



GLOSSARY

to put (something) off – to delay something; to plan on doing something later so that one does not need to do it now

* Jasmine needs to write a paper for her English class, but she kept putting it off until the day before she needed to turn it in.

annual physical – a yearly medical exam of one's basic health; a visit to the doctor that happens once a year, in which one's general health is checked

* Trent felt healthy, but he still needed to go to the doctor for an annual physical.

to be booked – to have a full schedule; to have all of one's available appointments filled

* The hair stylist was booked for the next three weeks and Gemma couldn't get appointment until September.

HMO – Health Maintenance Organization; personal health insurance; a business that pays part of the cost or the full cost for certain medical bills of its customers, in exchange for a monthly or yearly fee

* The medical exam was covered by the HMO, so Sari did not need to pay for it.

co-pay – a small payment that one pays for medical services when another part of the payment is paid by an insurance company (a company that pays for health and medical expenses)

* The insurance covered most of the cost, but Byron still needed to pay a \$25 co-pay for his appointment to see the doctor.

waiting room – a small room at a business one waits in until the person one plans to meet is available

* The accountant was busy talking on the phone, so her client waited in the waiting room until the conversation was over.

to weigh – to measure the weight of someone or something; to measure how heavy something or someone is

* The cook weighed the container of flour to find out how much was in it.

temperature – a measurement of how hot or cold something is

* When Evelina got ill, her body temperature went up a lot and it made her sweat.



ESL Podcast 23 – A Visit to the Doctor

blood pressure – a measurement of how much pressure or stress is put on the blood vessels (passageways that carry blood) in a person's body

* Nick's blood pressure was too high, and he needed to lower it so that his heart would be healthier.

check-up – a medical examination meant to determine the condition of one's overall health instead of focusing on a specific problem or concern

* Piper was not sick or injured, so her visit to the doctor was just a check-up.

examination room – a small room in which a doctor tests and observes a person's health

* Dr. Li had a patient in the examination room who suffers from a bad heart.

to strip down – to undress; to remove one's clothes

* After his clothes got wet, Rodney stripped down to his underwear and put on dry clothes.

exam table – a table or flat surface that one sits on when getting tested and observed by a doctor

* The exam table was cold and uncomfortable, so the patient wished that the doctor would hurry and finish the exam.

to show up – to appear; to arrive

* Wanda was supposed to meet a friend at a local coffee shop, but her friend never showed up, so she drank coffee there alone.

chart – papers used to track the medical condition of a specific patient; documents that explain the condition of a person's health

* The doctor read the patient's chart to find out the patient's medical history.

stethoscope – a tool used by a doctor to listen to sounds in the body, making those sounds louder

* Dr. Rodriguez used a stethoscope to listen to the patient's heartbeat.

abdomen – stomach area; mid-section; belly

* After eating too much ice cream, Miguel felt a pain in his abdomen.

blood test – medical test that check human blood for diseases or irregularities

* The results of the blood test showed that the patient did not have enough iron in her blood.



CULTURE NOTE

The Jobs With the Most Germs

A researcher at the University of Arizona conducted studies to see which workplaces had the most germs. “Germs” are the very small living things that can cause disease and illness. Before their study was published in 2009, this researcher and his colleagues visited many different types of offices and “swabbed” (used a cotton stick to remove a small amount of something) more than 600 surfaces, including phones, computers, and desks.

The top nine jobs with the most germs are:

1. Teacher
2. Accountant
3. Banker
4. “Radio deejay” (the person on the radio who talks to the audience and announces the names of songs played on the station)
5. Doctor
6. “Television producer” (the person responsible for overseeing the money and management of making a TV show)
7. “Consultant” (the person hired by different companies to give expert advice and/or to do a specific project)
8. “Publicist” (the person responsible for making known to many other people a person, product, or company)
9. Lawyer

The average bacteria per square inch on surfaces in their workspace ranged from 900 for lawyers to 17,800 for teachers. Anyone who has worked in a classroom or with students won’t be surprised by this.

