

Advice from the pharmacist

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To consult a pharmacist about minor health concerns
- To follow instructions from a pharmacist about medicines



RESOURCES

- Copies of Resources 1–3
- Cards for instructions (Activity 2 Support)
- Audio equipment [55–58](#)

RELATED THEMES

- Prescriptions (pages 29–39)
- Checking medicine labels (pages 304–316)
- Dosage and timing (pages 317–330)

HEALTH SKILLS

The pharmacist plays a vital role in the treatment of routine and minor health concerns, offering rapid access to a range of medicines, services and advice, thus reducing demand for appointments with a GP.

In this theme learners recognise what advice and information they can expect from a pharmacist, understand key information about medicines and equipment, and follow instructions.

SKILLS FOR LIFE

In order to get information from a pharmacist about minor health concerns and their treatment, learners need to be able to:

- listen for and identify key information
- listen to and follow simple instructions
- understand relevant specialist vocabulary.

Core curriculum

Activities in this theme will contribute to learning in the following curriculum areas:

- listen for detail in instructions (E Lr/E3.2c)
- listen for and identify relevant information (E Lr/E3.3b).

- Check understanding of the words 'pharmacist' and 'chemist'; check learners realise that these are the same.
- In small groups, ask learners to compile lists of things you can and can't get from a pharmacist. Discuss any differences between the UK and other countries learners are familiar with.
- Discuss the types of medicines you can buy 'over the counter' from the pharmacist (i.e. without a prescription) and those that you can only get with a prescription, such as antibiotics.

What type of advice and help can you get from a pharmacist?

Why are some medicines such as antibiotics only available on prescription?

Why might you speak to a pharmacist rather than a doctor?

What other conditions might a pharmacist help you with?

ACTIVITY 1 55

Explore the types of help and advice a pharmacist can give

- Share ideas about the picture on Resource 1, asking questions to establish who the people are, where they are and what is happening. Display useful words.
- Discuss the types of advice listed, checking understanding of key words such as 'medicine', 'symptoms' and 'side-effects'.
- Set the context for the audio clip – six short extracts with a pharmacist's advice for a child with hay fever, followed by two general points about antibiotics.
- Play the audio clip. Stimulate discussion by asking questions, such as: 'What do you think the anti-histamine is for?' 'Does anyone here get hay fever?' 'Think about the pharmacist's last point. What question do you think the customer asked?'
- Discuss the meaning of any unfamiliar words in the pharmacist's advice.
- Suggest that learners match each speech-bubble on the page to one of the types of advice listed.

Support

- Pause the audio clip after each piece of advice, discussing what learners heard and supporting learners to identify the speech-bubble on the page.
- