

## 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

**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?

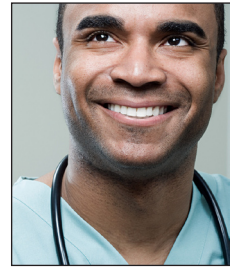
**Ms W:** Sometimes I take a tonic which has ginseng in it.

**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.



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**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?

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### A Comprehension check

1. As you listen, write T (true) or F (false) next to the statements below.
- The nurse already knows which drug the patient has been prescribed.
  - The patient has been prescribed a drug to thin her blood.
  - The patient is not taking any herbal supplements.
  - It has been reported that Warfarin can interact with green tea.
  - Nosebleeds are a side effect of Warfarin.
  - The patient is happy to go on taking the drug.

### B Colloquial language

1. A number of phrasal verbs and colloquial expressions are used in the dialogue. Match the phrases to the definition.

calms down	how you are finding/managing (taking a drug)
keep off	reduces (the symptoms of)
keep on	be cautious
getting on with	avoid taking
be on the safe side	check regularly
keep an eye on	continue

### C Communication focus

The sentences and phrases below are spoken by the nurse in the dialogue. Listen to the dialogue and fill in the blanks.

- Nurse: The \_\_\_\_ I'm asking ...
- Nurse: Is that a \_\_\_\_?
- Nurse: By \_\_\_\_ I mean ...
- Nurse: So, he only gets \_\_\_\_ occasionally?
- Nurse: Is \_\_\_\_ alright?
- Nurse: So, just to go over \_\_\_\_ you've said ...

Put the completed sentences and phrases into the appropriate column, according to the communication strategy used. The first one is done for you.

The nurse is checking information given by the patient	The nurse is checking whether the patient has understood
The reason I'm asking.	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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### D Follow-up

With a partner, take it in turns to play the nurse and the patient. Use the phrases from the dialogue and from *C Communication focus* where possible.

Patient 1	Patient 2
Currently taking Prozac for stress / depression	Currently prescribed Actrapid for diabetes
Takes two capsules a day	Injects 10ml after every meal
Has been taking it for over a year	Has been taking it for three years
Taking ginseng	Doesn't take any supplements
Allergic to Penicillin	Allergic to local anaesthetic

#### Nurse

You are about to administer some medication to the patient. You will need to check whether the patient is taking any medication or herbal supplements and if they are what it is for. If they are taking anything you will need to find out how much of it they are taking and how long they have been taking it for. You will also need to find out if they are allergic to anything.

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### ANSWER KEY

#### A Comprehension check

- 1.
- a. T
- b. T
- c. F
- d. T
- e. T
- f. F

#### B Colloquial language

1.
  - calms down: reduces (the symptoms of)
  - keep off: avoid taking
  - keep on: continue
  - getting on with: how you are finding/managing (taking a drug)
  - be on the safe side: be cautious
  - keep an eye on: check regularly

#### C Communication focus

1. Nurse: The reason I'm asking ...
2. Nurse: Is that a problem?
3. Nurse: By that I mean ...
4. Nurse: So, he only gets them occasionally?
5. Nurse: Is that alright?
6. Nurse: So, just to go over what you've said ...

The nurse is checking information given by the patient	The nurse is checking whether the patient has understood
The reason I'm asking ...	By that I mean ...
So, he only gets them occasionally?	Is that a problem?
So, just to go over what you've said ...	Is that alright?