

Below is a template for writing a complete pediatric patient record. In a consultation, begin with the concerns of the parent(s) and end with the most disliked part of the examination.

Keep focused. Be detailed *when relevant*.

There must be a *logical sequence* in your record. The record is a legal document that must describe your thinking and action with the precision and completeness necessary in a courtroom.

Present history -> background history -> status presens -> supplementary investigations -> interpretation/diagnosis -> management

In the history: Use dates or "x many days ago", not weekdays.

In the status presens: Describe what you **observe**, **not** your interpretation of it!

## History:

First, note how you got the information. Who's present? Direct interview? Telephone? Transcriber?

### Reason for admission:

Why is the patient admitted this time.

### Social History:

Age and sex of the patient.

Ethnic background, birthplace, language understanding level of parent(s).

Siblings and home environment (smoking, pets, carpeting).

The child's level of care is important to note, including the number of caretakers, the work situation of the parent(s), childcare while parent(s) are at work (child daycare center, school, afterschool program).

### Family History:

Disease in the family, parents, siblings or other close relatives. Death of a sibling due to unknown cause.

Relative to the presenting complain/disease.

### Past Medical History / Hospital Admissions:

Pregnancy, birth and neonatal period, including birthweight and gestation. Growth. Nutritional state (length of breastfeeding). Health center check-ups and immunization status (reasons if not vaccinated). Progression of key developmental milestones (time of rolling over, sitting, walking, talking in sentences). These elements must be noted in detail when deviation from the norm or a neurological disorder is suspected.

Previous illness, hospital admissions, health problems in childhood, exposure to risk of infection, allergies and non-tolerable foods.

### Present situation:

Reason for consultation. Initiation of symptoms (gradual or sudden start). Description of symptoms, specific symptoms (cough, laboured breathing, vomiting, diarrhoea, pain, etc).

It is important to obtain detailed and specific information and to note the order with which the symptoms presented themselves. Describe the chronicity of each symptom independently.

Be open and listen to the parent(s)! It is very important to note the concerns of the parent(s).

### Vegetative functions:

Urination

Defecation

Appetite

Sleep

### Medications:

Any use of medications, including dosage.

**Allergy:**

Obligatory when assessing e.g. obstructive airways disease  
Include any adverse reactions to medications.

**Status praesens, date and time:**

*Describe what you observe, **not** your interpretation of it!*

X-month/year-old boy/girl. Generally good health/ill-health. Well/thin/emaciated.  
Hollow eyes, sunken fontanelle, reduced turgor?  
Degree of contact. Movement. Co-operation during the examination.  
Oedema (seldom seen in children). Rash. Cyanosis. Jaundice. Petechiae.  
Nuchal and back rigidity. Enlarged lymph nodes – where?  
Respiratory distress? (tachypnoea, laboured breathing/ease of respiration, nasal flaring)

Height (percentile)      Weight (percentile)      Head circumference (percentile, children younger than 2 years old)  
Pulse  
Respiratory rate  
Blood pressure  
Temperature  
Capillary refill time (central/peripheral)

**Caput:**

Tension of the anterior fontanelle. Separation of the sutures. Shape, symmetry.

**ENT:**

Examination of the ears with an otoscope and examination of the throat should be made at the end of the consultation.

**Neck:**

Slightly enlarged glands are not uncommon. Describe enlarged glands (where, size, soft/hard, tender...)

**Thorax:**

Inspection of the chest: chest wall recession, use of accessory muscles of respiration

**Cor:**

Inspection (voussure)  
Palpation (ventricular heave, displaced ictus, thrill)  
Auscultation (heart sounds, systolic/diastolic murmurs)  
Percussion (rarely helpful in children).

**Pulm:**

Auscultation (abnormal breath sounds: Stridor, crackles, wheeze, decreased breath sounds, expiratory grunting). Prolonged expiration?  
Assisted, forced respiration  
Percussion (comparing sides)

**Abdomen:**

Inspection, auscultation, palpation and percussion  
Palpation should be done tenderly.  
Femoral pulses.

Scrotum – often appropriate if abdominal pain

**Rectal examination:**

Not part of the routine examination. When performed, the little finger should be used with young children.

**Reflexes:**

Checking for primitive reflexes during the first months. These reflexes gradually disappear after three months of age, and should be absent after 6 months, with the exception of the plantar grasping reflex, which is gone by the 9<sup>th</sup> month. Deep tendon reflexes can be examined from the 6<sup>th</sup> month.

**Neurological screening:**

A brief neurological overview should be performed in all children (contact, muscle tone and patterns of movement), while a more detailed neurological examination is only done when indicated.

**Supplementary investigations:**

*List investigations performed or planned with date/time relevance to the present complaint*

Imaging (x-ray, ultrasound, CT, MRI, scintigraphic ex. ++)

Blood chemistry

EEG, ECG, urinary test, fecal sampling, nasopharynx aspirate ++

Include all results as possible!

**Summary and interpretation (including tentative diagnosis):**

Patient record ends with a short summary of the patient history and examination findings. This should not include new information, but rather the essential points of the patient history and examination.

An interpretation of the symptoms and findings, leading to a conclusion with a *tentative diagnosis* should be clearly separated from the history and status. Are vital signs (pulse, RR, BP...) normal for age?

**Management plan:**

Hospitalization? Treatment initiated? No actions necessary?