

# Medication Explained

Essential English for Pharmacists

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現場で役立つ薬学英語表現

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NAN'UN-DO

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# PREFACE

## Background:

Imagine being sick in a foreign country where you do not understand the language. To make matters worse, what if you weren't able to read the medicine explanation? This is the situation for many visitors and foreign residents in Japan. They cannot understand Japanese and cannot even look up the words in dictionaries because they are written in "Kanji," Chinese characters.

In such a situation, a pharmacist who can explain medicine in English is a great help. Even when English is not the native language of the foreign resident, it is much more widely understood than Japanese.

## Objective:

This textbook presents a patient-centered approach to help Japanese pharmacists explain medicine in English.

## Method:

The language introduced is intended for patients who are not in the medical profession. Thus, "everyday English" is recommended instead of medical terminology. For example, the terms "pain reliever" or "painkiller" are suggested, rather than "analgesic."

The textbook presents a four-part framework for explaining medicine quickly, clearly, and concisely.

- 1) What the medicine is
- 2) How to administer the medicine
- 3) Precautions
- 4) Storage methods

This framework allows both student and teacher to focus on specific points without losing focus on the overall objective of explaining medicine.

Material is introduced step by step, and many exercises are given to practice what has been learned. Learning tasks start out easy and become progressively more difficult, resulting in a series of mini-successes which motivate the students to move forward.

After learning the basics, role-play activities are then set up and practiced. By the end of the course, students will be able to put into active use what they have learned.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I would like to thank my wife for her support, helping with multiple drafts of the book and taking care of the boys.

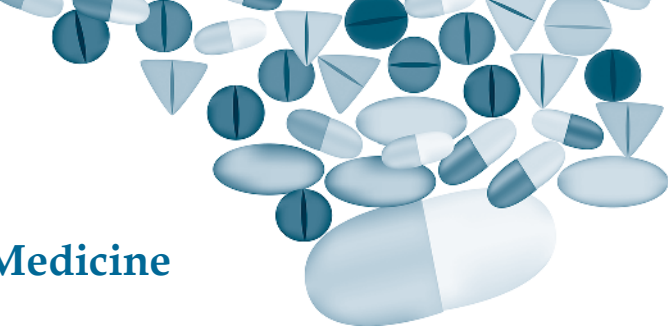
Finally, I would like to thank my first and best teacher, my mom, for giving me my inspiration.

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# UNIT 1

## Introduction to Explaining Medicine



When dispensing medicine, a pharmacist should explain four things: 1) what the medicine is; 2) how to administer the medicine; 3) precautions; and 4) storage methods.

### 1) What the medicine is

First, tell the patient what you are giving them. Explain: 1) the type of medicine (cold medicine, antibiotics, etc.) (薬の種類); and 2) what it is effective for (indications). (効能・効果)

e.g. “This is cold medicine. It is for fever and runny nose.”  
(薬の種類) (効能・効果)

### 2) How to administer the medicine

Next, inform the patient how to use the medicine. Include these five points: method of administration (投与方法), dosage (用量), frequency (頻度), time of day (時間), and duration (期間).

e.g. “Take one tablet, three times a day, after meals, for three days.”  
(投与方法) (用量) (頻度) (時間) (期間)

### 3) Precautions

After that, discuss with the patient possible risks and concerns (precautions). Focus on these four points: adverse reactions / side effects (副作用), restrictions on use (使用についての制限), present illnesses and present conditions (現病歴と現在の状態), and previous medical history (既病歴).

e.g. “This medicine may cause drowsiness, so do not drive after taking it.”  
(副作用) (使用についての制限)

“Consult a doctor before taking this if you have asthma.”  
(使用についての制限) (現病歴)

“Do not take this if you have had an allergic reaction caused by this medicine.”  
(使用についての制限) (既病歴)

### 4) Storage methods

Finally, tell the patient how to store the medicine (保存方法). Focus your explanation on:  
a) things to keep the medicine “away from” (light, heat, children, etc.); and  
b) places to keep the medicine (in a cool, dark place, the refrigerator, etc.).

e.g. “Keep this away from direct sunlight, heat, and moisture.”  
(保存方法)

## Comprehension Questions

1. What are the four main topics to cover when explaining medicine?

---

2. What are the key points of the “What the medicine is” explanation?

---

3. What are the key points of the “How to administer the medicine” explanation?

---

4. What are the key points of the “Precautions” explanation?

---

5. What are the key points of the “Storage methods” explanation?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

## Find the Errors

Find the errors and rewrite the following sentences.

1. Cold medicine is it. It is fever and runny nose.

---

2. One tablet is taking three times a day, after a meal.

---

3. Consult a doctor taking this before if you have asthma.

---

4. Keep this in direct sunlight, heat, and moisture.

---

## Exercise 1

Match the words and phrases in the box with the explanation categories below. The first one is done for you.

