

Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

Neonatal pg. 13

Child pg. 15

Adult pg. 18

How to use the key symptom lists

Identify the major symptoms from the history

For each symptom, ask about duration (how many days, weeks, months), treatment received, hospital/clinics used, and details on death certificate/clinical records (if applicable)

For each symptom, ask probing questions listed below, including associated symptoms.

If respondent does not give a clear history, ask about each major symptom one by one. Probe all positive responses

Neonatal Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

1. **FEVER**

- Severity: high or low grade
- Continued until death
- Associated with diarrhoea, cough, jaundice, convulsions/fits, lethargy, drowsiness, coma, fever followed by rash/blisters

2. **BREATHING PROBLEM**

- Cough
- Whooping sound when coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Was the breathing problem: fast breathing, breathlessness, chest in-drawing
- Breathing sounds like: wheezing, grunting, stridor
- Nasal flaring
- Associated with fever, vomiting, crying more than usual

3. **DIARRHOEA**

- Loose/semi-solid stools
- *Note: mothers of breastfed infants tend to report children with soft/loose stools, so it is important to ask if soft and loose stools were MORE FREQUENT than usual*
- If blood in stools: colour (red or black)
- Continued until death
- How many times a day at worst
- Associated with vomiting, fever, sunken eyes, sunken fontanelle, reduced urine amount

4. **JAUNDICE** (YELLOWNESS IN THE WHITE PART OF EYES OR SKIN)

- Location: eyes, skin, palms/soles, urine (dark yellow/brown)
- Onset: starting from birth? Third day after birth? Later than that?
- Associated with fever, fast breathing, excessive crying, chest in-drawing

5. **SEIZURES/ FITS/ CONVULSIONS**

- History of sudden jerky movements of a focal area – fingers, arms, or legs – or whole body, baby's body becoming stiff with the back arched backwards
- Onset: within 24hrs of birth, 24hrs or more after birth
- Associated with fever, rolling of eyeballs, frothing of mouth, not very alert (low consciousness), bulging fontanelle

6. **DISCOLORATION OF LIPS, HANDS, AND LEGS**

- Blue or red discoloration of lips, hand and legs
- Associated with bulging fontanelle, drowsiness, scalp injuries, spasm of body, breathing problems (chest in-drawing)

7. **SKIN PROBLEM / ULCER**

- Skin rash
- Skin ulcers or pits
- Areas of skin that turned black, areas of skin with redness and swelling

8. **BLEEDING**

- Bleeding from mouth, nose, anus

9. **UNCONSCIOUS/ UNRESPONSIVE**

- Onset: within 24hrs of birth, 24hrs or more after birth
- Unconscious for <24hrs or >24hrs before death

Neonatal Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

10. INJURY

- Nature of injury
- How, when, and where did it happen? Which body parts were injured?
- If road traffic accident: what was the deceased's mode of travel (pedestrian, in light/heavy vehicle, motorcycle, pedal cycle) and with what did they collide (vehicle or stationary object)?
- Was the injury an accident or homicide?
- If animal or insect bite: what was the animal/insect?

11. CHILD BIRTH

- Cry: immediately after birth, stopped crying
- Size/weight at birth
- Any physical abnormality at birth,
- Feed: Able to suckle normally, stopped suckling
- Skin discoloration at birth, part of multiple birth
- In case of no signs of life after birth: did the baby ever move? Ever breathe? Require assistance to breathe? Have soft, pulpy, and discolored skin after birth?
- Bruises or signs of injury at birth, pus drainage or discharge from umbilical cord
- Bulging/sunken fontanelle

12. PREGNANCY DETAILS

- Duration of the pregnancy
- Received professional assistance during delivery
- Mode of delivery
- Mother died during delivery, complications in the first/last 3 months of pregnancy or during delivery (diabetes, hypertension, infectious disease, trauma, taken medication, etc.), baby moving/stopped moving in the womb before labour
- Duration of labour and delivery
- When did the water break, colour of the liquid, if it was foul smelling, foul smelling vaginal discharge.
- Did the mother receive vaccinations (TT vaccine)?
- Did the mother have fever, diabetes, anemia, convulsions, blurred vision during pregnancy, vaginal bleeding in the last 3 months?
- Baby's bottom, feet, arm/hand delivered first; umbilical cord around the neck; umbilical cord delivered first

Child Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

1. FEVER

- Severity: high or low grade
- Pattern: Continuous with no normal temperature, intermittent (on and off), or only at night
- Continued until death
- Fever rose every day
- Repeated attacks with chills, rigor, night sweats, muscle pain
- Associated with diarrhoea, cough, headache, chest pain, jaundice, burning sensation while passing urine, neck stiffness, irritation from and dislike of light or sound, convulsions/fits, confusion, drowsiness, coma, fever followed by rash/blisters or weight loss.

