The Medical History or Case History (also called anamnesis, especially historically) (often abbreviated hx or Hx) of a patient is information gained by a physician by asking specific questions, either of the patient or of other people who know the person and can give suitable information with the aim of obtaining information useful in formulating a diagnosis and providing medical care to the patients.

**The importance of adequate medical history taking:**

- In medicine, History taking is the cornerstone of medical diagnosis and usually gives the answer in about 80% of cases with a further 10% coming from examination and 10% from investigations.

  I. It Is the Cornerstone of Patient Evaluation & Risk Assessment
  II. Identifies Systemic Disease
  III. Identifies Medications
  IV. Establishes Rapport (positive professional relationship)
  V. Medicolegal Protection for The Practitioner

- Medical histories vary in their depth and focus between medical specialties.
- Medical history is a vital part of dental history and increases the dentist's awareness of diseases and medication which might interfere with the patient's dental treatment.
- In Dentistry, *many medical problems and/or drugs can affect or influence the provision of dental care Examples:*
  - **Heart disease** (infection, bleeding, drug interactions, cause an MI or angina, oral lesions)
  - **Allergies** (reactions to local anesthetics, antibiotics, analgesics, latex)
  - **Diabetes** (infection, hypoglycemia, periodontal disease)
  - **Bleeding disorders;** drug induced or genetic (abnormal hemostasis)
So the role of medical history in dentistry:

- It may be related to the diagnosis
- Precautionary measures are sometimes indicated.
- Pre-medication, or controlling before dental treatment.
- For medical consultation if needed.
- Dental treatment might affect the patient systemic health
- Screening for Systemic disease (e.g.: HT, DM)

How to take a history?

**General Approach for case history:**

- **Introduce yourself.**
  - Note – never forget patient names
  - Treat patient appropriately in a friendly relaxed way.
  - Confidentiality and respect patient privacy.

- **Try to see things from patient point of view.**
  - Understand patient underneath mental status, anxiety, irritation or depression.
  - Always exhibit neutral position.

- **Listening**
- **Questioning:**
  - simple/clear/avoid medical terms/open, leading, interrupting, direct questions and summarizing.

**STEPS IN HISTORY TAKING:**

1. Personal data (demographic data)
2. Chief complaint
3. History of present illness
4. Past medical history
5. Systemic enquiry
6. Family history
7. Drug history
8. Social history

- The *dental case history* is a modified form of medical history, and is taken in different formats, include:
  - Self-administered pre-printed forms filled by the patient. (Medical Questionnaire)
  - Direct interview of the patient by the clinician
  - A combination of both (preferred method)
• The past medical section of dental history concentrates on:
  ✓ **Serious illness** (heart attack, bleeding disorders).
  ✓ **Fits or faints**.
  ✓ **Hospitalization**.
  ✓ **Allergies** (allergic testing should be considered for susceptible patients).
  ✓ **Medications** taken in the last six months.
  ✓ **Childhood diseases** (as rheumatic fever).

• **Medications Hx (Drugs hx) advantages:**
  ✓ Identify Drugs that produce oral manifestations.
  ✓ Identify Drugs that indicate systemic diseases.
  ✓ Identify Drugs which need adjustment.
  ✓ Identify Drug interaction
  ✓ Identify Adverse reactions of drugs

**Basic Medical Questionnaire in dental case sheets:**

- Anemia or Allergies?
- Bleeding tendencies?
- Cardiorespiratory complaints?
- Drug treatment?
- Endocrine disorders?
- Fits or faints?
- Gastrointestinal complaints?
- Hospital admission or attendance?
- Infections including HIV/AIDS
- Jaundice or liver disease?
- Kidney disease?
- Likelihood of, or existing pregnancy?
- Medical warning card carried? (*hemophilic, long-term corticosteroid therapy, allergic to penicillin*)