The four surfaces with the most germs are:

1. Phones
2. Desks
3. Computer keyboard
4. Computer mouse

Again, these results are not too surprising. The reasons for phones and computers being on the list are “obvious” (clear), but why are desks so full of germs? The researchers found that most people, at one time or another, ate at their desks, but fewer than 20% ever clean them.



ESL Podcast 23 – A Visit to the Doctor

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 23 – A Visit to the Doctor.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 23. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In this episode, we're going to discuss going to the doctor. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Going to the doctor is never particularly pleasant for me. But I couldn't put it off any longer. It was time for my annual physical, and there was no getting around it. So I picked up the phone and called for an appointment. "I'd like to see Dr. Shimoya next week, please, if that's possible," I said. Of course, it wasn't possible. The doctor was booked until next month, the receptionist told me. "Okay," I said, "Let's schedule it for next month."

When the day arrived, I drove over to the doctor and checked in at the receptionist's desk. I had to present my HMO card and pay the co-pay of \$15.00. The receptionist instructed me to go to waiting room B, down the hall, first door on the right. So I went there and took a seat to wait. And I waited, and waited. Finally, my name was called and I went in to see the doctor. The nurse weighed me, took my temperature and blood pressure, and asked me why I was there. I told her it was time for my yearly checkup. She told me to follow her to the examination room and then to strip down to my underwear.

Now I was sitting on the exam table, half-freezing, waiting for the doctor to show up. Finally, he walked in, looked at my chart, and began his examination. "Breathe," he said, as he placed the stethoscope on my chest. "Breathe in and out slowly," he said. I did so. Then he checked my throat and had me lie down to check my abdomen. Finally, he ordered a blood test and said, "Well, you're good for another year, Mr. McQuillan."

Thank goodness, I thought to myself, and got dressed to leave.

[end of story]

Today we are talking about going to the doctor. I began by saying, "Going to the doctor is never particularly pleasant for me." When we say something is



ESL Podcast 23 – A Visit to the Doctor

“particularly pleasant,” or “particularly” plus some other adjective, we mean “especially” or “very.” “This cookie is not particularly good” means this cookie isn’t especially good or it isn’t very good, and “not particularly pleasant” means not especially pleasant or not very pleasant.

“Going to see the doctor is never particularly pleasant for me. But,” I said, “I couldn’t put it off any longer.” The word “it” in this sentence refers to going to the doctor, and “to put something off” means to delay it, to wait before doing it. For example, “I put off doing my homework until the night before it was due” means I didn’t do my homework right away. I delayed or waited until I had to do it.

In the story, I was trying to put off going to the doctor, but “I couldn’t put it off any longer” because “it was time for my annual physical.” An “annual physical” is when you go to the doctor not because you are sick, but to make sure that you are healthy. “Annual” (annual) is an adjective meaning once a year, and “physical” (physical) here refers to a general examination by a doctor.

In some American schools, children are required to have a physical every year. Many adults also go to the doctor once a year to get checked. We call this an “annual physical” or a “checkup” (checkup). Similarly, when you go to a dentist to have your teeth checked every six months or every year, you can say, “I’m going in for a checkup,” meaning I’m going to see the dentist even though there may be nothing wrong with me, but I want to get checked anyway.

I said there was “no getting around it.” The word “it” again refers to going to the doctor. The expression “to get around” something is a phrasal verb. It means to avoid something, to find a way so that you don’t have to do something. But if you can’t avoid it, then “there’s no getting around it.” “There’s no getting around talking to my neighbor.” It is not possible to avoid that situation. After all, he is my neighbor. He lives next to my house.

When I called for the appointment, I said to the doctor’s receptionist – the person who answers the phone – “I’d like to see Dr. Shimoya.” “I’d like to see” here means “I’d like to make an appointment to see” or “I would like to schedule an appointment to see.” The doctor, unfortunately, “was booked until next month.” “To be booked” (booked) means to already have something else scheduled for a given date or time.

