

Grammar Focus: Asking Questions Politely

Medical staff must ask **clear, accurate, and polite questions** to gather essential information — without making patients feel uncomfortable or rushed.

Yes/No Questions. These are used to confirm facts or check for symptoms.

Structure: [Auxiliary Verb] + [Subject] + [Main Verb] + (Rest)?

"Are you feeling any pain?"

"Have you taken any medication today?"

"Did the injury happen at work?"

Wh- Questions. Used to gather more detailed information.

Structure: [Wh-word] + [Auxiliary Verb] + [Subject] + [Main Verb] + (Rest)?

"**When** did the pain start?"

"**What** kind of pain is it — sharp, dull, or burning?"

"**Where** exactly does it hurt?"

Using Modal Verbs for Politeness. Using modals like "can," "could," "would," "may," makes questions sound more polite and professional.

Compare:

"What's your name?" → *direct*

"Could you tell me your name, please?" → *more polite*

Common polite forms:

Could you... ? "Could you describe the pain for me?"

Would you mind...? "Would you mind removing your jacket?"

May I...? "May I check your blood pressure now?"

Pro Tips:

Add "**please**" or "**for me**" for warmth: "Can you lift your arm for me, please?"

Soften direct questions with polite phrases:

Instead of "Why didn't you come sooner?" → Try "What made you decide to come in today?"

Polite Questions in the ER – Choose the Best Option

Instructions: Choose the question that sounds more appropriate and polite for speaking with a patient in the Emergency Room.

- ? a) What's your problem?
- ? b) Could you tell me what brings you in today?
- ? a) Where does it hurt, please?
- ? b) Can you tell me where you're feeling pain?
- ? a) Did you take any medicine?
- ? b) Have you taken any medication today?
- ? a) Can I check your pulse?
- ? b) May I check your pulse, please?
- ? a) Why didn't you come earlier?
- ? b) When did you decide to come in?
- ? a) Would you mind removing your shirt?
- ? b) Take off your shirt, please.
- ? a) What kind of pain do you have?
- ? b) What kind of pain is it — sharp, dull, or burning?
- ? a) Can you open your mouth, please?
- ? b) Open your mouth now, please.
- ? a) Did it happen at home or work?
- ? b) Where were you when the accident happened?
- ? a) Could you show me exactly where it hurts?
- ? b) Where is the pain?

Instructions: Choose the correct WH-word to complete each question appropriately.

/ Where / When did the pain start?

/ What / Which kind of medication have you taken today?

/ How / Why did you injure your arm?

/ What / What symptoms are you experiencing?