



ESL Podcast 589 – Having Skin Problems

GLOSSARY

rash – a group of red marks on one's skin, possibly itchy

* Have you ever gotten a rash from touching poison oak?

exam table – a bed-like table in a doctor's office where patients can sit or lie down while a doctor examines them

* The nurses put clean paper over the exam table for each patient.

to start out – to begin in a certain way, especially when something changes later

* She started out her career as a waitress, but within a few years, she was a restaurant manager and then owner.

blister – a small area of raised skin that is filled with liquid

* Marty got blisters on his feet after he wore his new hiking boots all day.

itchy – making one want to scratch a certain part of one's skin; feeling irritated and causing one to want to rub an area of skin with one's fingernails

* Karina's arms are really itchy where she was bitten by mosquitoes.

infection – a disease caused by bacteria entering part of one's body

* When Meghan pierced her ears with a dirty needle, she got an infection.

skin cancer – a serious disease where skin cells multiply and grow uncontrollably, often because one's skin was exposed to too much sun

* If we don't want to get skin cancer, we need to limit the amount of time we spend outdoors and always use sunscreen.

to get ahead of (oneself) – to plan or do something before one knows whether it is really necessary; to begin making decisions before all the relevant information is known

* Ximena thought she was having a baby girl and got ahead of herself, buying pink baby clothes and painting the nursery pink before the doctor was able to tell her the baby's gender.

while you're at it – a phrase used to ask someone to do something else in addition to what he or she is already doing

* Thanks for agreeing to help me hang this heavy mirror. While you're at it, can you help me hang all these photos and paintings, too?



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bump – a small raised area; an area that is higher than the surrounding area

* The little boy has a big bump on his forehead where he was hit by a baseball.

mole – a small, dark, brown, usually round mark on one's skin, often slightly higher than the surrounding skin

* If you notice that your moles change in shape or color, make an appointment with a skin doctor.

birthmark – an area of skin that is a different color than the surrounding skin and that one has had since birth

* Melissa has a large birthmark on her left shoulder.

wart – a small spot on one's skin that is dark, raised, and very hard

* James has warts on his fingers, but since they aren't painful, he doesn't plan to see a doctor about them.

scar – a small, white mark that remains on one's skin after a cut or burn has healed

* Terese has a large scar on her abdomen from when her appendix was removed.

treatment – what is done to cure a disease or fix an injury

* Treatment for a broken bone often involves wearing a cast for several months and then going through physical therapy.

pimple – zit; a small, red spot on one's face caused by having too much oil in one's skin

* Most teenagers get embarrassed when they have pimples on their face.

acne – a skin condition where one has many red spots on the face and neck, often affecting teenagers

* Sheila's acne was so bad that she begged not to go to school, because she was afraid the other students would make fun of her.

since you asked – a phrase used when one wants to add additional information or ask another question, but was waiting for the other person to indicate interest before doing so

* - Here's your chicken, beef, pork, and salmon. Can I get you anything else?
- Well, since you asked, I'd also like a pound of turkey and a pound of ham.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these is most likely to be red?
 - a) A rash.
 - b) A blister.
 - c) A mole.
2. What would someone with acne have?
 - a) A birthmark.
 - b) A wart.
 - c) Pimples.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to start out

The phrase “to start out,” in this podcast, means to begin in a certain way, especially when something changes later: “The company started out by hiring a part-time employee, but now it needs two full-time employees to do the work.” The phrase “to start in” means to begin doing something, especially when it will require a lot of effort or time: “The amount of work seems overwhelming, but the sooner we start in, the sooner we’ll finish.” The phrase “to start over” means to begin doing something again, usually because it didn’t work the first time: “She spent all morning baking a cake, but it burned, so now she has to start over.” Finally, the phrase “to start up” means to create a business or organization: “They started up a furniture store in 1983.”

mole

In this podcast, the word “mole” means a small, dark, brown, usually round mark on one’s skin, often slightly higher than the surrounding skin: “Vicky hates the mole on her cheek and is going to ask her doctor to remove it.” A “mole” is also a small, furry mammal that spends most of its time underground and is almost blind: “Gardeners dislike moles, because they eat the roots of plants and leave large piles of dirt near where they live.” Finally, a “mole” is a spy, or a person who works for one government or organization while secretly giving confidential information to another government or a competing organization: “The government is trying to identify the mole who is passing on secret information about nuclear weapons to the country’s enemies.”



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CULTURE NOTE

People use many different “beauty products” (products designed to make one more beautiful) to treat skin “blemishes” (unwanted, unattractive marks) and improve the “condition” (state; health) of their skin.