If someone asks you, “Can you go to dinner with me tonight?” but you already have made plans to have dinner with someone else, you could say, “Oh, I’m sorry, I’m booked tonight.” You can also say that if you just don’t like this person and don’t want to have dinner with them, but I don’t recommend lying, of course.



ESL Podcast 23 – A Visit to the Doctor

We normally use this expression when talking about meeting with professionals such as doctors, dentists, professors, and so forth – anyone you might need to make an appointment to see.

I said that I went to the doctor on the day of my appointment and I “checked in at the receptionist’s desk.” “To check (check) in” at a doctor’s office means to go to the front desk and tell the receptionist who you are so that they know you are there for your appointment. You can also check in at a hotel. You can check in at an airport. This is when you give the person working for the airline – the ticket agent – your ticket, and they give you something called a “boarding pass,” which is a piece of paper that you need to get on the airplane. Well, you also check in at the doctor’s and dentist’s office when you arrive for your appointment. You tell them that you are here so they know that you are ready to see the doctor, even though the doctor won’t be ready to see you.

I said I had to “present my HMO card.” “To present” here means to give. “HMO” stands for “health maintenance organization.” An HMO is basically a private company that offers medical insurance to people. You buy insurance from the company, and then you can go and see one of the doctors that use that same insurance company or get paid by that same insurance company.

I also had to pay “the co-pay of \$15.00.” In the United States it’s very common, when you have health insurance with an HMO, to have to pay something extra every time you go to the doctor. You don’t have to pay a lot of money. You don’t have to pay what we might refer to as the “full price.” The insurance company pays for most of it, but you often have to pay a small amount, and we call that small amount a “co-pay” (co-pay). The co-pay might be \$15. It might be \$20. It might be as much as \$50, depending on your health insurance.

After I checked in and paid my co-pay, “the receptionist instructed me” – or told me – “to go to waiting room B.” A “waiting (waiting) room” in a doctor’s or dentist’s office or a hospital or any sort of medical facility is the place where you sit down and wait until they call your name. They call your name when the doctor is ready to see you. They say your name, and then it is time for you to go in for your appointment. So, I went to the waiting room with the letter “B.” This is just a common way of naming waiting rooms. There may be a waiting room A, a waiting room B, a waiting room C, and so forth.

The waiting room was located “down the hall, first door on the right.” The word “hall” (hall) is short for “hallway” (hallway), which is a long space between rooms where you walk in a building. To say something is “down the hall” means it is



ESL Podcast 23 – A Visit to the Doctor

located nearby in the hallway, probably just a short distance. It's similar to the expression “down the street,” which means nearby or close by on that street.

The phrase “the first door on the right” is a common way of giving directions to people. “The first door on the right” means the first door that you walk by on your right-hand side. The second door on the left would be the second door on your left-hand side, and so forth. After I waited for a very long time, my name was called – meaning someone said my name – and I went in to see the doctor. When I got into the doctor's office, the nurse “weighed” me. “To weigh (weigh) someone” means to find out how heavy they are or, in my case, how fat I am.

The nurse also took my temperature. “To take someone's temperature” (temperature) means to measure a person's body heat with something called a “thermometer” (thermometer). A “thermometer” can either be a little stick that goes in your mouth or a small device that goes in your ear. There's actually one other place they can put a thermometer, but we won't talk about that now.

The nurse also checked my blood pressure. Your “blood (blood) pressure (pressure)” has to do with how the blood is moving through your body. Usually, they check your blood pressure by wrapping a band around your upper arm and then pumping air into the band to measure your blood pressure. You want to have low blood pressure, not high blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure, then you could have problems with your heart or other things, but go see your doctor about this. I'm not a medical doctor.

