

Sickness, Symptoms, and Medicine

Warm up:

- How often do you get sick?
- What do you usually do if you have a cold?
- If you have a headache, do you take painkillers right away?
- What are some basic hygiene tips that can stop the spread of sickness?
- Do you believe in “working through” sickness, or do you prefer to rest in bed?



1. In pairs join the symptoms/sicknesses in the first box with the treatments/advice in the second box. Discuss the advice with your partner. More than 1 answer is possible.

First conditional + should is often used to give advice. Normally the structure of first conditional is (If + present simple), (will + infinitive).

Eg “If he doesn’t go to the doctor, his injury will get worse.”

However, modal verbs such as should, can, and might can replace “will” in this structure.

Eg “If you have a cold, you can take a day off.”

Use “If you have a...” + “then you should...” to give advice below.

If you have...

a cold	a headache	sore muscles	a runny nose	the flu
a stomachache	trouble sleeping	a toothache	a rash	an injured leg
a sore throat	a cough	sunburn	hay fever	indigestion

, then you should....

buy some tissues.	see a doctor.	avoid running.
take some painkillers.	stay in bed.	take a hot bath.
get some cough lozenges.	drink some lemon tea.	go to a dentist.
stop drinking coffee.	put on some ointment.	eat less spicy food.
avoid flowers and grass.	call your mum.	reduce screen time (T.V etc)



2. Create 4 of your own suggestions about what people *shouldn't* do when they are sick

Eg "If you have a sore throat, you shouldn't smoke"

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....



3. Match the document on the left to its description on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| a) Sick note 3 | 1. A document that allows you to buy restricted medication. |
| b) Receipt 7 | 2. A form requesting payment from an insurance company |
| c) Prescription 1 | 3. A document that states you are unable to work. |
| d) Invoice 5 | 4. A document from a GP sending you to a specialist. |
| e) Pamphlet 6 | 5. A document requesting payment for goods or services. |
| f) Referral 4 | 6. A small booklet containing basic information. |
| g) Insurance claim 2 | 7. A document that proves you have purchased something. |



4. Listen to the conversation between Rick and 3 medical professionals and answer the questions.

At the doctor

- a) What did Rick see the doctor about two years ago? *An injured leg*
- b) What are Rick's flu symptoms? *Bad fever, weak muscles, sore throat, headaches*
- c) Why does the doctor recommend cough lozenges? *For his sore throat*
- d) What are the two tests that the doctor does on Rick? *Looks at his throat and checks his temperature*
- e) What does Rick think caused his sore back? *Sitting down while he works.*
- f) What are the two official documents the doctor writes for Rick? *A referral and prescription*
- g) How should Rick pay for the visit? *They will send him an invoice and he can pay online.*

At the pharmacy

- a) Where are the cough lozenges, and where are the tissues? *Cough lozenges are next to the candy, tissues are in aisle 3 next to the toilet paper*
- b) What medicine does Rick take twice a day and why? *Insulin, because he has diabetes*
- c) How often and when should Rick take Tamiflu? *3 times a day after eating*
- d) What does “drowsy” mean? *It means sleepy*
- e) Why shouldn't Rick take ibuprofen? *Because he has diabetes, and people with diabetes shouldn't take ibuprofen.*
- f) Why does Rick want a receipt? *For his insurance company*

At the chiropractor

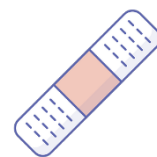
- a) What time of day is Rick's chiropractor appointment? *Early in the morning*
- b) Where exactly is Rick's back pain? *Lower back in the middle*
- c) What did Rick think would help his back, but actually hurt it even more? *Resting and lying down*
- d) What 3 suggestions does the chiropractor make? *Go for a walk, getting a standing desk, and doing yoga/stretches.*
- e) Why is Rick frustrated at the end of the appointment? *Because he gets another referral to another medical professional, and the chiropractor does not really help him.*

 5. Roleplay the following situations with a partner. Student A is the patient, student B is the doctor.

Student A: patient	Student B: doctor
You have a bad cold. Think of 3 symptoms of a cold, and tell the doctor you have them. You are a little frustrated because you've had this cold for weeks. You also need a sick note for work.	Give the patient advice on what to do, suggest some over the counter medicine, but inform them they do not need any prescription medicine.
You get bad headaches very often. You take paracetamol, but it doesn't work very well. You would like some stronger painkillers.	Ask your patient 3 questions about their lifestyle that may cause headaches (e.g. do you drink a lot of coffee?). Then decide if you want to prescribe strong painkillers.
You often get a sore back. You work from home sitting down, and you think that's why. You would like your doctor to help you.	Ask a few questions, make a few basic suggestions for back health, and then give your patient a referral to a chiropractor.

