COMMUNICATING WITH THE PATIENT DURING URGENT CARE  
IN 
HAITIAN CREOLE  

A First-Response Medical Communication Tool

This first-response medical communication tool designed for the Patient-Doctor encounter during Urgent Care is for the healthcare provider who speaks only English but often provides medical care for patients who speak but Haitian Creole. It is meant to help you establish immediate communication while waiting for an interpreter and in no way intends to replace the interpreter, whose role in the delivery of health care remains crucial.

When appropriate, questions are accompanied by some possible answers, with which your patient may agree or disagree by a nod or shake of the head, respectively. The style and content of the questions are designed to minimize the isolation your patient may endure due to the language barrier. In addition, the Creole translation has been adjusted in some instances in an effort to make the questions sensitive to the patient’s culture. You may read the transliteration, which appears next to the English phrase, or, if appropriate, you may point at the Creole phrase in brackets for your patient to read.

**GREETING THE PATIENT:**

Hello, I am Doctor/Nurse....  
Ahlo, mweh seh dohk-teh/ Enn-fee-myeh...  
[Alo, mwen se doktè/Enfimyè....]

Do you understand my Creole?  
Es-keh oo kohn-prahmn kreh-yol mweh?  
[Eske ou konprann kreyol mwen?]

Is there someone we should call?  
Es-keh geh yohn mooon noo kah-pahb reh-leh?  
[Eske gen yon moun nou kapab rele?]

Can you write down your name and telephone number?  
Es-keh oo kah-pahb eh-kree nohn ah-vehk nee-meh-woh teh-leh-phone oo?  
[Eske ou kapab ekri non avèk nimewo telefon ou?]

Could you nod for “yes” and shake your head for “no”?  
Es-keh ou kah-pahb soo-keh teht oo poo oo dee “wee” oo-bien “non”?  
[Eske ou kapab souke tèt ou pou ou di “wi”, oubyen “non”?]

**GENERAL QUESTIONS** (select as needed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Creole Question</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have pain?</td>
<td>Es-keh oo geh doo-leh?</td>
<td>[Eske ou gen doulè?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Kee koh-teh?</td>
<td>[Ki kote?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please point exactly.</td>
<td>Seel- vouo-pleh, mohn-treh</td>
<td>[Silvouplè, montre mwen ekzaktenan.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the pain here?</td>
<td>Es-keh doo-leh yah lah?</td>
<td>[Eske doulè ya la?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the pain start?</td>
<td>Es-keh doo-leh yah koh-mahn-seh</td>
<td>[Eske doulè ya kòmanse:]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today?</td>
<td>Jhoh-dee yah?</td>
<td>[Jodi-a?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday?</td>
<td>Yeah?</td>
<td>[Yè?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suddenly?</td>
<td>Bregss-kheh-mah?</td>
<td>[Briskeman?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradually?</td>
<td>Lee vee-nee tee-kahl pah tee-kahl?</td>
<td>[Li vini tikal pa tikal?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes the pain worse?</td>
<td>Kee-sah kee feh doo-leh yah vee-nee pee mahl?</td>
<td>[Kisa ki fè doulè ya vini pi mal?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking?</td>
<td>Leh oo mah-shëk?</td>
<td>[Lè ou mache?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving?</td>
<td>Leh oo feh moov-mah</td>
<td>[Lè ou fè mouvman?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have:</td>
<td>Es-keh oo geh:</td>
<td>[Eske ou gen:]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea?</td>
<td>Ahn-véh voh-mee?</td>
<td>[Anvi vomi?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest pain?</td>
<td>Doo-leh nah lehss-toh-mahk?</td>
<td>[Doulè nan lestomak?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burning?</td>
<td>Lehss-toh-mahk oo ahp boo-leh?</td>
<td>[Lestomak ou ap boule?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizziness?</td>
<td>Teht oo ahp vee-reh?</td>
<td>[Tèt ou ap vire?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleeding?</td>
<td>Sehn-yëh?</td>
<td>[Senyen?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble breathing?</td>
<td>Pwoh-blehm leh oo rehss-pee-reh?</td>
<td>[Pwoblèm lè ou respire?]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have you had illness with:  Es-keh oo geh mah-lah-dee:

- Asthma?  Oh-preh-syon?
- AIDS/HIV?  See-dah?
- Ulcer?  Eel-seh?
- Gout?  Goott?
- Arthritis?  Mah-lah-dee nah jhwehn-tee?
- Hepatitis?  Eh-pah-tee?
- Diabetes?  Seek?
- High blood pressure?  Tahn-syon?
- Heart trouble?  Pwoh-biehm keh?
- Heart attack?  Ah-reh-dee-keh?
- Tuberculosis?  Tee-beh-kee-loz?
- Broken bones?  Zoh kah-seh?
- Pneumonia?  Neh-moh-nee?
- Pancreatitis?  Ahn-flah-mah-syon pahn-kreh-yah?
- Gall Bladder?  Posh fyehl?
- Night sweats?  Sweh leh-swah?
- Blood transfusion?  Ah-vek sahn loht moon?
- Thyroid disease?  Mah-lah-dee nah koo?
- Epilepsy or seizures?  Kreez?

