Patient response' section in your table.
3. Write a rationale for each point. Then, with your partner, discuss the importance of each.
4. Listen to Part II and answer these questions about the medication:
- What are the side effects?
 - What advice does the nurse give the patient?
5. How appropriate do you think is it to ask this particular patient about pregnancy?
6. Read through the dialogue and find out what language the nurse uses to deal with this potentially sensitive issue?

B Colloquial language

1. Read through the dialogue and find expressions that mean:

a. to continue	b. to avoid	c. to watch carefully
----------------	-------------	-----------------------

N.B. Each expression uses the same verb.

2. Use a good dictionary to find five more expressions using the same verb, writing an example sentence or definition for each.
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Taking a patient's medication history by Marie McCullagh & Ros Wright

C Communication focus

1. Read this section from the dialogue and decide why the nurse employs the verb 'can'.
Nurse: Nosebleeds can be a side effect of Warfarin. Passing blood in your urine or faeces is another and sometimes there can be bruising as well.
2. What other verb forms are also possible in this case?
3. Suggest a follow up comment that the nurse might use to try and reassure the patient about side effects.

D Handover

With a partner, develop a possible Medication History for Ms Wyatt's father, who Ms Wyatt describes in Part II.

Bear in mind the following: patient's gender, age, possible drug/food allergies, other medications, etc.

Then role-play a dialogue in which the nurse takes Mr Wyatt's medication history, prior to administering the Warfarin.

Taking a patient's medication history

by Marie McCullagh & Ros Wright

ANSWER KEY

A Professional usage

1. Check	2. Patient response	3. Rationale
Patient's temperature / blood pressure	Not mentioned	Side effects can affect blood pressure
Height and weight	Not mentioned	Some drug dosages are calculated on body mass
Other medications	None	Interactions can occur with combinations of certain drugs and other medications
Pregnancy	No	Asked of all women of child-bearing age
Allergies	She doesn't think so	Patient may be suffering from allergies to some drugs
Alternative therapies/medicine	Saw Palmetto, ginseng tonic	Interactions can occur with combinations of certain alternative medications
General fitness	Not mentioned	The general fitness of a patient can influence decisions about routes of drug administration
Dosage and timing	Injection, then tablet form, once a day for four weeks	These need to be included on the prescription
Diet	Not mentioned	Certain food can react negatively with some drugs

- Bruising, nosebleeds, blood in the urine and faeces. Drinking green tea can also have a negative reaction with Warfarin.
 - She suggests the patient surveys her father's as well as her own use of Warfarin and returns to see a doctor if necessary.
- All female patients of child-bearing age will be asked this question. However it may well be a delicate subject.
- Can I ask if you might be pregnant?* This is a non-threatening, non-judgemental way of broaching the issue. The nurse asks for permission first and then uses the model 'might' to further soften the question.

B Colloquial language

- keep on doing something
 - keep off something
 - keep an eye on someone
- Possible examples are:
keep away from / keep down / keep one's spirits up / keep one's head / keep one's head above water / keep to / keep up with

C Communication focus

- The nurse wants to indicate possibility as opposed to something definite. Side effects are dependent on various factors, including age / gender / body mass / general health / diet, etc. and not every patient experiences the same side effects or even to the same degree.

Side effects	<i>are possible. are a possibility. may occur/happen. might occur/happen. could/could be ...</i>
Nosebleeds	<i>are a possible side effect. may occur/happen. might occur/happen. could/could be ...</i>
Possible side effects	<i>you may experience are ... might include ..., ... could/could be ...</i>

It is not uncommon for people to suffer certain side effects such as ...

- These side effects can happen but they're not common. / They will wear off after a short time.*

Taking a patient's medication history

by Marie McCullagh & Ros Wright

ANSWER KEY

D Handover

Medication History

If your learners are having difficulty creating their own profile for this patient, you may want to suggest the following:

		Comments
Patient's temperature / blood pressure	<i>For you to add</i>	
Height and weight	1m 71 / 85kilos	
Other medications	Ibrubafen	Occasional use for back pain
Pregnancy	N/A	
Allergies	dust mite, pollen, animal fur / no allergies to medication	
Alternative therapies / medicine	none	Strongly disagrees with this form of medicine. Doesn't understand his daughter's 'obsession' with alternative medicine.
General fitness	'Good for his age'. Occasional back pain	Swims once/twice a week
Diet	Low salt	At the recommendation of his doctor