 **6. Read the advice below about what to do when you are sick and discuss if you agree with it with a partner.**

Ronnie: “I always say “what doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger!” That’s why when I’m sick I just keep working. I once ran a marathon with the flu, I was sweating before the race even began! I don’t like taking pills, I think they just reduce my body’s natural defences. I don’t even use band-aids!!”



Thorsten: “Honestly if I’m sick I just stay at home and do nothing. If I have a cold or the flu, I prefer home-made remedies like ginger tea and vegetable soup more than actual medicine. But, if I have a headache, I take some pain killers right away, usually ibuprofen, and the pain usually subsides within thirty minutes or so.”



Molly: “I get very bad migraines sometimes, but I have to be careful with my migraine medicine, because it increases my blood pressure, and I already have high blood pressure. My doctor said it’s safe for me to take them, but I’m still trying to cut down on how many I take.”



Rafael: “My mother is a nurse, so I grew up in a house with lots of medicine, and even today I keep a huge amount of pills, ointments, and lozenges in my apartment. Over time my collection of medicines has expanded, and to be honest I’m not even sure what half of them do! If I feel even a little bit sick I don’t go to the doctor, I just take a handful of different pills and hope one of them works!”



Kayla: “I’m a bit of a germaphobe, so I rarely get sick. I use disinfectant on everything, and I think this raises my chances of staying healthy. I also eat a lot of fruit and vegetables because I’m vegan, and that boosts my immune system.”

Chrystal: “I have hay fever and asthma, so I have to keep an inhaler and hay fever medication with me at all times in the spring. Luckily in the past few years my hay fever symptoms have decreased. I still get a blocked nose and watery eyes anytime I go near flowers though. I haven’t used my asthma inhaler in 2 years, but I think it’s better safe than sorry. I’m also a total hypochondriac, so whenever I feel a tiny bit under the weather, I go to the doctor right away!”



 **7. Read back through the statements and place the underlined words in the correct category below.**

Go up	Go down
<i>increase</i>	<i>reduce</i>
<i>expand</i>	<i>subside</i>
<i>raise</i>	<i>cut down on</i>
<i>boost</i>	<i>decrease</i>



8. Read through the descriptions of common medicines and their side effects. Choose the correct synonym for “go up” or “go down.”

Ibuprofen: A common, over the counter painkiller which can increase / *decrease* pain and swelling. It can also be used to boost / *reduce* the symptoms of fevers or colds. Side effects: Ibuprofen can cause dizziness, nausea, and indigestion.

Loratadine: This is a medication used to *decrease* / raise the symptoms of hay fever such as sneezing, runny nose, itching, and watery eyes. The effects of loratadine will *subside* / increase after about 24 hours.

Varenicline: This is a prescription treatment to help people *cut down on* / expand or completely quit cigarettes. Doctors recommend starting with a small dose, and slowly dropping / *increasing* the dose.



9. Optional task/homework. Choose one of the common medicines below (or any other medicine you know), research it, and make a small presentation about it to your class.

- Atorvastatin (for cholesterol)
- Gabapentin (for epilepsy, menopause, anxiety disorders, migraines and insomnia)
- Nizatidine (for indigestion and stomach ulcers)
- Dextromethorphan (for coughs)
- Doxepin (for insomnia)
- Sumatriptan (for migraines)

Your presentation should include what it is used to treat, how it works, what the side effects are, and if the medication is prescription or over the counter.

Audio Transcript

Conversation 1

Rick: Hi Doctor, long time no see.

Doctor: Hi Rick, good to see you again. I think the last time you came was for a leg injury from football right, how is your leg now?

Rick: Oh it's fine, I think that was about 2 years ago, so it's fully healed now.

Doctor: Ok great, glad to hear it. So what can I do for you today?

Rick: Well it's two things actually. I've come down with a bad flu, and I feel absolutely terrible, and I also have a sore back.

Doctor: Ok, let's talk about the flu first. What are your symptoms?

Rick: I have a bad fever, my muscles feel sore and weak, and I have a sore throat.

Doctor: Do you have a cough or a runny nose?

Rick: No I don't, but I have had a few headaches.

Doctor: Mmm ok that doesn't sound good. I'm just going to take a look at your throat. Please open your mouth and say "ahhh"

Rick: aahhhh

Doctor: Mmm ok, that looks quite red and swollen. You should definitely buy some cough lozenges.

Rick: But I don't have a cough.

Doctor: They'll still be good for a sore throat. Now I'm going to take your temperature. Please take off your shirt and lift your arm.

Rick: Sure: There we go.

Doctor: Ok, this will be a little cold, you can put your arm down now.

Rick: Oh that is really cold.

Doctor: Ok... Yes, you definitely have a fever, your temperature is 39 degrees. I'm going to give you a prescription for Tamiflu, that's a medicine that should reduce the symptoms of your flu. Take it three times a day after you've eaten.

