

SYSTEMIC INQUIRY

"CARDINAL" SYMPTOMS

Adapted From

**Macleod's
Clinical Examination**

CMG Archives
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IMPORTANT

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Systemic Inquiry: "Cardinal" Symptoms

The following list can be used as a rough guide when make a client systemic inquiry:

Medications

- Prescribed medications being currently taken
- Over the counter medications being currently taken

General Health

- General well-being
- Sleep
- Appetite
- Weight change
- Energy

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Cardiovascular System

- Ankle swelling
- Palpitations
- Breathlessness when lying flat (orthopnoea)
- Chest pain on exertion
- Pain in legs on exertion
- Resting heart rate
- Resting blood pressure

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Respiratory System

- Shortness of breath: exercise tolerance
- Wheezing
- Cough
- Sputum production (colour, amount)
- Chest pain related to respiration or coughing
- Blood in sputum (haemoptysis)

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Alimentary

- Condition of mouth
- Difficulty with swallowing (dysphagia)
- Indigestion
- Heartburn
- Acid reflux
- Abdominal pain
- Weight loss
- Change in bowel habit
- Colour of motion (e.g. pale, dark, black, fresh blood)

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Urogenital

- Pain on passing urine (dysuria)
- Frequency of passing urine by day or night (nocturia)
- Abnormal colour of urine (e.g. blood)
- Number of sexual partners

Males

If appropriate age, prostatic symptoms such as difficulty in starting to pass urine, poor stream, terminal dribbling

If appropriate, mental attitude to sex (libido), morning erections, frequency of intercourse, ability to maintain erections, ejaculation, urethral discharge

Females

If premenopausal, age of onset of periods (menarche), regularity of periods (e.g. 28-day cycle), length of period, blood loss (e.g. clots, flooding), date of last period, contraception

If relevant, presence of vaginal discharge

If post-menopausal, bleeding

Stress and/or urge incontinence

If appropriate, libido, pain during intercourse (dyspareunia)

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Central Nervous System

- Headaches
- Fits
- Faints
- Tingling (paraesthesiae)
- Numbness
- Muscle weakness
- Hearing symptoms (e.g. deafness, tinnitus)
- Excessive thirst
- Sleep patterns

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Visual

- Appearance of eyes
- Pain
- Disturbance of vision

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Locomotor

- Joint pain or stiffness
- Muscle pain or weakness

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Endocrine

- Heat intolerance
- Cold intolerance
- Change in sweating
- Prominence of eyes
- Swelling in neck
- Excessive thirst

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Other

- Tobacco use (quantity)
- Alcohol use (quantity)
- Other substance use (quantity)

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References

Adapted from *Macleoud's Clinical Examination*. (2000). Edited by: Munro, John F. and Campbell, Ian W. Churchill Livingstone. ISBN 0-443-06172-6.

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