

Symptom Tracker

What is your main symptom?

What is your chief complaint, the thing that is bothering you most?

What is the history of your present illness?

Use the memory trick "OPQRST" below to dive into the details.

O = Onset

When did the symptom start?

What were you doing immediately before the onset of the symptom?

Did something you were doing seem to trigger the symptom?

Did the symptom come on all of a sudden or gradually over the course of days or weeks?

If you are having trouble remembering when your symptoms started, consider the last time you felt what you would consider "normal" (your usual state of health). Recall how things changed. What symptom came first? When did the symptom get worse/better?

P = Provocation or Palliation

What makes the symptom worse (movement, position, breathing, coughing, for instance)?

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Q = Quality

What are the qualities of the symptom?

Do you feel dull or sharp pain?

Does it tingle or burn?

Is it constant or throbbing?

Is there sputum or blood when you cough?

Do you have diarrhea? Is the stool watery, loose, or bloody?

R = Region and Radiation (where the pain is felt)

Can you pinpoint the pain with one finger? Or does the pain seem to be more spread out through an area?

Does the pain extend, or radiate, to another area?

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S = Severity

How severe is the symptom? How would you rate the pain, with 0 being “no pain” and 10 being “the worst it could be”?

How frequent is the symptom? For example, if you have diarrhea, how many times a day do you have to go?

How much does your symptom interfere with your day-to-day activities? For instance, how often does your cough wake you up from sleep?

T = Time

How long has the symptom been going on (hours, days, weeks, longer)?

Does your symptom come and go? Or has it been constant since the start?

How long does the symptom last?

Do you have short episodes of the symptom, or is it continuous?

Do you have any other related symptoms?

What other symptoms, if any, come with your main symptom? For example, do you have nausea along with your pain? Do you have sweats and/or chills with your fever?

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Other symptoms

Doctors ask about other symptoms in a review of body systems divided into categories. You may find it useful to refer to this list. Jot down any symptoms and if they are particularly bothersome, you may find it helpful to use the OPQRST tool above.

General (constitutional symptoms)

weight loss excess sweating fatigue change in sleeping pattern change in appetite fever

Eyes

visual changes headache eye pain double vision blind spots floaters

Ears, nose, mouth, and throat (ENT)

runny nose frequent nosebleeds sinus pain stuffy ears ear pain vertigo (room spinning) ringing in ears (tinnitus) discharge from ears bleeding gums toothache sore throat pain when swallowing

Heart and circulation (cardiovascular)

chest pain or pressure shortness of breath with exertion shortness of breath when lying down inability to exercise swelling in the feet palpitations faintness or lightheadedness loss of consciousness leg cramps

Lungs (respiratory) cough sputum wheeze coughing up blood shortness of breath

Gut (gastrointestinal) abdominal pain unintentional weight loss difficulty swallowing indigestion bloating cramping nausea heartburn vomiting diarrhea constipation vomiting blood blood in stool smelly, dark, black, tarry stools change in bowel habits

Urinary

incontinence pain with urination blood in urine urinating at night weak stream of urine delay in starting urination dribbling

Genital

discharge soreness pain lumps

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Menstrual

- change in frequency of menses
- change in regularity of menses
- unusually heavy or light menses
- abnormal duration of menses

Muscles and bones (musculoskeletal)

- pain
- stiffness
- joint swelling
- decreased range of motion
- arthritis

Skin

- rash
- itching
- discoloration
- excessive dryness
- growth on skin
- hair loss
- change in nails

Breast

- pain
- soreness
- lumps
- discharge

Brain and nerves (nervous)

- changes in smell
- changes in taste
- changes in speech
- numbness
- tremor
- seizures
- fainting
- headache
- pins and needles
- poor balance

Psychiatric

- depression
- change in sleep patterns
- anxiety
- difficulty concentrating
- paranoia
- lack of energy
- change in personality

Hormones (endocrine)

- increased appetite
- increased thirst
- increased urine production
- intolerance to cold or heat

Blood (hematologic) and lymph (lymphatic)

- excess bleeding
- easy bruising
- swelling of lymph nodes
- new lumps or bumps

Allergies (immunologic)

- difficulty breathing or throat closing as a result of exposure to anything
- hives
- runny nose
- itchy/watery eyes
- allergic response (rash, itch, swelling) to drugs, foods, animals