I told the nurse I was there for my “yearly checkup.” “Yearly” (yearly) means the same as annually, or once a year. You can also say “monthly,” meaning every month, or “weekly,” meaning every week, or “daily,” meaning, of course, every day. The nurse told me to “follow her to the examination room.” The “examination (examination) room,” or “exam room” for short, is the room in a hospital or doctor's office where the doctor sees you or examines you.

The nurse told me to “strip down to my underwear.” “To strip (strip) down (down)” means to take off your clothing. And your “underwear” (underwear) is what you wear underneath your outer clothes, underneath your shirt and pants. So, “to strip down to your underwear” means to take off all your clothing except for your underwear. I was sitting on the “exam table” – short for “examination table” – which is like a little bed that you lie on or sit on when the doctor is examining you, or looking at you. I waited for the doctor to show up. “To show up” is a two-word phrasal verb that means to arrive – usually to arrive for an appointment or something that has been scheduled at an earlier date.



ESL Podcast 23 – A Visit to the Doctor

The doctor looked at my chart. Your “chart” (chart) – or your “file” – in a hospital or in a doctor’s office means your medical records. They keep your records in a file, and this file is called a “chart.” When a doctor writes in your chart, it means he writes something in your file describing whatever it is that you are there for. Of course, nowadays, most of this is done on computers. The doctor placed a “stethoscope” on my chest. A “stethoscope” (stethoscope) is an instrument that doctors use to listen to your heart and to your breathing. One side of the stethoscope goes in the doctor’s ears, and the other side has a little round disk that is placed against your chest to listen to your heart and lungs.

The doctor also checked my abdomen. The “abdomen” (abdomen) is the medical term for the area above your hips, above your waist, and below your chest. The area that includes your stomach is part of your abdomen. The doctor then ordered a “blood test.” A “blood (blood) test” is just what it sounds like. It is a test of your blood. You go to a laboratory and they stick or put a sharp instrument called a “needle” in your arm, and then they draw your blood, meaning they take a little bit of blood out of your body. Then they analyze or test the blood. The expression we use when a doctor wants this test performed is “to order a blood test.”

The doctor then told me I was “good for another year,” which meant I was all done and I didn’t have to come back until the next year. I thought to myself, “Thank goodness,” meaning “I’m glad about that.”

Now let’s listen to the story again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

Going to the doctor is never particularly pleasant for me. But I couldn’t put it off any longer. It was time for my annual physical, and there was no getting around it. So I picked up the phone and called for an appointment. “I’d like to see Dr. Shimoya next week, please, if that’s possible,” I said. Of course, it wasn’t possible. The doctor was booked until next month, the receptionist told me. “Okay,” I said, “Let’s schedule it for next month.”

When the day arrived, I drove over to the doctor and checked in at the receptionist’s desk. I had to present my HMO card and pay the co-pay of \$15.00. The receptionist instructed me to go to waiting room B, down the hall, first door on the right. So I went there and took a seat to wait. And I waited, and waited. Finally, my name was called and I went in to see the doctor. The nurse weighed me, took my temperature and blood pressure, and asked me why I was there. I



ESL Podcast 23 – A Visit to the Doctor

told her it was time for my yearly checkup. She told me to follow her to the examination room and then to strip down to my underwear.

Now I was sitting on the exam table, half-freezing, waiting for the doctor to show up. Finally, he walked in, looked at my chart, and began his examination. “Breathe,” he said, as he placed the stethoscope on my chest. “Breathe in and out slowly,” he said. I did so. Then he checked my throat and had me lie down to check my abdomen. Finally, he ordered a blood test and said, “Well, you’re good for another year, Mr. McQuillan.”

Thank goodness, I thought to myself, and got dressed to leave.

[end of story]

Thanks to fantastic scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, for all her hard work, and thanks to you for listening.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Come back and listen to us again right here on ESL Podcast.

English as a Second Language Podcast was written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. Copyright 2006 by the Center for Educational Development.