- |   |                 |                             |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Adverse reactions / side effects         | b. Frequency    | c. What it is effective for |
| d. Present illnesses and present conditions | e. How to store | f. Restrictions on use      |
| g. Method of administration                 | h. Dosage       | i. Type of medicine         |
| j. Previous medical history                 | k. Duration     | l. Time of day              |

### Part 1: What the medicine is

1. \_\_\_\_\_ i. Type of medicine
2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 2: How to administer the medicine

3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 3: Precautions

8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 4: Storage methods

12. \_\_\_\_\_



## Exercise 2

Translate the sentences into English.

### What the medicine is

1. これは風邪薬です。発熱と鼻水のための薬です。

---

### How to administer the medicine

2. 3日間、1錠剤を1日3回食後に飲んでください。

---

### Precautions

3. この薬は眠気を起こすかもしれませんので、車の運転をしないでください。

---

4. 喘息の方はこの薬の服用前に医者にご相談してください。

---

5. この薬にアレルギー反応を起こしたことがある方はこの薬を服用しないでください。

---

### Storage methods

6. 直射日光、高温多湿を避けてください。

---

## UNIT 2

### Types of Medicine: “What is this?”



#### Common Types of Medicine

In English, we can use the words “medicine,” “medication” and, “drug” to describe various types of “医薬品.” However, “medicine” or “medication” are used more commonly by people outside the medical profession. For example, “風邪薬” is “cold medicine” or “cold medication,” not “cold drug.”

Pharmacists should use everyday English, not specialized medical words, when explaining medicine. For example, words like “pain reliever” or “painkiller,” are easier for patients to understand than “analgesic (鎮痛剤).”

A useful rule to explain medicine simply is: **a)** say the problem or place, then add the word “medicine” or **b)** say “medicine for” and the name of the disease.

**e.g.** cold medicine, stomach medicine, medicine for asthma, medicine for diabetes

Finally, there are some kinds of medicine that have specialized names, including eye drops, suppositories, lozenges, and laxatives. For this kind of medicine, do not add the word “medicine.” For example: Do not say “eye drops medicine.”

#### Comprehension Questions

1. What English word do most people use for “医薬品”?

---

2. What are two other English words for “analgesic”?

---

3. What is a rule for explaining medicine?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

## Vocabulary Lists



Below are some examples of medicines.

### General 一般

<input type="checkbox"/> cold medicine	風邪薬
<input type="checkbox"/> a pain reliever / a painkiller	痛み止め・鎮痛薬
<input type="checkbox"/> antiviral medicine	抗ウイルス薬
<input type="checkbox"/> an antibiotic / antibacterial medicine	抗生物質
<input type="checkbox"/> anti-fever medicine	解熱剤
<input type="checkbox"/> a suppository	座薬
<input type="checkbox"/> a supplement	サプリメント
<input type="checkbox"/> allergy medicine	抗アレルギー薬
<input type="checkbox"/> motion-sickness medicine / medicine for travel sickness	酔い止め

### Nose, throat and eyes 鼻、のど、眼

<input type="checkbox"/> a nasal spray	点鼻用スプレー
<input type="checkbox"/> medicine for asthma	喘息薬
<input type="checkbox"/> a gargle	うがい薬
<input type="checkbox"/> an inhalant	吸入薬
<input type="checkbox"/> cough medicine	咳止め
<input type="checkbox"/> cough drops	薬用キャンディ
<input type="checkbox"/> lozenges	トローチ
<input type="checkbox"/> eye drops	目薬

### Gastrointestinal 消化器

<input type="checkbox"/> an antacid	制酸薬
<input type="checkbox"/> stomach medicine	胃腸薬
<input type="checkbox"/> a laxative	便秘薬
<input type="checkbox"/> diarrhea medicine / medicine for diarrhea	下痢止め

### Skin 皮膚

<input type="checkbox"/> an ointment	塗り薬
<input type="checkbox"/> an antiseptic	消毒薬
<input type="checkbox"/> a patch	湿布／パッチ

### Other 他

<input type="checkbox"/> medicine for high blood pressure	高血圧薬
<input type="checkbox"/> medicine for heart disease	心臓病の薬
<input type="checkbox"/> medicine for diabetes / an antidiabetic	糖尿病薬
<input type="checkbox"/> an antidepressant	抗うつ剤

## Exercise 1

Imagine you are working in a pharmacy. For each person below, what kind of medicine would you recommend? (More than one answer is possible!)

1. I have a cough.

---

2. I have really dry eyes.

---

3. I've cut my finger.

---

4. I have nasal allergies.

---

5. I'm going whale-watching in a boat after lunch.

---

6. I have diarrhea.

---

7. I have a cold.

---

## Exercise 2

Write the English translations for each type of medicine in the matching places in the puzzle. The first one has been done for you.

Down	Across
2. 坐薬	1. 目薬
3. 風邪薬	6. 便秘薬
4. 吸入薬	7. 抗生物質
5. 塗り薬	8. サプリメント
7. 消毒薬	
9. 湿布／パッチ	