2. COUGH

- Dry, wet (with sputum; is it coloured?), bloody (rusty), foul smelling
- Worse during day or night, only at night
- Cough up blood, whooping sound when coughing
- Pain at the sides of the chest wall or worse with cough and/or deep breath
- Associated with fever, weight loss, night sweats, evening rise of temperature, vomiting, hoarse voice
- If more than 2 weeks, ask about associated fever, loss of appetite, and weight loss

3. BREATHING PROBLEM

- Onset and progression: did they initially feel short of breath on exertion, but progressively worsen to breathlessness at rest?
- Occurs after lying flat and relieved by sitting up
- What brings it on? Allergy or chest infection
- Episodes or attacks of wheezing and breathing problems
- Was the breathing problem: fast breathing, breathlessness, chest in-drawing
- Breathing sounds like (demonstrate): wheezing, grunting, stridor
- Associated with fever, weight loss, night sweats, evening rise of temperature, vomiting and hoarseness of voice, swelling of hands and legs, swelling of the body or abdomen

4. CHEST PAIN

- Onset: sudden or gradual
- Location: chest, upper stomach, back

5. DIARRHOEA

- Blood/mucus in stools, watery/rice water-like stools
- If blood in stools: colour (red or black), continued until death
- If more than 30 days, ask about weight loss
- Continued until death
- How many times a day at worst
- Associated with vomiting, fever, very thirsty, dehydration (less water in the body, sunken eyes, reduced urine amount), abdominal pain

6. WEIGHT LOSS

- Loss of weight became very rapid in last 2-3 months
- Prolonged unexplained fever for more than 1 month (constant or continuous)
- Diarrhoea for more than 1 month
- Persistent cough for more than 2 weeks
- Swelling in armpits, neck, groin
- Itching and skin rash
- White sores or white patches in mouth
- History of tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS
- Hair changing to reddish/yellowish discoloration
- Appeared pale or had pale palms, eyes, nail beds

Child Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

- Thin or severely wasted
- Whitish rash inside the mouth or on the tongue

7. SWELLING

- Location: hands and feet or elsewhere, only abdomen, puffiness of face, generalized puffiness
- Onset: sudden or gradual
- Worse at night or morning
- Associated with breathing problems at rest, fever, urinary problems, jaundice, worse with walking, fatigue, feeling heart beat faster, nausea, appetite loss

8. ABDOMINAL PROBLEMS

- Abdominal pain:
 - Location: one place or all over; upper abdomen, lower abdomen, or both
 - Type: burning or dull
 - Onset: sudden or gradual
 - Severity
 - Awoke from sleep
 - Periodicity: pain occurs in episodes, lasting 1-3 weeks every time, 3-4 times per year
 - Relationship to food: Was pain worse on empty stomach? Was it relieved after taking food? Was there difficulty in swallowing solid and/or liquid food?
- Protrusion/distension of belly
 - Onset: sudden or gradual
- Mass in the belly – size (like a lime, an orange, etc)
- Associated with loss of appetite, nausea, jaundice, constipation, black stools, vomiting with blood, breathing problems, sweating, history of surgery or trauma, history of lump/mass in abdomen

9. DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING

- Difficulty in swallowing solid or liquid food or both
- Pain upon swallowing

10. URINARY PROBLEMS

- Change in passing urine: stopped urinating, urinated more often than usual, blood in urine, turbid urine / pus in urine, pain or burning when urinating, difficulty urinating or holding urine, pain in the bladder region

11. JAUNDICE (YELLOWNESS IN THE WHITE PART OF EYES OR SKIN)

- Location: eyes, skin, urine (dark yellow/brown)
- Onset: early and got worse, or later after person was quite ill for some time
- Associated with fever, weight loss, swelling of abdomen, feet and then face and hands, breathing problems, vomiting with blood

