

MEDICAL SIGN LANGUAGE

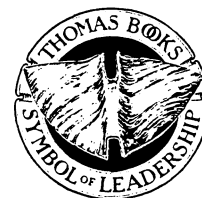
MEDICAL SIGN LANGUAGE

Easily Understood Definitions of Commonly Used
Medical, Dental and First Aid Terms

By

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**This manual is dedicated to
my Mother and Father
and Mr. Felix and Mrs. Barbra McGinnis
who made the entire project possible.**

INTRODUCTION

To the Medical Facility:

It is suggested at least one person on staff per working shift be enrolled in an American Sign Language (ASL) class. This manual will greatly assist one in communicating medical information to the deaf once understanding of ASL is acquired. A medical facility may wish to keep this manual on hand for reference when an interpreter or individual with signing experience is not available. This manual may assist in communicating medical information to the deaf under these circumstances.

To the Deaf Individual:

This manual was designed to provide the reader with clear, easily understood definitions of commonly used medical, dental, and first aid terms.

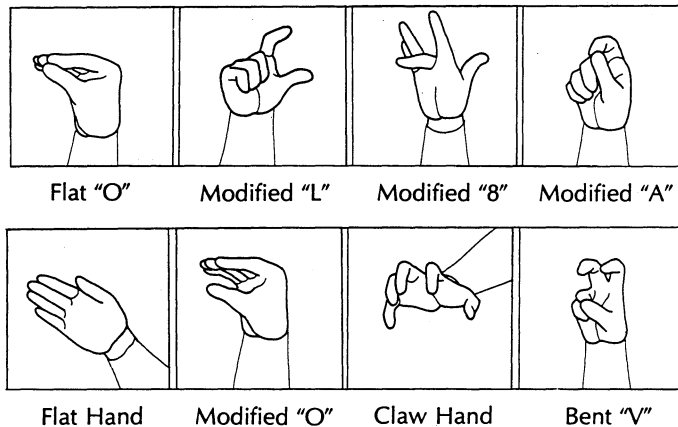
To the Interpreter for the Deaf:

This manual offers suggestions for interpreting medical terms. In cases where we were unable to equate a sign for some terms, the interpreter may sign the accompanying definitions, which were written in a manner to facilitate interpreting English into American Sign Language.

For terms with a common sign variation used widely by the deaf, a second or third suggested sign will be included.

A different face and the letters a, b, c, or d are used to show the sign's variations. Dotted lines show the beginning positions of the hands. (DM) = double movement, (SM) = single movement, and (MM) = multiple movement.

There are several hand shapes referred to throughout the manual. They are as follows:



To the Beginning Signer:

Take classes in American Sign Language (ASL). Learn the syntax and morphology of ASL in addition to the cultural aspects of the deaf society, and then this manual will be valuable to you. Any text that only provides vocabulary lists should be avoided until understanding of the ASL language structure is obtained.

It would be inappropriate to try to include in this Introduction the principles of American Sign Language. I believe more would be gained by the beginner learning this information through the instructor of an ASL class.

An important point to make is that giving a deaf person a written note is not an accurate way to achieve communication. English is a second language to the deaf and not their native language. Lou Fant wrote in the Introduction to his text, *An Introduction to Ameslam*, "Imagine yourself in a glass sound proof booth with a pencil and paper. Outside is a person trying to teach you to read, write and speak the Japanese language." How well would you master the language? How long would it take? How comfortable would you be trying to communicate your medical problems and needs, especially in written form, through this language?

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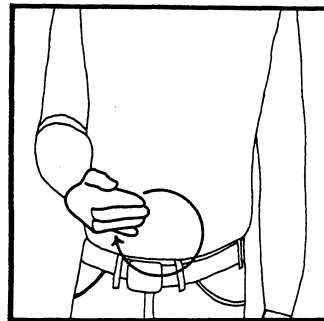
MEDICAL SIGN LANGUAGE

a 

ABDOMEN

The belly; the part of the body below the chest and above the legs. It includes the stomach, intestines, gallbladder, spleen, liver, pancreas and bladder. See *Figure 1*

(1) The fingertips of the right “flat” hand make a circle on the lower stomach.(SM)



(1)

ABDOMINAL CRAMP

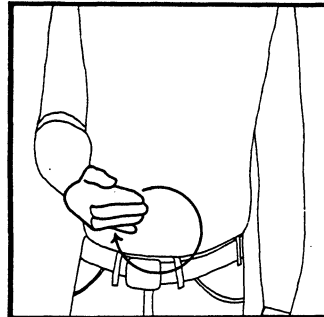
A tightening of the muscles in the abdomen which is very painful and dangerous.

