

OET Case Notes

Medicine · Beginner · Advice letter · to Patient

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Medicine — Advice Letter for Newly Diagnosed Hypertension

THE CASE NOTES

Patient: Mrs Patricia Yuen, 58 years old

Diagnosis: Hypertension: clinic BP 158/96, confirmed on 24-hour ambulatory monitoring (average 146/92)

New medication: Amlodipine 5 mg once daily in the morning

Lifestyle advice: Reduce salt intake; increase physical activity (30 minutes most days); reduce alcohol to within recommended limits; non-smoker

Monitoring: GP review in 4 weeks to check BP and medication tolerance; blood tests arranged (renal function, fasting glucose, cholesterol)

Side effects: Ankle swelling, flushing, dizziness — common with amlodipine; usually mild and settles within weeks

Target: Aim for BP below 140/90 in clinic; medication will be reassessed if not achieved at 4-week review

Task: Write an advice letter to Mrs Yuen explaining her diagnosis, her new medication and the lifestyle changes required.

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WHAT TO INCLUDE

+ The diagnosis in plain language and why treatment is needed

A patient who understands what hypertension is and why it matters will engage with the advice. The explanation does not need to be clinical; it needs to be clear.

+ How and when to take amlodipine

The central instruction. A once-daily medicine taken at irregular times is taken inconsistently — timing matters.

+ The most likely side effect (ankle swelling) and that it usually settles

Pre-warning prevents the patient stopping the medicine unnecessarily. This is the standard safety net for calcium channel blockers.

+ The 4-week review date

A concrete next step signals that you are monitoring the patient and gives her a timeline. Advice letters without a follow-up plan feel incomplete to both the patient and the examiner.

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

– The ambulatory monitoring methodology

Tell the patient the blood pressure was confirmed on a longer monitoring period; the technical procedure does not help her manage her condition.

– The pharmacology of calcium channel blockers

Mechanism detail is the wrong register for a patient advice letter. Explain what the tablet does in one plain sentence; never the biochemical how.

CRITERION IN FOCUS · GENRE & STYLE

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An advice letter to a patient is the clearest Genre & Style test in OET Medicine. Examiners expect warm, plain, supportive language — not clinical jargon, not a lecture. 'Your blood pressure was higher than normal' is right; 'Your hypertensive readings exceeded threshold values' is not. Correct register throughout separates a B from a C.

Write this letter, then get it marked at oetwritingcorrection.com/oet-writing-services

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