Have you had illnesses with your: Eske ou geh mah-lah-dee:

- Head?  [Tet?]  Blood?
- Ears?  Zoh-rey?  Chest?
- Eyes?  Zye?  Lungs?
- Heart?  [Kè?]  Pancreas?
- Liver?  Fwah?  Intestines?
- Stomach?  Vahn?  Penis?
- Bladder?  Veh-see?  Uterus?
- Vagina?  Vah-jhee?  Rectum?
- Ovaries?  Oh-veh?  Muscles?
- Kidneys?  Rehn?  Nerves?
- Bones?  Zoh?  [Zo?]

Can you write down your medicines?  Es-keh oo kah-pahb eh-kree meh-dee-kah-mah oo yo?

Are you allergic to any medicines?  Eskeh oo feh ah-leh-jhee ah-yehk oh-ken meh-dee-kah-mah?

- Penicillin  Peh-nee-see -leen  [Penisilin]
- Sulfur  Sulfa  [Sulfa]
- Antibiotic  An-tee-see-yo-teek  [Antibiotik]
- Aspirin  Ahss-pee-reen  [Aspirin]

When was your last Tetanus shot?  Kee deh-nyeh fwah oo teh prahn vahk-sehn poo teh-tah-nohs?

Could you be pregnant?  Eskeh lee poh-seeb keh oo ahh-sehn?

When was your last menstrual period?  Kee deh-nyeh fwah oo teh geh rehg oo?

Have you had an ectopic pregnancy?  Eskeh ou jah-meh feh fooss koosh?
PHYSICAL EXAMINATION: DIALOGUE AND INSTRUCTIONS (select as needed)

May I examine you?  Eskeh mweh kah-pahb ehk-zah-mee-neh oo seel-voo-pleh?  [Eske mwen kapab ekzamine ou silvouplè?]

Please undress and put on this gown with opening in the back.  Seel-voo-pleh deh-zah-bee-yeh oo, eh-peeh meh-teh rahd sah oo-veh deh-yeh.  [Silvouplè dezabiyi ou, epi mete rad sa a ouvè déyè.]

Very good.  Treh bian.  [Trè byen.]
Please wait.  Reh-teh tahnn seel-voo-pleh.  [Rete tann silvouplè.]
I will be back.  Mahp reh-too-neh.  [Map retounen.]
Don't worry.  Pah enn-kyeh-teh oo.  [Pa enkyete ou.]
I will not make you wait long.  Mweh pahp feh oo reh-teh tahnn troh lohn-tah.  [Mwen pap fè ou rete tann twò lontan.]
The nurse will come in a few minutes.  Enn-fie-myeh yah ahp vee-nee too-tah-leh.  [Enfimyè ya ap vini toutalè.]
I will be back with an interpreter.  Mahp reh-too-neh ah-vehk yohn enn-teh-preht.  [Map retouven avèk yon entèprèt.]
Would you like some water?  Eskeh oo vleh bweh dlo?  [Eske ou vle bwè dlo?]

PLEASE:

Sit.
Stand up.
Don't move.
Pull.
Push.
Open your mouth.
Tilt your head back—
   like this.
Turn your head—
   like this.
Lie down on your back.
Lie on your right side.
Lie on your left side.
Lie on your stomach.

Bring your legs up.
Bend your knees.
Bend forward.
Give me your arm.
Squeeze my fingers—
   Harder!
Walk over there—
   then walk back.
Can you do this?
That's enough.
Can you feel this?
Hold your breath.
Breathe like I do.
Inhale.
Exhale.
   like this.
Take slow, deep breaths.

SEEL VOO PLEH:
Shee-tah dwahht.
Kahm-peh.
Pah feh moov-mah.
Rah-leh.
Poo-seh.
Oo-vree boosh oo.
Pan-sheh teht oo deh-yeh.
   kohn-sah.
Vee-reh-teht oo—
   kohn-sah.
Koo-sheh soo doh.
Koo-sheh soo boh dwahht oo.
Koo-sheh soo boh goshh oo.
Koo-sheh soo vahnt oo.
Leh-yeh jahnm oo.
Plee-yeh jeh-noo oo.
Pahm-sheh koh-oo.
Bah mweh brah oo.
Kehn-bheh dwehnt mweh treh foh—
   Pee foh!
Mah-sheh ah-leh—
   Eh-peh reh-too-neh vee-nee.
Es-kheh oo kah-pahb feh sah?
Sah see-feeh.
Es-kheh oo sahn-tee sah?
Kehn-bheh soof oo.
Rehss-peh-reh tahnt-koo mweh.
Rehss-peh-reh!
Ehks-peh-reh!
   kohn-sah.
Rhess-peh-reh dooss-mah.

