

# How to Communicate Your Loved One's Symptoms Regarding Overall Wellbeing, Pain and More

## Overall Wellbeing

- Is the patient eating well? Any sudden changes in diet or fussiness about eating? Any sudden cravings?
- Is his weight stable? If not, what is happening?
- Is he sleeping well? Unable to fall asleep? Wakes up and is unable to go back to sleep? Has nightmares? Sleeps restlessly?
- Is he getting some kind of exercise? Suddenly doing more or less than typical?
- Is there any sign of abuse or neglect that you've noticed? If so, what is it?

## General Condition

- Does the patient seem to have "slowed down" noticeably since the last visit? If so, in what way?
- Does he have any unusual bleeding? Where? How much?
- Does he seem to be breathing easily? If not, what is the quality of the breathing? Rapid Shallow Gasping Rattling Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Does he cough when he eats or drinks?
- Is his digestive system working well? If not, what seems to be the matter? Excessive gas Heartburn Diarrhea Constipation Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Are his limbs moving as they usually do? Is he struggling to handle things?
- Have any rashes or welts appeared recently? Where? What do they look like?
- Has a mole changed shape or become dark? Has a new one appeared somewhere? If so, where?

- In general, does the treatment plan seem to be working? If not, what seems to be wrong?
- Is a particular problem the reason for this office visit? If so, what are the major symptoms or concerns?

## Pain

- Is the patient complaining about pain? What does he say it feels like? Sharp Stabbing Dull Pounding Achy Tingling Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is it located? All over Headache Abdomen Limbs Other location \_\_\_\_\_
- On a scale of 1–10, with 1 being no pain and 10 being the worst pain imaginable, how does the patient rate his pain?
- How long has the pain lasted?
- Does it move around or stay in one place?
- Does it come and go, or is it there all the time?
- Does the pain seem to occur in relation to something else (e.g., eating, standing up suddenly, while reaching for something overhead)?
- Is there anything that makes the pain better or worse?
- Does pain medication help? If so, how much?

## Medications

- Is the patient taking his medications on time? At the prescribed dose? If not, what seems to be going wrong?
- Is he complaining about or suffering from any side effects? If so, what are they (drowsiness, hyperactivity, etc.)?

- Does anything seem to have suddenly changed in his response to medication? If so, what is it?
- Did he stop taking a medication for any reason? If so, why and what happened as a result?

### **Emotional and Mental Wellbeing**

- Does the patient seem to be as mentally sharp and alert, or has there been a noticeable decrease in mental function? What are the symptoms?
- How is his memory, both long-term and short-term? Has it changed recently? If so, in what way?
- Can he still do and enjoy activities as in the past? Has something suddenly become boring or unpleasant?
- Does he feel responsible for being ill and/or angry about his condition?
- Does he fear the truth and put off doctor visits based on what he thinks the doctor may say about his problem?
- Is he able to laugh and enjoy life?
- Does he seem to be more emotionally overwrought than usual? In what way?  
Anxious   Depressed   Fearful  
Sad   Hyped-up   Excitable  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Spiritual Wellbeing**

- Are there any restrictions on treatment that need to be considered due to the patient’s spiritual beliefs or practices? If so, what are they?
- Has the patient continued his usual spiritual practices (e.g., going to church, meditation, saying the rosary, prayer, using a home altar)? If not, what has changed?
- Has he started expressing doubts about faith or spiritual practices?
- Does he seem more reflective and quiet than usual? If so, does this seem to be okay?
- Is he starting to talk about wanting to “go home” in the sense of dying?

### **Other Conditions**

Each illness has its own set of unique symptoms. Ask your doctor if there are particular symptoms that should be monitored.