

Example of GPs script:

Patient contribution

What would you like to talk about today?

So, let me just ensure that we're not talking about anything else today, or not needing to talk about anything else today?

Okay, was there some other issue that you were planning to raise today?

ICE

Any fears about what might be going on there?

Apart from that advice, was there anything else that you were particularly hoping I would do for you today?

Is there a reason...is there a reason that it's a problem at the moment?

Never had any thoughts about it yourself?

PSO

You're managing to keep on working?

At home it's you and your wife, if I'm not mistaken?

Is there anyone else in the house? No, so it's just the two of you in the house? Yeah. You're not a smoker, not a big drinker?

Any other habits I need to know about?

Red flags

No other substances I need to know about?

Either prescribed or otherwise?

You're not a big tablet user, generally?

And do they cause any side effects or any problems?

They don't irritate your stomach? Never had an ulcer in your stomach?

Can I check, are you able to go out for a walk alright?

Yeah, and that doesn't come on, typically, when you're walking, or anything like that?

Just occasionally? But it's not typically every time you're doing that sort of thing?

So it's not stopping you from doing things, but it's coming on, it feels like cramp, you stretch it and it usually helps, it feels just as it's ever felt, but you're having it much more frequently now.

Focussed history

Cramping, you mentioned, when you're doing things? Yeah?

What triggers it, that you've noticed?

Focussed examination

Can I check, when was the last time we checked your blood pressure?

Would you mind slipping your shoes and socks off, and I'm going to just check the circulation in your feet. There's no wasting of your feet? There's no arthritis and there's no swelling or stiffness in your feet or your ankles at all?

Relax your feet down on the ground, that's lovely. So, good pulses in both of your feet.

Got you. Let me just press across that area there – it's not tender when I'm pressing there so there's no suggestion of inflammation in the joints of your foot. Can you stand up on your tip toes for me? Good, so you've got capable—your arches lift when you do that, that's lovely, sit back down again.

So let me just check the movements of your ankle. Which of the feet is more prone to cramp?

The right one? Let's check this one, too. So, a normal range of movement at the ankle, and also at the forefoot, and no tender points, the bone's fine and the joints are fine. Great. If you want to put your shoes and socks back on.

Identify problem and explain diagnosis

There's no suggestion of inflammation in the joints of your foot. So, a normal range of movement at the ankle, and also at the forefoot, and no tender points, the bone's fine and the joints are fine..

The pharmacy advisor has also sent you some exercises to do to help cope with cramp when it comes on.

And your pulse is all good, so there's nothing that's making me think that you've got a problem with your circulation.

Check understanding

Does that sound like a reasonable plan?

Any questions for the moment?

Anything that you want to have clarified?

Develops management plan / shares management plan

There's one thing that is worthwhile doing - I know you've already been sent this leaflet saying don't use quinine unless you have to because it has risks; the pharmacy advisor has also sent you some exercises to do to help cope with cramp when it comes on and that's a safer treatment than using quinine. We can use quinine if you need to, but it doesn't work for everybody and it can cause tinnitus, and it can sometimes cause other side effects beside that, too.

It can make people a bit unsteady on occasion.

So, what I'd like to suggest this time, is because you're on lansoprazole, that can affect, sometimes, your magnesium levels.

And I'd like to check that your magnesium levels are okay and also the salts in your blood. So, I'd like you just to have a routine blood test done at this time and then if you could phone in a week's time to let—so that we can talk about the results, and then we'll make a forward plan on what we do about your cramps.

Are things so bad that you're needing quinine at the moment? Have you got any left?

We find that maybe one in three people get a significant benefit with taking the quinine.

But there is a significant risk of buzzing in the ears and being unsteady with taking them.

If you've not had that problem, then it's okay when the cramp's bad to use them, but I wouldn't prescribe them on a repeat basis. You can ask for them when you need them, but just take them when you really need them, otherwise stretching exercises are a sensible thing. I don't think there's anything worrying behind the cramp, but I do wonder whether it's been related to the fact that you've been using lansoprazole - potentially that can make cramps a little bit worse, too.

So, let's check your blood salts and also your magnesium levels.

Well, I think we'll do is wait until we've got the results of the blood test before changing anything, but we could then think about that, and if your magnesium levels are low, then maybe we should be using a slightly safer option when it comes to your magnesium levels.

And the safest of all measures, for heartburn, is to prop your bed up.

Because you might then not need to take the medication at all.

Well, maybe you don't need the lansoprazole anymore, then we could see if you're okay just to take that medication as and when you need it. So, prop the bed up, do that.

There's some other advice about ways of avoiding getting heartburn that are on that leaflet - so that includes not smoking; you're not a smoker, so that's not relevant to you.

It includes avoiding mints and chocolates, because those can make heartburn worse as well.

Safety net and follow up

So, a few things on there that you might want to explore, and then why don't we talk again on the phone in a week's time, to review how you're getting on - we'll have the blood test results by then, too, and then we can make a forward plan about what you want to do.

Okay, so you're consistently finding that after walking a short distance, you're finding you have to stop because of pain in your foot or if you get a very cold, painful foot, then we'd need to see you about that sort of thing urgently.

Let's talk again in a week's time after you've had your blood test - so, if you make an appointment for the blood test on the way out that would be great.

We'll talk on the phone next week, alright.