

EDUCATING PATIENTS ABOUT ASTHMA MANAGEMENT *PEAK FLOW METER*

Discuss the following questions:

- What is a peak flow meter?
- How do you use peak flow meter?
- What is your experience of asthma management?
- What kind of asthma treatment is available?

Eleanor is an Asthma Clinic Nurse. One of her roles is to educate patients in their asthma management.

Read the conversation and answer the following questions:

Nurse: Good morning, Mrs. Drake. How are you?

Patient: Much better, thank you. My chest feels less tight and I'm breathing much better now.

Nurse: That's great. I'm going to show you how to use a peak flow meter today. Would you mind if I go through it with you now? You'll have to use one regularly to keep an eye on your asthma at home.

Patient: No, that'll be fine. I'm happy to do anything which will stop me going back into hospital.

Nurse: Yes, it's much better to manage it at home. Now, I'd like you to use this peak flow meter at the same time every day.

Patient: All right. Is that important? I mean, is it important to use it at the same time every day?

Nurse: Yes, it's so that you can compare the readings. It's better if they're taken at the same time each day.

Patient: Oh, I see.

Nurse: Another thing – could you record your readings in this Daily Record Chart, please? I've got one for you here.

Patient: Right. So I take the peak flow reading at the same time every day and record it in this Daily Record Chart?

Nurse: Yes. That's right. You just write the details along the line for that day, like this. Something else which is important is, I'd like you to bring the Daily Record Chart with you every time you come here to the Asthma Clinic.

Patient: All right, I'll do that. So, just so I know I have it correct: I take the reading every day at the same time, then write the result on my Daily Record Chart, and I must not forget to always bring the chart to the Asthma Clinic. I'll never remember all that!

Nurse: Don't worry, it'll become a habit.

- How does Mrs. Drake feel?
- Why is Eleanor teaching her to use a peak flow meter?
- At what time of day should she take the reading?
- What three things does she have to remember?

Giving instructions effectively: Discuss the following questions.

- Do you know any techniques for giving instructions effectively?
- How can you make sure your instructions are effective?

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Read the following strategies for giving instructions effectively and explain each.

- Put the listener at ease by using positive non-verbal communication such as smiling.
- Sit or stand at the same level as the patient.
- Give encouragement by making remarks such as: That's right, Yes, Good, Well done, etc.
- State the purpose of the communication before giving the instructions, to prepare the listener for important information; for example: I'm going to teach you how to...
- Use the level of language which can be understood by the listener.
- Give instructions in steps, for example: Firstly, Secondly, etc. You could count the steps on your fingers to make sure your patient understands you.
- Demonstrate instructions on the relevant piece of equipment.
- Repeat instructions and allow the listener to ask questions.

In most of the instructions, the verb is an infinitive without to: blow, move, make and take. This is the most common and direct way of giving instructions and is appropriate after you have softened your request, for example: *Would you mind... I'd like you to... Could you...* There are also useful phrases like *I want you to...* and *The last thing to remember is...*, both of which are followed by infinitive with to.

SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- What techniques do you find most useful when giving instructions?
- What techniques are not helpful when giving instructions?
- Have you ever encountered problems when giving instructions to a patient?
- What is your experience of asthma management?
- What kind of asthma treatment is available?