

Example of GPs script:

Patient contribution

What would you like to talk about today?

What's the priority?

So, we're talking about potentially two problems: the throat and the foot?

Was there some other issue that you were planning to raise today?

Sounds like this one could be more of a priority...

The prolapse is not the issue today?

ICE

What do you think this one is?

And what did you think might be going on with your foot?

So, you've googled this, and what's the worst you came up with on google?

Erm, any particular thoughts apart from me checking out your foot and making sure that we don't need to do anything about the foot – any things that you wanted me to do for you today?

Apart from give you give you a diagnosis?

And hopefully cure it?

Because google didn't come up with any definite suggestions, was there anything else that you were thinking might be going on yourself, that you came up with after speaking to other people or your imagination came up with?

So, you think there could be a link there?

PSO

In what way is this affecting your life, apart from making you wake up in the middle of the night, and being sick?

Erm, work-wise, what do you do these days?

And your work's okay?

And you're able to carry on at work with all of this?

And the foot's not stopping you from being able to get about and do your activities, work-wise?

And home-wise, who's still at home?

And how old are the kids?

If I can just make sure that there's nothing else that you do that's going to make you prone to this problem. You're not a smoker?

Drinking-wise, alcohol-wise?

Okay. And there doesn't seem to be a link with this, at all?

You're not a footballer?

Habits and hobbies - are there any activities that you're engaged in usually; this is not stopping you from going to the gym or anything like that? Gym's not your thing?

Okay. You don't have time with having a husband and two kids, then?

Red flags

Has your weight changed at all?

And when you exert yourself, you're getting no chest pain, and you're not breathless or anything like that?

Focussed history

A sensation of something being stuck?

When was your last period?

Okay, so you're not having a period because you're regularly on Cerelle?

And I'm assuming that you're not missing pills and you've got no symptoms of pregnancy?

But you still don't want to conceive?

Have you got symptoms that make you think you're going through the change?

No flushes, no dryness, no vaginal dryness?

No skin changes, no weight changes?

You're quite happy to carry on taking the Cerelle for at least another year until we think about what do we do next.

Okay, and your waterworks are okay?

But you mentioned that Rennies help a bit?

And it tends to happen on a night-time.

And when you do that, does - and you take Rennies, does that help?

It seems to settle it a little bit?

Have you been troubled by heart - with heartburn in the past? That you've been aware of?

So, this has really been a relatively new problem.

And it's been going on for a few....

And you're up to date with keeping your thyroid blood test done, aren't you?

Alright, with the mechanism of the injury - was it an injury like that or was it...

Straight into the door, okay, and that's where you got the bruising from?

Focussed examination

Let's have a look at that foot and it would be helpful for me to check your weight as well, if that's okay.

Not painful when I press across those bones?

And I'm just going to press on your metatarsals.

Stable ankle, healthy looking foot in itself.

Just doing that was sore?

So, pressing on the bones itself is not provoking things?

But you do have some have some bruising still in the foot there, don't you.

Is it alright if we check your weight, if we stand you on the scales?

Okay, so 115, that's lovely. You're quite tall, aren't you, how tall are you?

If you just lie on the couch I'll just have a wee feel of your tummy if that's okay to make sure that we aren't missing anything. Come and sit down again and I'll have a quick look at your throat. No nasal symptoms, no nasal blockage?

Open your mouth, breathe in. Perfect, okay, good. Throat looks okay, nasal passage is okay, no blockage there, that's good.

Identify problem and explain diagnosis

I think it's unlikely that you fractured anything but it's taking a while to mend, isn't it, and it is a bit tender there. You've got a choice with the foot, I guess, is that it's not going to change with treatment very much, it's probably just going to carry on getting better slowly.

I think you pretty much made your own diagnosis haven't you, when it comes to your throat? You haven't quite vocalised it, you haven't quite put your finger on it.

So, it seems to be related to something coming up from your stomach, doesn't it?

So you're getting an irritation of your throat, at certain times of the day, it's worse on a night.

And, erm, this is caused by regurgitation.

Other people might call it heartburn.

Oftentimes that will stem from this problem. So, you'll find that, at night—at times, you're regurgitating, but it's irritating the throat and leaving that sensation there.

When I feel your throat, there's no lumps or bumps there; when I look at your throat, there's nothing worrying going on there...

Check understanding

Does that all make sense?

Was there anything else that I've not covered adequately, or anything else that you want to check up on beyond that?

Develops management plan / shares management plan

So, if we can get you a bit more active that would help.

...but I think that probably, we will get a vast improvement with very simple treatment for you. You've already found that Rennies work quite well.

There is a treatment that could work even better, quite quickly, but it's a tablet that you'd have to take by mouth, that suppresses acid production.

But the problem is that it doesn't get rid of food going up the way, it doesn't stop the regurgitation, it just stops the acid going up.

So you might prefer, instead of using that, to actually prop up your bed.

So, if you prop your bed up so that it's on a couple of bricks.

At the headboard end, so that your bed is raised by fifteen centimetres.

You're going to have to negotiate this with your husband as well. But usually it's really well tolerated by both sleeping partners.

Okay, okay, well that's not a bother in that case. So, propping up your bed would be a very simple measure of doing it.

You might temporarily also want to take these acid tablets as well, because that can actually quite quickly make you feel better.

But, the trouble with these tablets in the long term is that they do have some small risks.

They slightly increase the risk of you getting a nasty type of diarrhoea, they slightly increase the risk of you having thinner bones, and they can make you prone to some infections.

But, to be fair, they're pretty safe, and they're very widely used.

But they can cause some side effects, so if you do it the kind of organic way, if you like, that might be even better.

It's worthwhile talking a little bit about your weight, because your weight's likely to be linked with this, too, and you're going to be more prone to this because of your weight. So, if you wanted help with your weight, that perhaps could be something that we could focus on next time.

And the other thing that you can think about doing, as well as the program and the support from our nursing team, is maybe going online, on our website and listening to me talk to somebody about the options that might work for weight.

And we can maybe talk about that another time, if you wanted to. So, heartburn. So, there's some weight loss options for you there.

This is the organic way to deal with heartburn.

Without necessarily taking any medication – but you'll find that things like Rennies and antacids like Gaviscon or Peptac can be really helpful to control those symptoms when they happen but propping your bed might be an even better way. If you've got any weaknesses like - you're not a smoker, so that's good news, but chocolates and mints can open up your gullet and make you more prone to this problem, too.

Having big meals towards bed-time is not a good idea, too, because that tends to slosh up the way, so that might be worthwhile thinking about, as well.

What do you think; what should we do?

So, prop your bed up, take these tablets until the symptoms are much improved, and then when you've had no symptoms for a week or two, then just take them as and when you need to. Take the antacids when you need to as well...

There's a choice between lansoprazole, which can sometimes make looser, and omeprazole.

Safety net and follow up

No, okay, so there's nothing pointing in that direction (menopause). So, we're not thinking that's relevant, but we can maybe come back to that if that's a concern to you.

But we could do an x-ray if it's not improving within the next fortnight. Just give me a call and let me know if you want to x-ray the foot.

So, if we can get you a bit more active that would help.

... if we're right about this, that your symptoms will vastly improve within the course of a couple of weeks.

...and if we're not right about this, then we probably ought to be seeing you again within two to four weeks.

And then if you're wanting to put them on as a repeat prescription and take them as and when you need to, then give us a telephone call to discuss that. If you've not improved at all in a couple of weeks, we'll probably need to be talking about it again.