

Building Patient History Skills

When I get ready to start an exam, I prefer to look at any history the patient may already have listed. After that I look at what anatomy we are going to x- raying. Knowing this will help me think of any other question I need to ask, so that we can make sure we have all of the patient history before I perform their x-ray.

While I was at SWMP I did a clavicle x-ray on a teenage boy. The first thing I did was get the order and see if he had any previous history. Next, I went to the waiting area and retrieved the patient. I verified that it was the right person by asking him his name and date of birth. When I got him in the x-ray room, I asked him these three questions “it is your collar bone?” “What happened?” and “when did it happen?” He told me that he had played football the day before. I then got him positioned for the image and told him if at any time I did something that hurt him to make sure he let me know. When I finished the images, I walked him and his parents back to the lobby. Once we were in the lobby area I showed them which way they need to go so they could get to the doctor’s office upstairs.

The reason I chose to ask him those questions was to help me understand how long his collar bone has been hurting and to help me see what I need to be looking for. Being that it is very common for young boys to break their clavicle while playing football, that also gave me an idea of what to look for. We did not relay this information to the radiologist because he went straight up to the doctor. If he had not gone straight to the doctor’s

office from x-ray, we would have put that information in the notes. The one question that I did not ask and I wish I would have is "Is there any other area around you collar bone that is hurting?" This question could have helped the radiologist look at the areas around his collar bone and see if anything else was wrong. If I had not provided any patient information at all to the radiologists, he might have missed or overlooked something. However, with the information I gathered it will help the doctor to determine the correct diagnosis and how to treat it. While watching the techs I have learned what questions to ask for certain exams and, I understand why those question should be asked. These questions could help the radiologist know what else to look for.

I would give myself an eight (8) on my patient history technique. I do good about asking patients about their history, however there is always room for improvement. I think that there are times when I ask good questions. Then there will be times after the patient leave, I think of another question I could've asked to get a little more information. When I first started clinicals I did not really understand the point in asking patient history questions, because it was given on the bottoms of the orders. After being in clinicals for a while now I have learned that some people are not truthful or they do not have any record of patient history at this office.