Rick: Ok great, thanks very much for that.

Doctor: You're welcome. Now, about your back. Did you hurt that playing football too?

Rick: Oh no, I don't play football anymore. I work from home, and I sit down most of the day. I can't be sure, but I think all that sitting has slowly done something bad to my back. I can hardly stand up in the morning.

Doctor: Ok yes, I've been seeing a lot of these kinds of injuries recently. I would recommend you try yoga or back stretches at home, but I'm also going to give you a referral to a chiropractor.

Rick: A chiropractor?

Doctor: Yes, that's a doctor who specializes in back pain.

Rick: I know, I just thought you might be able to help me.

Doctor: I'm afraid that's not really my area of expertise. Is there anything else I can help you with?

Rick: One more thing, I can never remember... should I pay at reception, or how does it work here?

Doctor: You don't pay at reception, we'll send an invoice to your house, and you can pay online.

Rick: Ok fantastic.

Conversation 2

PHARMACIST: Hi, can I help you?

RICK: Yes, I have a prescription here for Tami..tami..

PHARMACIST: Tamiflu?

RICK: Yes, that's the one.

PHARMACIST: Ok, that will be ready in a minute.

RICK: Great. Also, do you have cough lozenges and tissues?

PHARMACIST: Absolutely, the cough lozenges are right here next to the candy, and the tissues are in aisle 3, next to the toilet paper.

RICK: Ok great, I'll be back in a minute.

PHARMACIST: Sir? Your prescription is ready.

RICK: Great, thanks.

PHARMACIST: Did the doctor tell you how often to take this?

RICK: Ummm... honestly, I don't remember.

PHARMACIST: Well in that case I'd better go over it with you. Do you take any other medications?

RICK: Yes I do, I take insulin twice a day, I have diabetes.

PHARMACIST: That's fine, you can take insulin and Tamiflu together. Now, you need to take this three times a day after eating, once in the morning, once at lunch, and once in the evening.

RICK: I normally don't eat breakfast.

PHARMACIST: Well you should at least have a snack before eating this, it's not good on an empty stomach, Tamiflu can make you quite drowsy if you don't eat before taking it.

RICK: Drowsy? What does drowsy mean?

PHARMACIST: Ah, it means it can make you sleepy. So if you do take it on an empty stomach, you really shouldn't drive.

RICK: Ok, I got it. Also do you have any painkillers?

PHARMACIST: Sure, is ibuprofen ok?

RICK: Yep, that would be great.

PHARMACIST: Wait, didn't you say you had diabetes?

RICK: That's right.

PHARMACIST: Oh... well I'm sorry sir, but people with diabetes shouldn't take ibuprofen. We can offer you paracetamol instead.

RICK: Really? I had no idea... ok, sure paracetamol will be fine, thanks.

PHARMACIST: Great, so tissues, lozenges, Tamiflu and paracetamol, that'll be 18 euros and 50 cents. Would you like a receipt?

Rick: No that's fine... actually, I will take one. I might need to give it to my insurance company, I'm never really sure what they need.

Conversation 3.

CHIROPRACTOR: Hello, how are you today mr... Mr Collins.

RICK: Hi, I'm ok, a little sleepy, I usually don't get up this early!

CHIROPRACTOR: I understand, I'm not exactly a morning person myself. Now what can I help you with today?

RICK: I have had a really bad sore back for about 3 weeks now. I think it's because I spend all my time at work in a chair.

CHIROPRACTOR: I understand, is it in your upper or lower back?

RICK: Lower back, right in the middle. It's strange because I lie down to rest it, but it always feels even worse after lying down.

CHIROPRACTOR: Actually, lying down can make some back injuries worse. If you have lower back pain, you should try to move around a bit. Going for a short walk every day for example.

RICK: Really? So I've just been making it worse this whole time?

CHIROPRACTOR: I'm afraid so. Do you have a standing desk Mr Collins?

RICK: A standing desk? Is that a desk that you stand up at while you work?

CHIROPRACTOR: That's correct. Standing desks can be very good for your back, especially if you stand on something soft, like a yoga mat. And on top of that, I have a pamphlet here that has instructions for some basic lower back exercises. You should do some of these after sitting down for 90 minutes.

RICK: Ok, great, I'll try them out. Now, do you give me a massage, or maybe a prescription for some medication for my back?

CHIROPRACTOR: Oh no Mr. Collins, I'm afraid not. However, I can give you a referral to a specialist who can give you a back massage?

RICK: A referral... but I got a referral from my GP to see you. How many referrals do I need before I can get this taken care of?

CHIROPRACTOR: I'm sorry Mr. Collins, that's just the way it works. The specialist I'm sending you to is really very good. Now is, there anything else I can help you with?

RICK: No....thanks for you help.