

MEDICAL TERMS FOR PATIENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

PATIENTS: HOW TO DESCRIBE COMMON MEDICAL PROBLEMS

To have an **abnormal growth** – something that is not normal is growing in or on your body

To suffer from **allergies / to be allergic to** something: An adverse reaction to a food, medication or environmental substance.

To have **asthma** – a respiratory condition, causing difficulty in breathing.

To have /get **chicken pox** – varicella.

To explain your **family history** – the medical background of a person's family.

To have **high blood pressure** – when the pressure of the blood in the veins is higher than it should be (also known as 'hypertension').

To have **high temperature/ a fever** – to feel hotter than usual.

To have / get **measles** – an infectious disease causing fever and a red rash.

To feel **nauseous** / sick – to feel like you want to vomit.

To have a **rash** – a red irritation of the skin.

To have **spots** appeared on your skin – to have small raised bumps in the skin.

To **vomit** / to be sick/ to **throw up** – these all mean 'to vomit.'

PROFESSIONALS: HOW TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT COMMON MEDICAL PROBLEMS

To do an **allergy** test.

To do/run a **biopsy** for an abnormal growth – to test a person's tissue.

To take someone's **blood pressure** – to check their blood pressure with a machine.

To do a **blood test** – to take blood from a person.

To check someone's **breathing**.

To do a **check-up** – this is a revision for your body.

To check someone's **heartbeat**.

To take someone's **temperature**.

To **refer** a patient to a specialist.

To run some **tests** – to take samples from a person and send them to a laboratory.

To do an **x-ray** – a radiography.

PATIENTS: HOW TO EXPLAIN SENSATIONS

Here you can use the body part + '**ache**' to describe any type of internal pain which is not extremely strong. For example:

I have:

- backache
- a headache
- a stomach ache

If the pain is on the surface, we use the term '**sore**' + body part. For example:

I have:

- a sore throat
- a sore finger
- a sore knee

For limbs such as arms and legs you would use the verb '**to hurt**'. This is because arm and leg pain are usually caused by broken bones or damaged muscles and so the pain is stronger. For example:

'My wrist hurts. I think it's broken.'

'My ankle hurts. I think I've twisted it.'

Other ways to talk about sensations:

To feel **numb**/ to have numbness – this is when you can't feel anything.

To have a **tingling** sensation – this is when you have an uncomfortable prickling sensation when you have a trapped nerve. Another way to describe this is 'to have **pins and needles**.'

To be **painful** – If something is causing you a lot of pain then it is 'painful.' Another way to describe this is to say 'I am in **agony**' or 'my [body part] is **killing** me.'

PROFESSIONALS: HOW TO DIAGNOSE SENSATIONS

To **dislocate** – to disturb the normal position in a bone or joint

To **break** a bone.

To **fracture** a bone -a less serious break in a bone

To **pull** a muscle – to strain a muscle

To **sprain**/ to twist an ankle – an injury to the ligaments of the leg or foot

To **swell** – when a body part becomes larger in size, as a result of an accumulation of fluid.

Remember 'to swell' is an irregular verb. It is: 'to swell, swelled swollen,' for example, 'to have a **swollen** ankle.'

TREATMENTS

To **bandage** an arm/leg – to wrap material bandages around a limb.

To walk with **crutches** – sticks to help a person with an injured leg or foot walk.

To put an arm or leg in **plaster** – When a hard substance is wrapped around a patient's limb to stop it moving.

To put an arm in a **sling** – a piece of material, tied around the shoulder to support an injured arm or hand.

PATIENTS: HOW TO EXPLAIN DISORIENTATION

To feel **dizzy**, light-headed – to feel disorientated like you are going to lose consciousness.

To **faint**, to black out – to lose consciousness.

PROFESSIONALS: PHARMACY VOCABULARY

Dosage – the amount of medicine a patient can take safely at one time

Drowsy – medicine which makes a patient feel sleepy. The opposite is 'non-drowsy'. For example, 'Is this medicine drowsy or non-drowsy?'

Eye drops – medicine taken through the eyes

Oral medicine – medicine taken through the mouth

Over-the-counter medicine – medicine that a patient can buy without a prescription.

Painkillers – common term for aspirin and ibuprofen which stop pain.

Prescription medicine – medicine that can only be prescribed by a doctor.

To cause **side effects** – a secondary, typically undesirable effect of a drug or medical treatment.

Topical medicine – medicine taken by rubbing it on the skin