People can buy many different “bar soaps” (a small, rectangular block of soap) and “body washes” (liquid soap) to wash their skin. Many of these have “fragrances” (scents; smells) to make people smell nice. Other soaps are “antibacterial” (with the power to kill bacteria) or are made for “sensitive skin” (skin that is irritated easily).

After washing, many people “apply” (use; put on) “moisturizing” (adding liquid) “lotions” (creams). Lotions are used to “hydrate” (add water to) the skin, making it feel softer and look younger. Many of these lotions also have fragrances. Others have vitamin E or other “substances” (components; parts) that are designed to reduce “wrinkles” (small lines on the skin caused by age) and make skin look younger. Many women, in particular, use special under-eye creams that are supposed to reduce wrinkles.

Sometimes people use special “face masks,” which are thick substances put on the skin, creating a “mask” (a cover for the face). When the dry mask is washed off, the skin underneath is cleaner than it was before. Other people use “exfoliating scrubs,” which are creams with small, hard pieces that are rubbed against the skin to remove dead skin cells. This is supposed to “reveal” (show) younger, healthier-looking skin.

Finally, many people use “sunscreen” (lotions that prevent sunburns) to protect their skin from “UV” (ultraviolet; light from the sun) damage. Other people want to have the “appearance” (look) of a tan without being exposed to the sun, so they might choose to use a “self-tanner” (a cream that temporarily makes one’s skin appear darker).

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – c



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 589: Having Skin Problems.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 589. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there to download an 8- to 10-page Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is a dialogue between a doctor and the mother of young boy. They're going to be talking about the problems that this young boy has with his skin – the medical problems. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Mother: Doctor, this is my son Danny. I brought him in so you could look at his rash.

Doctor: Okay, Danny. Have a seat on the exam table. How long have you had the rash?

Mother: My son has had that rash for about two weeks. It started out as a blister, and then it got really itchy and turned red. Could it be an infection?

Doctor: I'll need to take a closer look at it first before I can tell you that.

Mother: I hope it's not anything serious. I hope it's not skin cancer!

Doctor: Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Okay, let's take a look...

Mother: While you're at it, could you look at this bump on Danny's neck? I think it's a mole.

Doctor: That looks like a birthmark, but I'll take a look.

Mother: And could you look at this wart? If you remove it, will it leave a scar?



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Doctor: I'm not sure it is a wart. Let me examine it first, and I'll tell you what treatment I recommend.

Mother: Oh, and Doctor, could you look at Danny's pimples? He just started getting them. I had really bad acne when I was his age.

Doctor: Is there anything else?

Mother: Well, since you asked...

[end of dialogue]

We begin with the mother saying, "Doctor, this is my son Danny. I brought him in (I brought him here) so you could look at his rash (rash)." A "rash" is when you have a group of red – small red marks on your skin, often times they are itchy. You feel like you need to take one of your hands and move it rapidly across the rash back and forth to stop this feeling of itchiness. We would call that "scratching" the itch.

Well, that's what Danny has. The doctor says, "Okay, Danny. Have a seat on the exam table." The "exam table," or the "examination table" – "exam" is just short for "examination" – is sort of a bed-like table in a doctor's office where the patient can sit or lie down so the doctor can look at the patient. The doctor says, "How long have you had the rash?" Now he asked that to the boy, Danny, but the mother responds instead. "My son has had that rash for about two weeks. It started out as a blister, but then it got really itchy and turned red." "To start out" is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to begin in a certain way. Especially we use the expression "to start out," this phrasal verb, when something begins one way, then at the end there's a different result; something changes: "She started out working as a waitress in a restaurant, and after a few years she was in the movies." Typical Los Angeles story, I guess. Usually they continue to be waiters and waitresses for the rest of their lives. But in the Hollywood version, you start as a lowly employee working at a café, and then you are suddenly a big movie star. I'm waiting for that to happen to me! That's what "to start out" means. There are actually meanings of this expression, and those can be found in today's Learning Guide. A "blister" (blister) is a small area of your skin that is raised; it's a little higher up than the other skin around it and there's liquid inside. Typically if you are wearing shoes, for example, that are too tight and your foot is rubbing against the tight shoes you may develop – you may get a blister on your foot. "Itchy" (itchy) we mentioned earlier; it's the sensation – the feeling that you want to scratch something, that you want to take your hand and your fingernails



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and put it over the skin, rubbing it back and forth. That's the sensation of something being itchy.

