

Medication Explained

Essential English for Pharmacists

現場で役立つ薬学英语表現

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NAN'UN-DO

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PREFACE

Background:

Imagine being sick in a foreign country where you do not understand the language. To make matters worse, what if you weren't able to read the medicine explanation? This is the situation for many visitors and foreign residents in Japan. They cannot understand Japanese and cannot even look up the words in dictionaries because they are written in “Kanji,” Chinese characters.

In such a situation, a pharmacist who can explain medicine in English is a great help. Even when English is not the native language of the foreign resident, it is much more widely understood than Japanese.

Objective:

This textbook presents a patient-centered approach to help Japanese pharmacists explain medicine in English.

Method:

The language introduced is intended for patients who are not in the medical profession. Thus, “everyday English” is recommended instead of medical terminology. For example, the terms “pain reliever” or “painkiller” are suggested, rather than “analgesic.”

The textbook presents a four-part framework for explaining medicine quickly, clearly, and concisely.

- 1) What the medicine is
- 2) How to administer the medicine
- 3) Precautions
- 4) Storage methods

This framework allows both student and teacher to focus on specific points without losing focus on the overall objective of explaining medicine.

Material is introduced step by step, and many exercises are given to practice what has been learned. Learning tasks start out easy and become progressively more difficult, resulting in a series of mini-successes which motivate the students to move forward.

After learning the basics, role-play activities are then set up and practiced. By the end of the course, students will be able to put into active use what they have learned.

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UNIT 1

Introduction to Explaining Medicine

When dispensing medicine, a pharmacist should explain four things: 1) what the medicine is; 2) how to administer the medicine; 3) precautions; and 4) storage methods.

1) What the medicine is

First, tell the patient what you are giving them. Explain: 1) the type of medicine (cold medicine, antibiotics, etc.) (薬の種類); and 2) what it is effective for (indications). (効能・効果)

Example:

"This is cold medicine. It is for fever and runny nose."
(薬の種類) (効能・効果)

2) How to administer the medicine

Next, inform the patient how to use the medicine. Include these five points: method of administration (投与方法), dosage (用量), frequency (頻度), time of day (時間), and duration (期間).

Example:

"Take one tablet, three times a day, after meals, for three days."
(投与方法) (用量) (頻度) (時間) (期間)

3) Precautions

After that, discuss with the patient possible risks and concerns (precautions).

Focus on these four points: adverse reactions / side effects (副作用), restrictions on use (使用についての制限), present illnesses and present conditions (現病歴と現在の状態), and previous medical history (既病歴).

Example:

"This medicine may cause drowsiness, so do not drive after taking it."
(副作用) (使用についての制限)

"Consult a doctor before taking this if you have asthma."
(使用についての制限) (現病歴)

"Do not take this if you have had an allergic reaction caused by this medicine."
(使用についての制限) (既病歴)

4) Storage methods

Finally, tell the patient how to store the medicine (保存方法). Focus your explanation on:

- a) things to keep the medicine "away from" (light, heat, children, etc.); and
- b) places to keep the medicine (in a cool, dark place, the refrigerator, etc.).

Example:

"Keep this away from light, heat, and moisture."
(保存方法)

Comprehension Questions

1. What are the four main topics to cover when explaining medicine?

2. What are the key points of the "What the medicine is" explanation?

3. What are the key points of the "How to administer the medicine" explanation?

4. What are the key points of the "Precautions" explanation?

5. What are the key points of the "Storage methods" explanation?

a) _____

b) _____

Find the Errors

Find the errors and rewrite the following sentences.

1. Cold medicine is it. It is fever and runny nose.

2. One tablet is taking three times a day, after a meal.

3. Consult a doctor taking this before if you have asthma.

4. Keep this in light, heat, and moisture.

Exercise 1

Match the words and phrases in the box with the explanation categories below. The first one is done for you.

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Adverse reactions / side effects | b. Frequency | c. What it is effective for |
| d. Present illnesses and present conditions | e. How to store | f. Restrictions on use |
| g. Method of administration | h. Dosage | i. Kind of medicine |
| j. Previous medical history | k. Duration | l. Time of day |

Part 1: What the medicine is

1. i. Kind of medicine
2. _____

Part 2: How to administer the medicine

3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Part 3: Precautions

8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

Part 4: Storage methods

12. _____

Exercise 2

Translate the sentences into English.

What the medicine is

1. これは風邪薬です。発熱と鼻水のための薬です。

How to administer the medicine

2. 3 日間、1 錠剤を 1 日 3 回食後に飲んでください。

Precautions

3. この薬は眠気を起こすかもしれないので、車の運転をしないでください。

4. 喘息の方はこの薬の服用前に医者に相談してください。

5. この薬にアレルギー反応を起こしたことがある方はこの薬を服用しないでください。

Storage methods

6. 直射日光、高温多湿を避けてください。