An abdominal cramp may be a warning of a severe problem.

(1) The fingertips of the right “flat” hand make a circle on the lower stomach.(SM)

(2) Sign CRAMP — both “claw” hands are at stomach level with palms facing in. Move both hands into “S” hands and twist in opposite directions as if wringing out a cloth. (SM)

* *The facial expression should show pain.*



(1)



(2)

ABERRATION

An error in the way the lens of the eye focuses light.

Due to an aberration, her vision was blurred.

(1) Sign SEE — the right “V” hand faces in at eye level. Move the hand out forward.(SM)

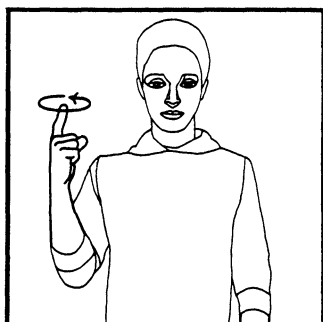
(2) Both “five” hands face each other at eye level, with the right hand on the inside. Move both hands alternately from right to left a few times.(MM)



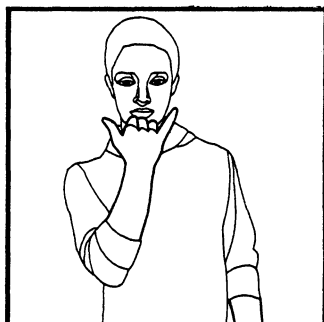
(1)



(2)



(1)



(2)

ABNORMAL

Not right, not normal, irregular or unusual.

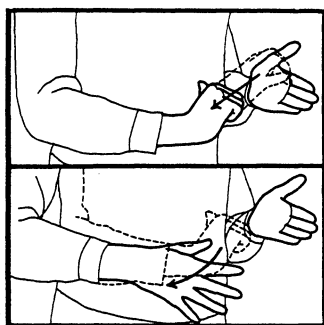
Being sick for a long time is abnormal.

(1) Sign SOMETHING — the right “one” hand faces left at chest level and makes a small circle, keeping the wrist stiff.(SM)

(2) Sign WRONG — the right “Y” hand faces in under the chin.(SM)



a.(1)



a.(2)

ABORTION

A natural or medically caused removal of a baby from the uterus before it is ready to be born.

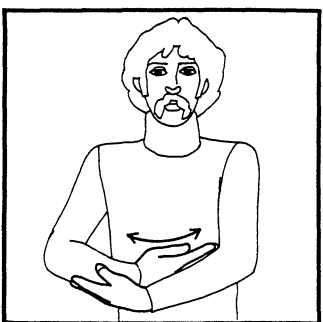
It is important to watch for infection following an abortion.

a. (1) Sign BABY — the right hand and forearm face up, resting on the left hand and forearm which also face upward. Both are then rocked back and forth as if holding a baby.(MM)

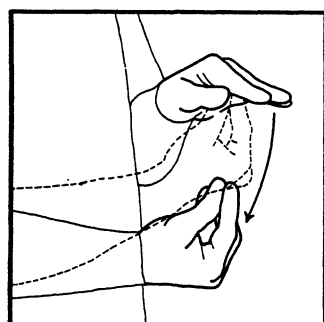
(2) The left “flat” hand faces right at stomach level. The right “claw” hand moves down the left palm into an “A” hand then opens into a “five” hand as it is thrown down.(SM)

b. (1) Sign BABY — the right hand and forearm face up, resting on the left hand and forearm which also face upward. Both are then rocked back and forth as if holding a baby.(MM)

(2) The left cupped hand faces down at stomach level. The fingertips of the right “flat-O” hand touch the left palm. Move the right hand down towards the floor.(SM)



b.(1)



b.(2)

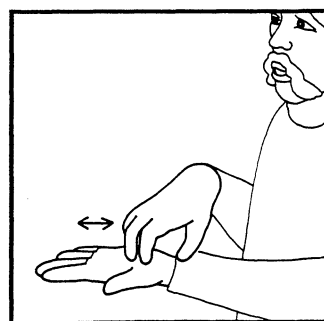
ABRASION

A wound caused by the scraping away of the skin with something rough.

