Decoding medical jargon

Below you'll find examples of complicated, hard-to-understand instructions that a doctor might give their patient. Practice replacing the jargon with plain language. Don't forget to use the teach-back method to confirm your "patient" understands what they need to do!

Here's an example to get you started.

Jargon instruction: Take propranolol to treat high blood pressure. This treatment is in a class of medications called beta blockers, which relax blood vessels and reduce heart rate to optimize blood flow. The proper dosage for immediate-release propranolol is twice daily. Food isn't necessary.

Plain language instruction: Your doctor prescribed a medication called propranolol to treat your high blood pressure. This medicine works by relaxing your blood vessels and slowing your heart down so that your blood pressure goes down. Remember to take this medicine 2 times a day — 1 pill in the morning and 1 pill in the evening. You don't need to take it with food. Now, I want to make sure that I explained this well — can you tell me how you'll take propranolol?

Now it's your turn!

Jargon instruction: Only give your child medication for fever and pain after consulting with your physician. To give the correct dose, you must know your child's weight. If your child weighs 36 to 47 lbs (16 to 21 kg), give a 7.5 mL dose of ibuprofen liquid 100mg/5ml. Use a medication syringe to administer the medicine. You may also give 3 chewable 50 mg tablets. Repeat every 6-8 hours as needed.

Plain language instruction:

Jargon instruction: The day before your colonoscopy, begin a clear liquid diet. At 12 p.m., take two Tulablutide tablets (5 mg each). Mix 64 ounces of liquid with 8.3 ounces of Verina, and place this mixture in the refrigerator. Drink 8 ounces of the solution 5 to 6 hours later. Continue drinking 8 ounces every 15 minutes until half the mixture is gone. Drink the remaining 32 ounces of solution 5 hours before you must leave for the procedure.

Plain language instruction:

Lilly