

RESPONDING TO SYMPTOMS



Topic	Suitability of questioning of a customer asking for advice for treating a symptom.
Standard	<p>x% of customers asking for advice for treating a symptom will be questioned suitably. You will need to define both what questions should be asked and when the pharmacist should become involved.</p> <p>A model flow chart of questions and referral points is shown in appendix one.</p>
Audit Period	<p>(Time during which you collect data)</p> <p>At least two weeks (may be longer depending on the number of requests for advice you receive).</p>
Symptom(s) to be studied	<p>It is often helpful to narrow the choice of symptom to one area of practice. The choice of symptom to study will depend on several factors.</p> <p>It will be important to choose symptom which is seen fairly frequently in your pharmacy and is treatable with products available without prescription.</p> <p>Suitable examples could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gastro-intestinal upsets Hayfever Sleep disturbance Cough etc.
Data Collection	<p>When a customer asks for advice for the treatment of a symptom that you are studying, you will need to record what questions were asked and the answers given. Most of this can be coded according to the expected questions and answers.</p> <p>The outcome of the sale should also be recorded so that you can see if the correct action is being taken in response to the answers obtained.</p> <p>A model data collection form is shown on the next page.</p>

Data Collection Form

<u>Transaction number</u>	1	2	3	4	5
Questions asked					
Who the product was for					
Age (if appropriate)					
Nature of symptoms					
Duration of symptoms					
Action taken already					
Other medication being taken					
Medical condition(s)					
Pregnant/lactating (if appropriate)					
Other (please specify overleaf)					
Customer reluctant to talk to us					
Customer unable to supply info.					
Result of transaction					
Product sold					
No product sold					
Referral to GP advised					
Product/dosage information given					
Lifestyle/symptom advice given					
Other (please specify overleaf)					
<u>Who was involved in the transaction?</u>					
Pharmacist					
Counter Assistant					
Pre-reg					
Other					

Definitions of Questions

Questions asked

Who the product was for	Was the product for the customer or was he/she buying the product for someone else? Example codes to use for the answers S = self A = another adult C = child
Age (approx.)	Do you know the approximate age of the person who will be taking the medicine? This is only really relevant if the patient is a child or there are other age considerations e.g. elderly
Nature of symptoms	What symptoms is the patient treating? This is to check that the symptoms are treatable with the medicine requested. You will need to invent codes to cover symptoms you would expect to see. The codes should be easy to remember.
Duration of symptoms	How long has the patient had the symptoms? Long term problems may need referring to the GP for a full examination. Example codes to use for the answers L = less than a day 1 = 1-2 days 3 = 3-5 days W = about a week F = fortnight M = month O = over a month
Action already taken	What treatment has the patient already had for this condition? This will determine whether the patient has already tried similar therapy, etc. Example codes to use for the answers S = Self treated with a medicine G = Seen GP, etc.
Other medication being taken	Is the patient taking any other medication? This is to check for any medication which might interact with the medicine being purchased. Example codes to use for the answers N = no other medicines Y = taking other medicines (you may wish to make a note of what the medicines were or you may be content to leave this as a simple Yes/No answer.
Medical condition(s)	Has the patient any relevant medical conditions which might affect what medicine the patient should take? This can be a simple Yes/No answer although you may need to define "relevant medical conditions".
Pregnant/lactating	his answer can be coded P = Pregnant, L = Lactating.
Other (please specify)	Did the patient give you any other relevant information?

Customer reluctant to talk to us	Did the customer refuse to answer your questions? (e.g. in a hurry or finds any questions intrusive)
Customer unable to supply info.	Was the customer unable to answer your questions? (e.g. buying the medicine for someone else)

Result of transaction

Product sold	You sold a product.
No product sold	You did not sell any product to the customer.
Referral to GP advised	You advised the patient to see their GP. This may be in addition to selling a product or instead of making a sale.
Product/dosage information given	You gave the customer advice about the dose to take or other product related information (e.g. side effects, warnings, etc.)
Lifestyle/symptom advice given	You gave general advice about how to deal with symptoms or how to avoid symptoms, etc.
Other (please specify overleaf)	Was there anything else you did for the customer as a result of this transaction?

Who was involved in the transaction?

Pharmacist	Please include all those involved in the sale.
Counter Assistant	E.g. if the counter assistant refers the sale to the pharmacist, please tick both the pharmacist and the counter assistant.
Pre-reg	
Other	



Evaluation

The results of this audit give you a picture of whether relevant questions are being asked and what action is being taken in response to the answers. You will need to look at the answers to the questions to check whether the customer is being referred to the pharmacist appropriately. The results will also show what is happening as a result of the request for advice. Reviewing this may show trends that you wish to investigate further. E.g. you may wish to follow up your referrals to the GP to see whether these are followed by the patient and whether the GP considered them good referrals, etc.

Implement Change

If necessary, alter questioning technique by pharmacist and counter staff to identify more information and reaudit later. Further training may be required if the answers to the questions are not being acted upon appropriately.

