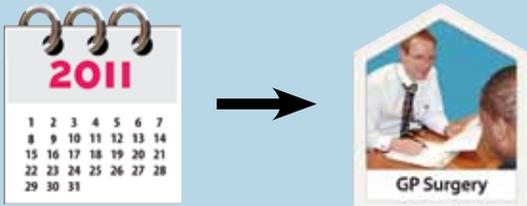
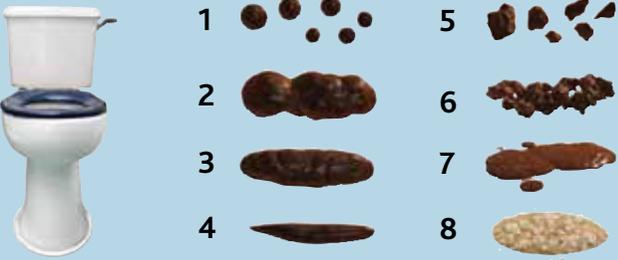
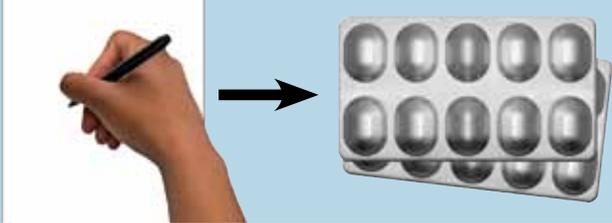


Communication jargon buster

Frequently used term or phrase	Alternatives	For example...	Visual prompt	Action	
Medication	Pills/tablet Medicine Capsules Injections Needles Cream	"I will give you some tablets/pills to make you feel better."		Use an example that the pills will come in eg blister pack, bottle.	Use the pill container and mime.
Take this three times a day	Pill/tablet Medicine Capsules Injections Needles Cream	"Take one pill at breakfast, take one pill at lunchtime, and one pill at bedtime."	<p>Breakfast Lunch Bedtime</p> 		Gesture taking the pill and then gesture eating or sleeping.
Come back in a week	See me... Visit me...	"Come back to see me after seven days/sleeps/bedtimes."			Point to calendar. Count seven days. Make use of person's visual timetable if brought along.
Are you in pain?	Hurt "Ow" Poorly "Ouch" Sore Bad Ache	"The 'ow' in your tummy... the 'hurt' in your head 'poorly' ear... can you point to where it hurts?"			<p>Makaton sign for pain</p>  <p>Pain: open claw shaped hand shaking over sight of pain.</p>

Frequently used term or phrase	Alternatives	For example...	Visual prompt	Action
<p>Pain Acute pain Dull pain Stabbing pain</p>	<p>Ow/hurt/sore Quick, big pain Long pain Jabby pain/hurt</p>	<p>"Is the hurt one big 'ow' or lots of little 'ow's'?"</p>		<p>Asking the person to mime here may be most useful.</p> <p>Your facial expression to model intensity here could also help.</p>
<p>When did the pain start?</p>	<p>Feel poorly Start to hurt</p>	<p>"Tell me about your hurt."</p>		<p>Put it into the context of the person's own activities, use their visual timetable, may need to use the knowledge of the supporter.</p>
<p>Bowels/Stools</p>	<p>Poo Bottom Brown toilet Number two</p>	<p>"What does your poo look like?" "Does it hurt to poo?" "Do you poo every day?"</p>		<p>Point to your bottom. You could mime urgency/diarrhoea and/or constipation.</p>
<p>How are you sleeping?</p>	<p>Sleep Bedtime</p>	<p>"Do you sleep well/good?" "Are you tired in the daytime?" "Do you wake up in the nighttime?" "Do you sleep in the daytime?"</p>		<p>Natural gesture of sleep (head on one side resting on hands pressed together).</p> <p>Mime yawning.</p>

Frequently used term or phrase	Alternatives	For example...	Visual prompt	Action
<p>Appetite</p>	<p>Hunger Hungry Food – wanting or needing food Eat/eating</p>	<p>“Do you feel hungry?” “Do you want to eat a lot?” “Does your tummy feel full/empty?”</p>		<p>Rub your stomach, as if hungry or pat, miming that it's full.</p> <p>Mime discomfort.</p>
<p>Urine</p>	<p>Wee Number one Yellow toilet</p>	<p>“What colour is your wee? Can you show me?” – use the colour chart in the next column as a visual prompt. “Do you need to do a lot of number ones?”</p>		<p>Point to groin /rub tummy to indicate discomfort.</p>
<p>Prescription</p>	<p>Letter Form Paper</p>	<p>“Give this letter to the pharmacist who will give you your medicine/pills.” “This paper helps you get some pills.”</p>		<p>Show the prescription indicate handing it over and receiving the pills.</p>
<p>I don't need to see you again unless the pain returns. [also see “Avoid negatives” on next page]</p>	<p>See me when/if...</p>	<p>“Come back and see me if you still feel poorly in five days/ after five sleeps”</p>		

Concepts around time

These can be difficult to explain, and people frequently use expressions which can be confusing (for example, "...a week on Tuesday"). A more simple way to communicate time might be: "Come back to see me in seven days" or "...seven sleeps". Calendars and pointing to notable events on a calendar help, if the person has a supporter they can help with this. For example, "On Tuesday you go swimming, then come and see the doctor". If the person attends alone they may have a diary or give them an appointment card. Don't rely on memory as these sorts of words are really hard for many people with a LD to understand and remember.

Open ended questions

For example, "How are you?". These are usually fine as conversational starters but for people with more severe communication needs you will quickly need to break it down into components. For example, "Tell me about your...sleep/eating/tummy/headache".

Avoid Negatives

Don't use language like "So you're not hearing Well?" as the "not" may not be understood. Instead be more direct. For example, "Tell me about your ear, it seems to be hurting you." Instead of "don't come back unless the pain returns" say something like "if your ear is still poorly come and see me again".

The appearance of understanding

The person may appear to understand if they nod and smile and say yes, but it could be the case that they have not understood. To check if they have, ask simple questions that require a factual answer. For example, "Ok, so just to check...can you tell me what I want you to do/take?" or "Can you tell me what happens next?"

Take your time

Some people require time to process what you are saying and it helps a great deal if you can break down long instructions or questions into smaller chunks. You may also need to pause to allow the person to process before they are able to answer, perhaps for longer than feels comfortable. Don't feel you need to fill the silence by repeating the question as you may overload the patient and they might not be able to answer.

Communication aids

Encourage your patient and their supporter to bring any communication aids with them before the appointment as these can be invaluable in explaining things to the patient and helping them explain things to you.

For more tips on communication with people with learning disabilities go to www.gmc-uk.org/learningdisabilitie