

# ESL Topics: Health & Medicine

## Beginner:

**1.) When was the last time you went to a clinic? What was the reason?**

*I went to the clinic for my annual check-up several weeks ago.*

**2.) When was the last time you went to the hospital? What was the cause?**

*I fractured my ankle and bruised it very bad. So, I ended up needing surgery, and had to wear a cast for four weeks.*

**3.) Have you ever donated blood? If not, are you afraid of syringes?**

*I try to donate blood on a regular basis. I have no fear of needles.*

**4.) When was the last time you had a physical? Did you receive a clean bill of health?**

*As I already mentioned, I got a physical several weeks ago. I am very healthy, aside from my high blood pressure.*

**5.) What are some home remedies for a toothache? A stomachache? A headache?**

*Rest is the best remedy. However, for a toothache there is no quick fix.*

**6.) Did you suffer from any ailments when you were a child? Did you grow out of them?**

*I had allergies and I suffered from atopic dermatitis. Luckily I grew out of them. Sometimes I get seasonal allergies in the spring, but over the counter medicine clears it right up.*

**7.) Have you ever been hospitalized overnight?**

*When I had surgery on my fractured ankle. I spent three days in the hospital.*

**8.) Do you get nausea easily (carsickness, seasickness)?**

*I don't get nausea easily, thank God.*

**9.) What changes have you noticed as you've begun to age?**

*I need much longer to **recuperate** from illness, and I am not as energetic as I used to be.*

**10.) Do you take any vitamins or **supplements**?**

*I exercise regularly so I take a multi-vitamin, and I also take whey protein to **retain** muscle mass.*

**Intermediate:**

**1.) Have you considered **acupuncture**? What do you think of Oriental medicine, is it effective?**

*I've tried acupuncture. I had no success. I'm very **skeptical** of Oriental medicine.*

**2.) Do you have health insurance? How much does health insurance cover in the case of illness?**

*I have health insurance, my insurance covers 90% of costs **incurred**.*

**3.) Are you currently suffering from any injuries? How is the recuperation process going?**

*My range of motion is limited in my right shoulder due to an injury for early this week. The recuperation process has been slow.*

**4.) What is a common gift when visiting a friend or family member who is hospitalized?**

*Sweets and flowers, A "get well soon" card is always a nice touch.*

**Advanced:**

**1.) Are there any **genetic** or **hereditary** illnesses in your family that you may have a **predisposition** to?**

*Fortunately not, actually, my father and grandfather are bald, so I guess I have a predisposition to baldness.*

**2.) We know smoking is **linked** to cancer. However, do you think fast food is linked to diabetes? Do you think vaccinations are linked to autism?**

*I think vaccines are a necessity and everything has risks. I don't think they are linked to autism. However, I'm pretty sure too much fast food is a bad thing and will lead to diabetes in the long run. You are what you eat!*

**3.) Canadian lawmakers have passed a law to **legalize** physician-assisted death. What is the law in your country? Do you think ill people should have the right to die if they so choose?**

*I'm not sure about the current laws in my country. However, I think people with a **terminal illness** should have the right to decide whether they want to live or die.*

**4.) What steps are you taking to ensure you healthy into your old age?**

*I eat healthy, exercise regularly, and try to live a stress free life. I stay away from **toxic people** and try to surround myself with **like-minded people**.*

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## Various Types of Physicians:

Type of Doctor	Specialty
1.) Cardiologist	a.) heart
2.) Dermatologist	b.) skin
3.) Gynecologist	c.) Female reproductive system
4.)Neurologist	d.) brain
5.) Orthopedic Surgeon	e.) broken bones / arthritis
6.) Pediatrician	f.) infants / children/ young adults

Type of Doctor	Specialty
7.) Urologist	g.) kidney / bladder / male reproductive organs
8.) Oncologist	h.) treatment / prevention of cancer
9.) ENT Specialist	i.) ear / nose / throat (ENT)
10.) Radiologist	j.) X-ray for broken bones and cancer cells

### Tips:

1.) We use "sick" only when speaking generally about our overall health. Therefore, "I am sick." or "I feel sick." or "You look sick." can work. We do not say "My leg is sick." or "She has a sick stomach." this sounds very strange in English. Instead we use the word "sore", or "hurts", or "is in pain". "My legs are sore from hiking." or "My arm hurts from when you punched me." For stomach pain we can say: "I have an upset stomach." or "I have a stomach ache."

2.) Remember, we go to the "clinic" or the "doctors office" if it is not an emergency. We go to the "hospital" if it is serious. Many Koreans use the word "hospital" when, in fact, they just went to the doctors office. This causes foreigners to worry too much!

3.) Remember, we "take" medicine and we "take" vitamins. We do not "eat" medicine or "eat" vitamins. *I have to take my medication three times a day following meals.*

### Match:

Match the words from column 1 with the best-suited answer in column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
1.) clinic	a.) a complete check-up (x-ray, blood, urine, blood

Column 1	Column 2
	pressure)
2.) fracture	b.) discoloration on the skin from an injury.
3.) bruised	c.) needle
4.) a physical	d.) stay overnight in the hospital
5.) syringe	e.) to recover from an illness
6.) quick fix	f.) temporary solution
7.) over the counter medicine	g.) doubtful
8.) hospitalized	h.) doctors office
9.) recuperate	i.) medicine that does not require a prescription
10.) skeptical	j.) broken bone

### Questions:

- 1.) Do you have a family doctor?
- 2.) Have you ever had surgery?
- 3.) Have you ever experienced a medical scare?
- 4.) Do you call in sick when you feel ill?
- 5.) Does your family have any hereditary problems?

