



## ESL Podcast 183 – At the Pharmacy

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### GLOSSARY

**drug store** – a store that sells medicines; many also sell toiletries, such as toothpaste and make-up

\* At the drug store, I bought some headache medicine, some toothpaste, and batteries.

**to fill a prescription** – to get the medicine that the doctor gave you permission to take

\* My doctor told me to fill the prescription and to start taking the medicine today.

**pharmacy** – a place where medicines are sold

\* The pharmacy was closed when I got there and I couldn't get my prescription filled.

**medication** – medicine; a drug you take if you are ill

\* What kind of medication are you taking for your head cold?

**pharmacist** – a person trained to prepare and to give out medicine

\* The pharmacist told me that I shouldn't take both of my medications at the same time.

**over-the-counter** – medicine you can buy without your doctor's permission

\* I don't need to see a doctor. I'm sure I'll feel better just by taking some over-the-counter medicine.

**tablet** – a pill; a small, round, solid piece of medicine

\* These tablets are so big, I have trouble swallowing them.

**capsule** – a small container of medicine you swallow and that dissolves in water

\* Should I take two capsules before or after I eat?

**directions** – instructions; information about how to take a drug or product; usually listed on the back of a bottle of medicine

\* The directions say that I should drink a lot of water when I take this medication.

**dosage** – how much and how often you should take a drug

\* The dosage on the bottle says to take one tablet every three hours.



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**warning** – information about a possible problem or danger

\* Don't forget the nurse's warning: You shouldn't go swimming until your leg is better.

**on an empty stomach** – with food; usually listed on a medicine bottle telling you to take the drug during or right after you eat

\* Taking this medication on an empty stomach will make you sick.

**side effects** – something that happens when you take a drug that isn't suppose to happen; usually a negative thing

\* One of the side effects of this medication is that I get headaches.

**closely** – carefully; doing as the instructions tell you to

\* I tried to follow the instructions closely but I still couldn't figure out how to play this game.

**overdose** – taking too much of a drug

\* The news report said that Elvis died of a drug overdose.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. The pharmacist
  - a) told him to be careful so he wouldn't take an overdose.
  - b) told him to take some over-the-counter medication.
  - c) filled the prescription immediately.
  
2. The directions on the bottle said to:
  - a) take two tablets everyday on an empty stomach.
  - b) take only the tables, not the capsules.
  - c) take the medication two times a day.

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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **directions**

The word “directions,” in this podcast, means the instructions for taking a medication: “Do you remember if the directions say to take one or two a day?” We also use the word “directions” to mean information on how to get to a specific place. We can “give” and “get” directions: “She gave me directions on how to get to her house.” Or, “Did you get directions on how to find the restaurant?” If you're lost, you usually “ask for directions”: “Is there a place we can stop to ask for directions?”

#### **warning**

In this podcast, the word “warning” is used to mean the information on a medicine bottle that tells you about a possible problem or danger: “The warning says I shouldn't drive when I take this medication.” The word “warning” is used more widely to tell of any possible danger, such as “security warning” when a person may be trying to harm you, or a “flood warning” when it has been raining a lot and you or your property is in danger. We also use the term “warning signs” to mean things that happen before an event to tell you that it is coming: “Have you seen any warning sign that this will be a bad storm?” Or, “If you have chest pains, that may be a warning sign that you are going to have a heart attack.”



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### CULTURE NOTE

In the U.S., people who are 65 years old or older can get health insurance that is paid for by the government. This program is called “Medicare.” Medicare covers, or pays for, people to go to the doctor and to stay in a hospital if they are ill. Sometimes, people need medical treatment that isn’t covered by Medicare. In that case, people must pay for that treatment themselves. Since January 2006, Medicare also covers some prescription drugs.

The government pays for Medicare by collecting taxes. A large of part of Medicare is paid for by “payroll taxes.” “Payroll” are the wages, or money, an employer pays to a worker. Each time an employer pays money to a worker, payroll taxes are taken out and given to the government. The employer pays for half and the worker pays for half.