It is important to thoroughly clean an abrasion to prevent infection.

(1) The left “flat” hand faces up at chest level. The right “claw” hand scratches back and forth on the left palm.(MM)

* The right “flat” hand could rub the exact injured area following this sign.



(1)

ABSCESS

A collection of pus in an infected area of the body, usually near an opening in the skin or a wound.

A doctor should be seen when an abscess is present because it may spread and infect the entire body.

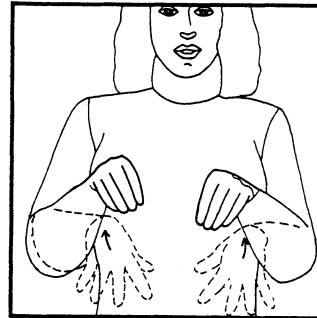
ABSORB

To soak up.

One reason bandages are used is to absorb blood and fluids from wounds.

(1) Both "five" hands face in at waist level. Move both hands up to chest level, ending in "flat-O" hands.(SM)

* The mouth movement should imitate sucking in the air.



(1)

ABSTINENCE

Going without sexual activity. Abstinence can also be used to mean going without anything, as alcohol, food or drugs.

A doctor may advise abstinence after a woman has a baby to prevent infection in her vagina and to allow any damage done during labor to be repaired.

a. (1) Sign SEX — the right "X" hand faces out and touches at the temple and then the upper jaw. (SM)

(2) The left "one" hand faces down at waist level. The right "X" hand faces down and hooks over the left index finger. Move both hands up to chest level. (SM)

b. (1) Sign SEX — the right "X" hand faces out and touches at the temple and then the upper jaw. (SM)

(2) Sign NONE — both "flat-O" hands face down at shoulder level. Move both hands out forward and to the sides.(SM)

* If food, drugs, or alcohol is meant, the sign for "food", "drugs", or "alcohol" should be signed followed by the NONE sign.



a.(1)



a.(2)



b.(1)



b.(2)

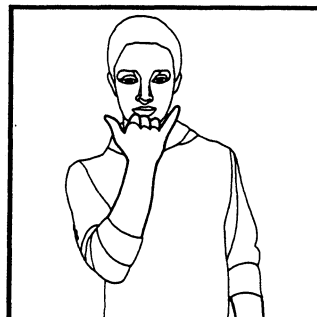
ABUSE

Wrong or improper use of something or someone, resulting in injury.

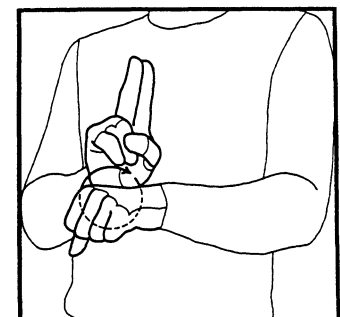
Drug and alcohol abuse are problems in today's society.

(1) Sign WRONG — the right "Y" hand faces in at the chin (SM)

(2) Sign USE — the left "S" hand faces down at chest level. The right "U" hand faces out and makes a small circle then touches the left hand.(SM)



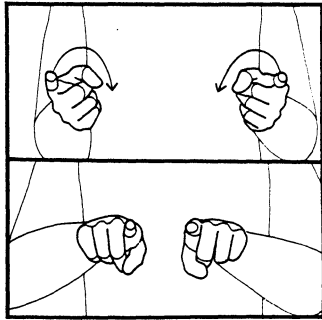
(1)



(2)



(1)



(2)

ACCIDENT

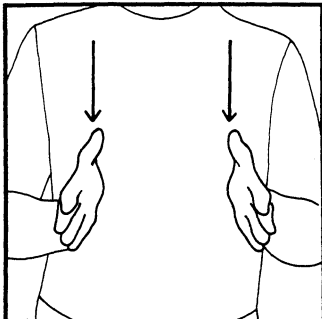
An undesirable, unexpected event resulting in damage.

The best way to avoid an accident is by being careful all of the time.

- (1) Sign WRONG — the right “Y” hand faces in at the chin (SM)
- (2) Sign HAPPEN — both “one” hands face up at chest level. Move both hands in and down, ending with palms facing down.(SM)



(1)



(2)

ACCIDENT VICTIM

A person involved in an accident.

An accident victim should get quick medical help.