12. SEIZURES/ FITS/ CONVULSIONS

- History of sudden jerky movements of arms, legs or whole body, with or without loss of consciousness, awake between fits or not
- Associated with fever, rolling of eyeballs, frothing of mouth, loss of memory, bit tongue, bed wetting, confused, history of head injury

13. UNCONSCIOUS/ UNRESPONSIVE

- Onset: sudden or gradual
- Continued until death
- Unconscious for <24hrs or >24hrs before death

Child Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

14. VOMIT

- Black vomit, like coffee grounds
- Blood in the vomit

15. SKIN PROBLEM/ ULCER

- Skin rash
- Measles rash
- Sores or ulcers
 - With clear fluid or pus
 - Ulcer (pit) on the foot, oozing pus
- Skin flaking off in patches
- Areas of skin that turned black, areas of skin with redness and swelling

16. LUMPS

- Location: neck, armpit, groin

17. PARALYSIS

- Paralysis of only one side of the body
- Any limbs or body parts paralyzed

18. NECK STIFFNESS

- Severe headache
- Painful neck

19. INJURY

- Nature of injury
- How, when, and where did it happen? Which body parts were injured?
- If road traffic accident: what was the deceased's mode of travel (pedestrian, in light/heavy vehicle, motorcycle, pedal cycle) and with what did they collide (vehicle or stationary object)?
- Was it an accident, suicide, or homicide?
- If animal or insect bite: what was the animal/insect?

20. CHILD BIRTH (for child < 3-6 months)

- Able to suckle normally, stopped suckling, any physical abnormality at birth, size/weight at birth, part of multiple birth
- Bulging/sunken fontanelle

21. PREGNANCY DETAILS (for child < 3-6 months)

- Duration of the pregnancy, received professional assistance during delivery, mode of delivery
- Mother died during delivery, complications in the first/last 3 months of pregnancy or during delivery (diabetes, hypertension, infectious disease, trauma, taken medication, etc.)

Adult Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

1. FEVER

- Severity: high or low grade
- Continuous with no normal temperature, intermittent (on and off), occasional, fever only at night
- Fever rose every day
- Repeated attacks with chills, rigor, night sweats, muscle pain
- Associated with diarrhoea, cough, headache, chest pain, jaundice, burning sensation while passing urine, neck stiffness, irritation from and dislike of light or sound, convulsions/fits, confusion, drowsiness, coma, fever followed by rash/blisters or weight loss.

2. COUGH

- Dry, wet (with sputum), bloody (rusty), foul smelling
- If more than 2 weeks, ask about weight loss
- Worse during day or night, only at night
- Cough with wheezing or chest in-drawing
- Pain at the sides of the chest wall, pain worse with cough and/or deep breath
- Associated with fever, weight loss, night sweats, evening rise of temperature, vomiting, hoarseness of voice

3. BREATHING PROBLEM

- Onset and progression: did they initially feel short of breath on exertion, but progressively worsen to breathlessness at rest?
- Occurs soon after lying flat and relieved by sitting up
- What brings it on? Allergy or chest infection
- Episodes or attacks of wheezes and breathlessness
- Associated with fever, weight loss, night sweats, evening rise of temperature, vomiting and hoarseness of voice, swelling of hands and legs, body or abdomen

4. CHEST PAIN

- Onset: sudden or gradual
- Did pain last more than 24hrs or less than 24hrs?
- Location: chest, upper stomach, back
- Spread of pain: to left arm, deep central chest, hand, shoulder, back, etc.
- Pain worse with walking/exertion/cough or deep breath, touching the area or eating
- Associated with breathlessness, sweating, vomiting, shortness of breath, unconsciousness, fever, anxiousness

5. DIARRHOEA

- Blood/mucus in stools, watery/rice water-like stools
- If blood in stools: colour (red or black)
- If more than 30 days, ask about weight loss
- Continued until death
- How many times a day at worst
- Associated with vomiting, fever, very thirsty, dehydration (less water in the body, sunken eyes, reduced urine amount)

6. VOMIT

- Black vomit, like coffee grounds
- Blood in the vomit

7. ABDOMINAL PROBLEMS

- Abdominal pain:
 - Location: one place or all over; upper abdomen, lower abdomen, or both
 - Type: burning or dull