6.) Do you ever try to self diagnose yourself with the help of the internet?

7.) What was your last injury? How long did it take to recover? Did you have to take any medicine or follow any instructions from a doctor?

### Useful English Questions For Nurses / Hospital Staff:

1.) Is your illness / medical condition an emergency?

2.) Have you visited this hospital before?

3.) What are your symptoms?

4.) Do you have medical insurance?

5.) What is your contact information?

6.) The test results will be ready in \_\_\_\_ days. How should we contact you?

7.) Can I see your identification card? Can I see your alien card?

8.) (If the patient is female) Do you prefer a female physician?

9.) (If not an emergency) Would you like to wait to see the doctor today, or would you like to schedule an appointment for a later date?

10.) How will you be paying?

### Vocabulary:

- **clinic:** Healthcare facility; doctors office. *"Do you want me to take you to the clinic? Your cold is getting worse."*
- **fracture:** A broken bone. *"Many senior citizens fracture their hip due to their weak bones."*
- **bruise:** A discoloration, usually brown or blue left on the skin due to an injury. *"My thigh is covered in bruises from when I fell off the later."*

- **cast**: A protective shell usually made of fiberglass to help a broken bone heal correctly. *"The orthopedic surgeon said I'd likely have to wear a cast for 5 weeks and keep weight off my broken leg."*
- **syringe**: The medical needle used to inject drugs or withdraw blood from a patient *"I have a fear of big syringes."*
- **regular basis**: Something you do regularly following a daily, weekly, or monthly pattern. *"I take vitamins on a regular basis."*
- **"a physical (check-up)"**: A series of tests taken at a hospital to make sure an individual is healthy. *"My company requires me to take a physical once a year. It's for the best."*
- **"clean bill of health"**: If the results following a physical checkup show no ailments or diseases. *"I haven't had a check-up in years. I really hope I have a clean bill of health."*
- **"home remedy"**: A natural way to treat an illness. *"Eating chicken soup is a home remedy for the common cold."*
- **"quick fix"**: A temporary solution for a problem. *"I will call a professional to solve this problem tomorrow, but for now check Google if you can find a quick fix."*
- **ailment**: A mild illness or medical condition that is usually temporary. *"Growing up I had many ailments, but my allergies and asthma were the worst."*
- **"grow out of"**: Something that no longer interests you or affects you. *"Both my brother and I suffered from asthma as children but we grew out of it before we entered middle school."*
- **atopic dermatitis**: A rash / skin condition common in children. *"Both my brother and I suffered from atopic dermatitis when we were young."*
- **"over the counter medicine"**: Medicine that does not require a prescription from a doctor. Usually having less medical ingredients. *"I don't have time to go to the clinic, just ask the pharmacist for some over the counter medicine."*
- **hospitalized**: To have to stay in the hospital overnight. *"The injuries from the car accident weren't serious, but the doctors decided it would be best if I was hospitalized just in case."*
- **recuperate**: To recover from illness. *"The medical staff thinks it will take about 6 weeks to recuperate all my strength following the surgery."*
- **supplement**: Similar to a vitamin. However, usually containing very specific substances for specific reasons. *"I take an amino acid supplement for my muscles and a fiber supplement for my bowel movements."*

- **retain**: To hold on to; to keep possession of. *"After knee surgery I had a hard time retaining strength in my right leg."*
- **acupuncture**: Traditional Chinese medicine using needles to control the flow of energy. *"I'm very skeptical about acupuncture, but at this point I'll try anything."*
- **skeptical**: Something you are not sure to be true. When you don't completely believe what someone says. *"I'm very skeptical of weight loss diets and pills. I think they are a scam."*
- **incurred**: Something you have brought upon yourself. *"My wife has incurred a huge amount of college debt that I'm not sure we will ever be able to pay back."*
- **genetic / hereditary**: characteristics passed from parents to their children. *"Breast cancer has been shown to be a genetic disease."*
- **predisposition**: To increase the chances of getting a specific condition or disease. *"Both my mother and grandmother had breast cancer, so I guess I have a predisposition to it." "Eating lots of sugar predisposes you to diabetes."*
- **legalize**: To change a law to make an action legal. *"Many Canadians want to legalize marijuana."*
- **terminal illness**: An illness that will likely kill you in a short period of time; Very low chance of recovery. *"Most forms of cancer are considered a terminal illness."*
- **"toxic people"**: Negative people who are a bad influence on you. People you should avoid. *"I have to stay away from my college friends, they constantly drink and smoke and are in general, just toxic people."*
- **"like-minded people"**: People who share the same interests and opinions as you. *"You should join a language exchange club and meet some like minded people."*

## Daily Expressions & Idioms:

1.) **"at death's door"**: Very close to dying.

*"I feel bad for the guy, he's at death's door, they are already planning his funeral."*

2.) **"back on ones feet"**: To be healthy again; to recover from illness.



*"It seems like just yesterday he was at death's and now he's back on his feet. His wife is really lucky."*

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