- (1) Sign SUFFER — the back of the thumb of the right “A” hand touches the chin. Pivot the hand slightly from left to right a few times.(MM)

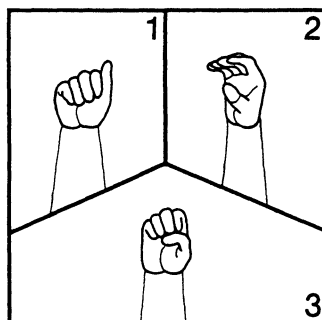
** The facial expression should show suffering.*

- (2) Sign PERSON — both “flat” hands face each other at chest level. Move both hands down to waist level.(SM)

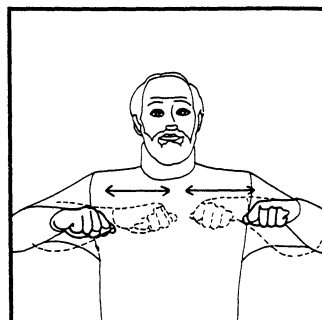
ACCOMMODATION

In optometry, the changes in the eye which allow us to see things that are different distances from us.

In accommodation, the muscles in the ciliary body help change the shape of the lens, allowing images at different distances to be focused on the retina.



(1)



(2)

ACE BANDAGE®

The name under which a kind of bandage is sold. An ace bandage has elastic in it to make it stretchy.

An ace bandage is often used to apply firm constant pressure on a part of the body.

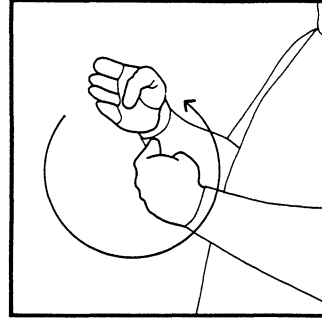
- (1) Fingerspell “A-C-E”.
- (2) Both “A” hands face down at chest level. Move both hands out to the sides and then in a few times as if imitating something stretching. (MM)

(Continued on next page)

ACE BANDAGE, continued

(3) Sign BANDAGE — the left “B” hand faces in at chest level. The right “B” hand also faces in. Circle the right hand out and around the left hand a few times as if imitating wrapping a bandage. (MM)

* This should be signed at the area where the bandage is being applied.



(3)

ACETYSALICYLIC ACID

The chemical name for aspirin.

Acetylsalicylic acid is mixed with other chemicals to make common pain relievers.

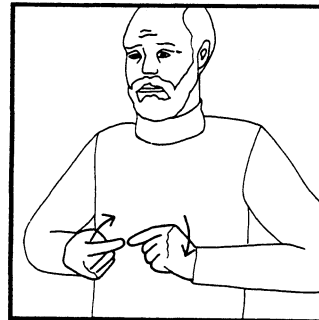
ACHE

A dull, persistent pain; the pain itself.

A continuous ache anywhere in the body is usually a sign that something is not right, and a doctor should be seen.

(1) Sign PAIN — both “one” hands face each other with palms facing in. Twist both hands in opposite directions a few times.

*This can be signed at the area of an ache. Facial expression should show pain.



(1)

ACHILLES TENDON

The connecting tissue between the muscles in the calf and the heel. See Figure 5

(1) The right index finger points to the tendon.

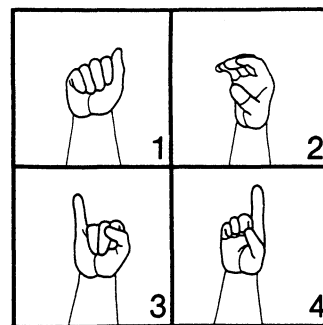
ACID

A chemical that has a sour taste and will cause burns; in chemistry, a substance which can give up a proton or a hydrogen ion; the common slang name for L.S.D. (lysergic acid diethylamide).

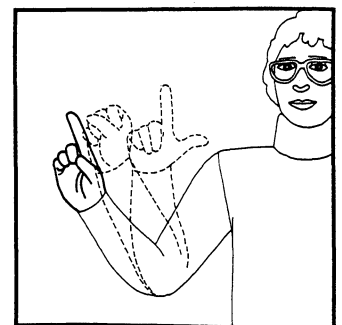
All acids should be labeled and handled with great care.

a. (1) Fingerspell “A-C-I-D” if referring to the chemical.

b. (1) Fingerspell “L-S-D” if referring to the drug.



a.(1)



b.(1)