

Sign language for health

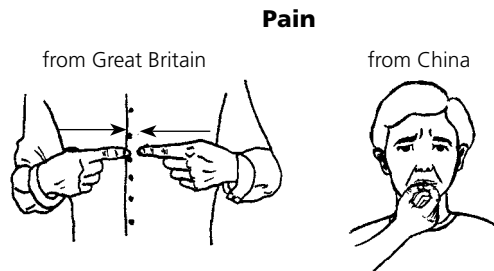
In most communities around the world, deaf people have created their own sign language. They use signs to communicate as well and nearly as fast as hearing people do. The signs shown here are from several countries. The sign for the same word can be different in different places. Use these signs as a guide. If you are a health worker, family member, or caregiver, ask the deaf women in your community to teach you the signs they use, how you should change and adapt these signs, and to teach you other signs. Sign language can help you make sure deaf women in your community get good health care.

SIGNS HEALTH WORKERS NEED TO KNOW

Here are examples of some signs a health worker needs to know to provide good health services for deaf women. Sometimes signs are based on gestures, and sometimes by finger-spelling letters of the alphabet.

Signs that point at the body

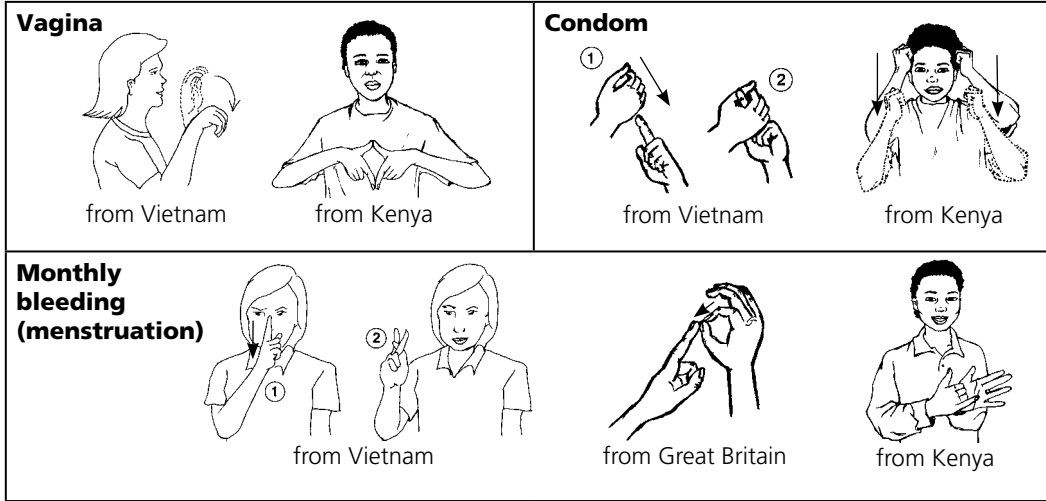
Body parts can be pointed at to show where a pain is. For example, to show a pain in the belly, make the sign for pain and then point to the belly.



Signs that use gestures

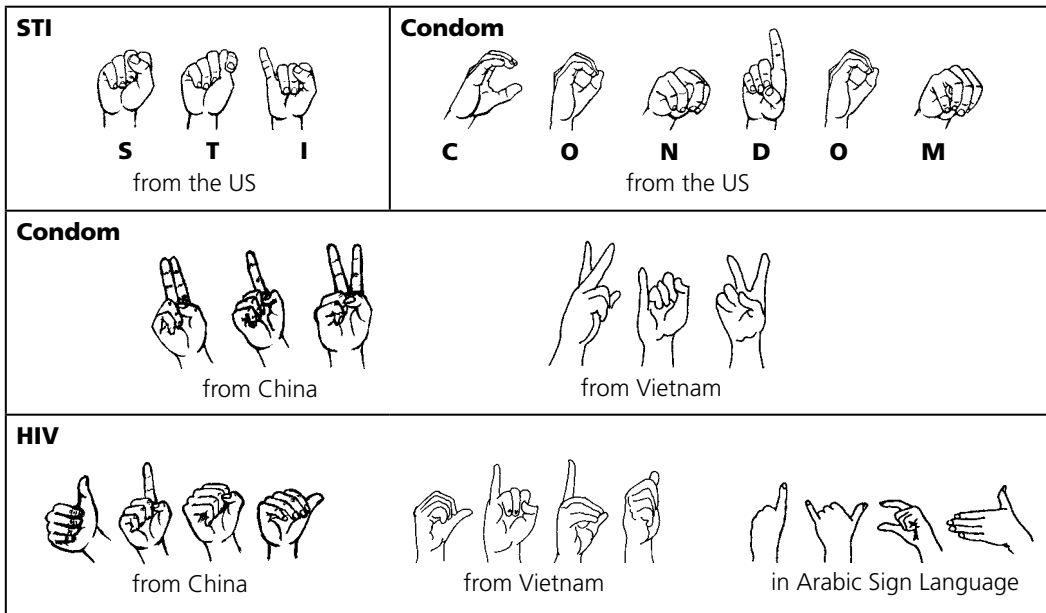
Here are examples of other signs to use in a health setting. These signs mostly use gestures:

<p>AIDS</p> <p>from Kenya from China</p>	<p>Infection</p> <p>from Vietnam from Great Britain</p>	<p>Medicine</p> <p>from the US from Kenya</p>	
<p>Family planning</p> <p>from Vietnam</p>	<p>from Kenya</p>		<p>Sex</p> <p>from Vietnam from Kenya</p>



Signs that use finger spelling

Many words can be understood by using finger spelling. For instance:



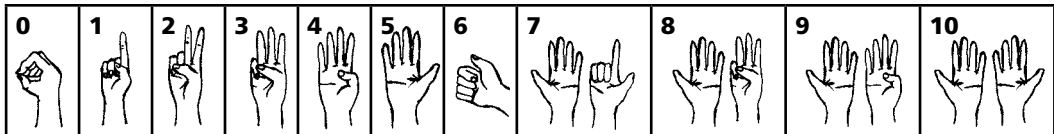
Other useful words to learn signs for

Here are suggestions for other words it would be good for a health worker to learn in a local sign language:

abortion	chills	no feeling (<i>numb</i>)	passing urine
abuse	clean/wash	fever	pelvis
anus	cramps	growth (<i>on skin</i> <i>or inside body</i>)	penis
birth	cuts/sores/tears	itchy	pregnant
blood/bleeding	depression	labor	rape
blurred vision	diarrhea	lump	sleeping problems
breast	discharge	medicines	sweating
breastfeeding	dizzy	miscarriage	swollen
breathing problems	dry	mucus	tenderness
burning	exams (<i>examination</i>)	nausea (<i>feeling sick</i>)	vomiting
changes in color	exercise	nervous	weak
contractions	faint	passing stool	womb

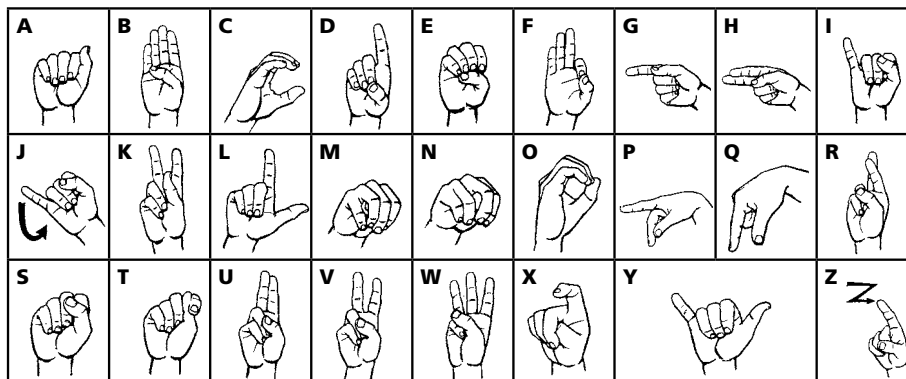
Signs for numbers

Numbers can be used to say how long the person has had a problem (how many times, how many days, weeks, or months). Numbers from 1 to 5 can also be used to say how bad a pain is, with 1 as the smallest amount of pain, and 5 as the largest.



Examples from British Sign Language

Sign alphabet



Examples from one-handed American Sign Language alphabet