The son has something that started out as a blister, and then it got really itchy and turned red. "Could it be an infection?" the mother asks. An "infection" is a medical condition caused by bacteria entering some part of your body. It makes you sicker; it's a kind of illness, we could say. The mother is wondering whether this rash, that started out as a blister, is an infection. The doctor says, "I'll need to take a closer look at it first before I can tell you that." He needs to examine it. The mother says, "I hope it's not anything serious. I hope it's not skin cancer!" "Skin cancer" is a serious disease where you have what are called cancerous cells that multiply – that grow. This happens sometimes if you get too much sun, you can get skin cancer. Skin cancer is usually caught early, and if it is it's not a problem to get rid of it; it's not like some of the other kinds of cancer.

The doctor said, "Let's not get ahead of ourselves." The mother is worried that the son has cancer, and the doctor is telling her not to get ahead of herself. That is, don't start making plans or doing things before you really understand what you have to do. You don't have enough information to make a decision yet; that's to get ahead of yourself. The mother immediately thinks the worst. The doctor says, "let's take a look," and again the mother interrupts and says, "While you're at it," meaning while you are doing that, you are asking them to do something else. In this case, the mother wants him to look at this bump (bump) on Danny's neck. She says, "I think it's a mole." A "bump" is a small, raised area of something; it could be on your skin. There could be a bump on your desk, if there was a problem with your desk. It's not completely flat or smooth. This is a bump on Danny's neck, which the mother thinks might be a mole (mole). Here, a "mole" means a small, dark, usually brown mark on your skin. It's usually slightly raised – it's usually a bit higher than the skin around it, though that isn't always the case.

The doctor says, "That looks like a birthmark, but I'll take a look." A "birthmark" (one word) is an area of your skin that is a different color than the area around it, and that's the way it has been since you were born – your skin has always been that way. We call those things birthmarks. I have a birthmark on the back of my head, which no one could ever see until I shaved my head. I took all the hair off of my head and there it was. It's kind of scary looking actually, but it's okay. I tell people it's a tattoo, which it isn't!

The mother says then, "And could you look at this wart? If you remove it, will it leave a scar?" A "wart" (wart) is a small spot on your skin that is dark, not usually



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brown. It's raised up above the rest of the skin, and it is typically very hard. It's almost like you have a very hard piece of rock on your skin. That's called a wart. A "scar" is what can happen sometimes when you cut your skin if it's a deep cut – a serious one. Sometimes after the "wound," the opening in your skin, has healed – has become better, there's a little mark on your skin where you cut it. That would be a scar. So the doctor is being asked if he removes the wart will that will leave a scar on little Danny's skin.

The doctor says, "I'm not sure it is a wart. Let me examine it first, and I'll tell you what treatment I recommend." Of course, the mother won't let the doctor actually do his job and examine the patient, Danny. "Treatment" is what you do to cure a disease or to fix an injury that you have; that's how it's used here. The doctor says I can't tell you the treatment until I look at it. The mother says, "Oh, and Doctor, could you look at Danny's pimples? He just started getting them. I had really bad acne when I was his age." So, the mother is having the doctor look at yet another thing, that's Danny's pimples. A "pimple" (pimple) is sometimes informally called a "zit" (zit), but "pimple" is a little nicer sounding word. It's a small, red spot often on your face that might be caused by having too much oil in your skin. It's something that happens to teenagers quite frequently, but it can also happen to adults.

Well, Danny has pimples, and he just started getting them. The mother said that I had really bad acne but I was his age. "Acne" (acne) is a skin condition where you have lots of different pimples on your skin, especially your face and your neck. Again, that's the general condition of having pimples; it's called having acne.

The doctor says, "Is there anything else?" The mother says, "Well, since you asked." The phrase "since you asked" means that you have another question or you have more information, but you were waiting for the other person to indicate some interest. You weren't going to ask them or tell them, but since they asked you, well then, you are going to ask the question or give the information.

Now let's listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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Doctor: Okay, Danny. Have a seat on the exam table. How long have you had the rash?

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Mother: While you're at it, could you look at this bump on Danny's neck? I think it's a mole.

Doctor: That looks like a birthmark, but I'll take a look.

Mother: And could you look at this wart? If you remove it, will it leave a scar?

Doctor: I'm not sure it is a wart. Let me examine it first, and I'll tell you what treatment I recommend.

Mother: Oh, and Doctor, could you look at Danny's pimples? He just started getting them. I had really bad acne when I was his age.

Doctor: Is there anything else?

Mother: Well, since you asked...

[end of dialogue]

Who wrote today's script? Well, since you asked, it's Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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