Adult Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

- Onset: sudden or gradual
- Severity, Awoke from sleep
- Periodicity: occurs in episodes, lasting 1-3 weeks every time, 3-4 times per year
- Relationship to food: Was pain worse on empty stomach? Was it relieved after taking food?
Was there difficulty in swallowing solid and/or liquid food?
- Protrusion/distension of belly
 - Onset: sudden or gradual
- Mass in the belly
- Associated with loss of appetite, nausea, jaundice, constipation, black stools, vomiting with blood, any bleeding from mouth, nose or anus, bloody diarrhoea, breathlessness, sweating, history of surgery or trauma or cancer, history of lump/mass in abdomen, alcohol abuse

8. UNCONSCIOUS/ UNRESPONSIVE

- Onset: sudden or gradual
- Continued until death
- Unconscious for <24hrs or >24hrs before death

9. SEIZURES/ FITS/ CONVULSIONS

- History of sudden jerky movements of arms or legs
- With or without loss of consciousness
- Awake between fits or not
- Associated with fever, paralysis/stroke, rolling of eyeballs, frothing of mouth, loss of memory, bit tongue, bed wetting, confusion, history of head injury

10. URINARY PROBLEMS

- Change in passing urine: reduced urine amount, stopped urinating, urinated more often than usual, blood in urine, turbid urine / pus in urine, pain or burning during urination, intense desire to pass more urine even after the bladder has been emptied
- Associated with pain in middle of lower abdomen, tenderness in the side of abdomen, sudden onset of pain in one or both loins, spreading to lower abdomen, paleness, nausea, vomiting, becoming dull, drowsy or unconscious, swelling of face or eyelids (especially in the morning), hands, legs or abdomen

11. SKIN PROBLEM/ ULCER

- Skin rash
- Measles rash
- Shingles
- Sores or ulcers
 - With clear fluid or pus
 - Ulcer (pit) on the foot, oozing pus
- Skin flaking off in patches

12. WEIGHT LOSS

- Loss of weight became very rapid in last 2-3 months
- Prolonged unexplained fever for more than 1 month (constant or continuous)
- Diarrhoea for more than 1 month
- Persistent cough for more than 2 weeks
- Swelling in armpits, neck, groin
- Itching and skin rash
- White sores or white patches in mouth
- History of tuberculosis / HIV/AIDS / cancer
- Weight loss associated with pain and difficulty in swallowing solid, liquids or both?

Adult Key Symptoms with Probing Questions

13. SWELLING

- Location: hands and feet, face, only abdomen, generalized
- Onset: sudden or gradual
- Worse at night or morning
- Associated with breathlessness at rest, fever, urinary problems, jaundice, worse with walking, fatigue, feeling the heart beat faster, nausea, loss of appetite, cough, pain

14. LUMPS

- Location: mouth, neck, armpit, groin, breast

15. PARALYSIS

- Onset: over minutes, hours, or noticed on waking up
- Accompanied by sudden loss of consciousness
- Any paralysis in any part of the body
- Location: left/right side, upper body, lower body, one arm or leg, left/right side of face
- Time of onset: during activity or in sleep
- Associated with vomiting, headache, loss of memory, loss of vision or speech, loss of urinary control, fecal incontinence or leakage, loss of sensation in any part of body, convulsions/fits, neck stiffness

16. JAUNDICE (YELLOWNESS IN THE WHITE PART OF EYES OR SKIN)

- Location: eyes, skin, urine (dark yellow/brown)
- Onset: early and got worse, or later after person was quite ill for some time
- Associated with fever, weight loss, swelling of abdomen, feet and then face and hands, breathlessness, vomiting blood, alcohol abuse, history of cancer

17. CANCER

- Location of cancer
- Cancer treatment taken: chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery

18. INJURY

- Nature of injury
- How, when, and where did it happen? Which body parts were injured?
- If road traffic accident: what was the deceased's mode of travel (pedestrian, in light/heavy vehicle, motorcycle, pedal cycle) and with what did they collide (vehicle or stationary object)?
- Was it an accident, suicide, or homicide?
- If animal or insect bite: what was the animal/insect?

19. MATERNAL DEATHS

- Gave birth to a live baby (within 6 weeks of her death), abnormally positioned baby, mode of delivery, hours spent in delivery, previous Caesarean section, received antenatal care
- When did she die (during pregnancy, during labor and delivery, or after delivery)
- Hypertension, foul smelling vaginal discharge, convulsions, blurred vision, fever, excessive bleeding, severe anaemia, diabetes mellitus
- Attempt to terminate the pregnancy