The government has another insurance plan called “Medicaid.” This is a plan for people who have low income, or who don’t make very much money, and for people with disabilities, or people who have physical or mental problems. This plan is paid for by the federal, or national, government and by each state. Each state decides how to manage this program so whether you are eligible, or can use this plan, can change if you move from one state to another.

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast Number 183, “At The Pharmacy.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast Episode 183. I’m your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Be sure to visit our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com) to get the Learning Guide that goes with this podcast. It includes all the definitions, new sample sentences, additional explanations, culture notes, and a complete transcript of this podcast.

Today’s podcast is called, “At The Pharmacy.” Let’s go!

<start of story>

I went to the drugstore down the street to fill a prescription at the pharmacy. I’ve had some problems with my arm, and the doctor prescribed for me a new medication. I waited in line, and when it was my turn, I handed the prescription to the pharmacist. She told me to come back in fifteen minutes and she would have it ready for me.

In the meantime, I went to look for some over-the-counter stomach medication. There were some in tablets and capsules. I decided on the capsules and returned to the pharmacy.

The pharmacist asked me if I had taken this medication before. I told her I hadn’t and she pointed out the directions on the bottle. It had the dosage information: Take two tablets two times a day. There was also a warning to not take it on an empty stomach. The bottle also said that I should stop taking the medication if I had any serious side effects. The pharmacist told me to follow the directions closely so that I can avoid an overdose. I paid for the medication and thanked her for her help.

<end of story>

Today’s podcast is called “At The Pharmacy.” A “pharmacy,” is a place where you can get drugs, where you can get medicine. Usually these are drugs or medicine that your doctor gives you or tells you to take. And so, you can go to a pharmacy. Most pharmacies are either their own store, what we would call a “drugstore,” which has a pharmacy, but also has other drugs and medicine and



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things that you might want to buy. You can also find pharmacies in hospitals. Most hospitals have a pharmacy where you can get drugs and medicine that the doctor has told you to take. The story begins by me saying that, “I went to the drugstore down the street to fill a prescription at the pharmacy.” A “drugstore,” all one word, is a store that, as I’d mentioned, sells many things and has a pharmacy in it. In one part of a store, there is a pharmacy.

I went down the street. To go “down the street” means to go somewhere close to where you live. So if someone says, “It’s just down the street,” they mean it’s close to here. Well, I went down the street to the pharmacy to fill a prescription. To fill a prescription means to get the drugs, to get the medicine. A “prescription” is the permission that your doctor gives you to get this drug. There are some drugs that you can only get with your doctor’s permission, if your doctor says it’s okay. And what they do is they give you a prescription and it’s usually a piece of paper, though now they can do it electronically, I think. But traditionally, it was a piece of paper that you take to the pharmacy to have it filled, meaning to get the actual drugs. So “to fill the prescription” means to get the drugs, to get the medicine that your doctor wants you to take. So I said that I was having some problems with my arm, and the doctor prescribed for me a new medication. Notice that a verb here, “to prescribe” - that’s the verb for prescription, which is a noun. So, what a doctor does is prescribes medicine, or prescribes drugs for you, and that’s the verb. That’s what the doctor does, gives you permission so you can take them. “Medication” is just the other word for medicine. So medicine, medication, usually mean the same thing. We’re talking about drugs here or something that’s suppose to help you get better or to be more healthy.

Well, I went to the pharmacy and I waited in line to talk to the pharmacist, the person who works at the pharmacy. I waited inline, and when it was my turn, I handed the prescription, I gave the piece of paper, I handed the prescription to the pharmacist. “Pharmacist,” as I said, is a person who works at the pharmacy. But it’s not just anyone who works at the pharmacy. It’s the person who has a special training, has a special degree to give people drugs. And, in the United States, you have to go through a special program at the university in order to work as a pharmacist, as someone who can give drugs. The pharmacist told me to come back in fifteen minutes, return in fifteen minutes, and she would get the drugs for me, and she would get them ready for me.

