

## Eye Center of Texas - Obtaining the Patient's Medical History

- I. History of Present Illness (HPI)
  - A. **Location**- The tech or physician should have an understanding of the location of the problem. If the patient complains of pain, they may ask if the pain is diffuse or localized? Unilateral or bilateral? Fixed or migratory?
  - B. **Quality**- Encourage the patient to describe the quality of the symptom, since some disease or conditions produce specific patterns of complaints. For example, pain may be described as sharp, dull, throbbing, stabbing acute, or chronic, improving or worsening.
  - C. **Severity**- The tech and physician should get some idea about the severity of the discomfort or sensation or pain. The patient can use a self-assessment scale (what's the pain on a level of 1 to 10, 1 being no pain and 10 being the worst pain you've experienced). They can also compare the pain to past experiences, like a kidney stone/labor.
  - D. **Duration**- the onset of the sign and /or symptoms.
  - E. **Timing**- Establish the onset of each symptom or problem, and rough chronology of the development of the problem. The physician may ask is it primarily nocturnal, diurnal, or continuous? Or has there been a repetitive pattern for the symptom?
  - F. **Context**- The physician may obtain a description of where the patient is and what the patient does when the symptoms or signs begin. Is the patient at rest or involved in activity? Is the symptom aggravated or relieved, or does it recur with a specific activity? Has situational stress or some other factor been present preceding or accompanying it?
  - G. **Modifying Factors**- What has the patient attempted to do to obtain relief, or make him/herself better? Which makes the symptoms worse? Does heat or cold to the affected area help or exacerbate the pain? Any over-the-counter treatments attempted? If so, what were the results?
  - H. **Associated Signs & Symptoms**- The physician may ask questions about additional sensations or feelings. Blurred vision accompanying a headache? Weakness and hunger pangs in patients with diabetes? Fevers, chills, weakness or exhaustion?

A **brief** HPI has 1 to 3 of the HPI; An **extended** HPI includes 4 or more HPI elements

- II. Review of Systems
  - A. Constitutional (excessive fatigue, fever, weakness).
  - B. Eyes (date of last eye exam, history of eye infections, use of corrected lenses, discharge, redness, excessive tearing).
  - C. Ear, nose, throat and mouth (ear pain, noise sensitivity, vertigo, impaired ability to smell).

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