[SILVOUPLÈ]:
[Chita dwat.]
[Kanpe.]
[Pa fe mouvman.]
[Rale.]
[Pouse.]
[Pouche.]
[Panche têt ou déyè— ]
   konsa.
[Vire têt ou— ]
   konsa.
[Kouche sou do.]
[Kouche sou bò dwat ou.]
[Kouche sou bò goch ou.]
[Kouche sou vant ou.]
[Leve janm ou.]
[Pliye jenou ou.]
[Panche kò ou.]
[Ban mwen bra ou.]
[Kenbe dwèt mwen tre fò— ]
   Pi fòl]
[Mache ale— ]
[Epi retouven vini.]
[Eske ou kapab fè sa-a?]  [Sa sift.]
[Eske ou santi sa-a?]  [Kenbe souf ou.]
[Respire tankou mwen.]
[Respire!]
[Ekspire!]
   konsa.]
[Respire dousman.]
Blow as hard as you can.  Soo-fleh jheeess-kahs-keh oo pa kah-pahb ahh-koh.
[Soulfe jiskeske ou pa kapab ankò.]
You’re going to feel my finger.  Oo prahl sahn-tee dweht mweh.
[Ou pral santi dwêt mwen.]
I need to examine your anus.  Mweh beh-zweh ehk-zah-mee-nah troo deh-yeh oo.
[Mwen bezwen ekzamine trou dèyè ou.]
This will feel uncomfortable but it shouldn’t hurt.  Sah pahp kohn-foh-tahb meh lee pahp feh mahl.
[Sa pa konfòtab men li paf fe mal.]
This will hurt.  Sah prahl feh mahl.
[Sa pral fè mal.]

FEED-BACK FOR THE PATIENT (select as applicable)
You are fine.  Oo treh bien.
[Ou trò byen.]
You’ll begin to feel better in ......days.  Oo ahp koh-mahn-suh sahn-tee oo pee bien nah ...... jhoo.
[Ou ap komanse santi ou pi byen nan...jou.]
You need to stay in the hospital so we can take care of you.
Fohk oo reh-teh nah loh-pee-tahl lah poo noo kah-pahb prahn sweh oo.
[Fôk ou rete nan lopital la pou nou kapab pran swen ou.]

DAYS
Monday  Lehn-dee  [Lendi]
Tuesday  Mah-dee  [Madi]
Wednesday  Mek-reh-dee  [Mèkredì]
Thursday  Jheh-dee  [Jedi]

MONTHS
January  Jhan-vye-yeh  [Janvyè]
February  Feh-vye-yeh  [Fevryè]
March  Mahs  [Mas]
April  Ah-vreel  [Avrìl]
May  Meh  [Me]
June  Jhehn  [Jen]
July  Jheh-yeh  [Jiyè]
August  Oot  [Out]
September  Sehp-tahm  [Septahm]
October  Ohk-tob  [Oktòb]
November  Noh-yahm  [Novahm]
December  Deh-sahm  [Desanm]

NUMBERS
1  Yoon  [Youn]
2  Deh  [De]
3  Twah  [Twa]
4  Cat  [Kat]
5  Sink  [Senk]
6  Seess  [Sis]
7  Set  [Sèt]
8  Weet  [Wìt]
9  Nehf  [Nèf]
10  Deess  [Dis]
20  Vehn  [Ven]
30  Trahn  [Trant]
40  Kah-rahn  [Karant]
50  Sehn-kaht  [Senkant]

This phrasebook and its companion volumes Communicating with the Patient at Work Rounds and Review of Systems were compiled by the generous contributions of numerous members of the faculty, students and staff of Harvard Medical School with support from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

For information, suggestions and comments please contact:
Daniel D. Federman, M.D.
Carl W. Walter Professor of Medicine and Dean for Medical Education,
Harvard Medical School
daniel_federman@hms.harvard.edu

Nora N. Nercissian, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Alumni Affairs and Special Projects
Harvard Medical School
nora_nercissian@hms.harvard.edu

DISCLAIMER
This phrasebook is intended to provide helpful information on communicating with non-English speaking patients. It is distributed with the understanding that Harvard Medical School is not engaged in rendering medical or any other kind of personal professional services in the book. Harvard Medical School specifically disclaims all responsibility for any liability, loss or risk incurred as a consequence, direct or indirect, of the use and application of any of the contents of this book.

Copyright President and Fellows of Harvard College
December, 1999