In the meantime, while I was waiting - “in the meantime,” that expression means while I was waiting for something else - I went to look for some over-the-counter



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stomach medication. “Over-the-counter,” which is usually hyphenated, meaning that it’s over, hyphen, the, hyphen, counter, although you may often see it without the hyphen, just the three words. Over-the-counter means a drug or a medicine that you don’t need the doctor’s permission to take. You don’t need, that is, a prescription from the doctor...that you can buy that drug legally without having to get the doctor’s approval or the doctor’s okay. So over-the-counter prescriptions are things that you would take for a cold - aspirin for a headache, something for your stomach that will help your stomach - lots of things that are over-the-counter medications or over-the-counter medicines. This is sometimes abbreviated as “OTC.” OTC are over-the-counter drugs.

Well, the stomach medication had two types, two forms. One was in a tablet, and one was in a capsule. A “tablet” is a small pill, a small drug - a pill, that has medicine in it. Usually it’s solid, meaning it’s all one piece. A “capsule” is a pill that usually has a cover, and inside the tablet, there is medicine. So it’s not necessarily solid. Though sometimes, people used the two words, tablet and capsule, both to mean the same thing – a pill.

I decided on the capsules, meaning I decided to buy the capsules, and I returned to the pharmacy. The pharmacist asked me if I had taken this medication before. Normally, when the pharmacist gives you a drug, if it’s a new drug, they have to talk to you. They’re required to talk to you and ask you certain questions. And, one question that the pharmacist here is asking is if I had taken the medication, if I had taken this drug before. I told her I hadn’t, and she pointed out the directions on the bottle. To “point out,” two words, means to show or to indicate, to show to someone. And so she showed me, she took the bottle and she pointed at it with her finger, probably, she pointed out the directions on the bottle. The directions here mean the instructions. We often use the word directions and instructions, and both of those words mean the things that you are supposed to do. Usually they are listed in steps. Number one, number two, number three. But for a drug like this, there would just be how many times you should take the pill and how many pills you should take. Those would be the directions telling you how to use this drug.

The bottle had dosage information. “Dosage,” and that refers to how much of the medicine you should take and how often you should take it. So that’s what we call the dosage. It’s the information of how much medicine you should take. Well, the dosage information for this medicine said: “Take two tablets two times a day.” So, I have to take two pills or tablets twice a day. The bottle also had a warning



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on it not to take it on an empty stomach. A “warning” here means it’s telling you something that could be a problem. It’s telling you that you should not do something, or you should be careful about something. That’s a warning, as a noun. The verb is “to warn,” to tell someone that they may be in danger or they may have a problem. Well, this warning said that I should not take the drug “on an empty stomach.” When we say “on an empty stomach,” we mean without any food. So, if you wake up in the morning and you have not eaten breakfast yet, you have an empty stomach. You have no food, or very little food in your stomach. And some drugs you need to take with food. Well, this one is one of those kinds of drugs.

The bottle also said I should stop taking any of the medication or stop taking medication if I had any serious side effects. A “side effect,” two words, a side effect is when you take a drug and may help you, you may feel better, but it may also cause a new problem. And, we call those new problems side effects. For example, there are some drugs, some medicine you take if you have a cold. But, if you take them, you may feel sleepy. You might start to feel tired. Well, that’s a side effect of the drug. You don’t take it to feel tired, you take it to help your cold. But, that’s one of the things that will happen with the drug.

The pharmacist told me to follow the directions closely. “To follow directions,” notice the verb, we say to follow directions means to obey the instructions, to do what the directions or instructions say to do. To follow something closely means to be very careful, to do exactly what the directions say. The reason is is that the pharmacist wants me to avoid having an overdose. “Overdose,” one word, is when you take too much of something. Sometimes people who want to kill themselves, take an overdose of sleeping pills, for example. Overdose is when you have too much of the drug and that it can hurt you. It can be worse for you if you take too much. The word “dose” is similar to dosage; it’s the amount of the drug that you are taking. I then thanked the pharmacist for her help and paid for the medication.

Now let’s listen to the story, this time at a native rate of speech.

<start of story>

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In the meantime, I went to look for some over-the-counter stomach medication. There were some in tablets and capsules. I decided on the capsules and returned to the pharmacy.

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<end of story>

The script for today's podcast was written by our very own, Dr. Lucy Tse. Remember to e-mail us your questions or comments, if you have any. Our e-mail address is [eslpod@eslpod.com](mailto:eslpod@eslpod.com). From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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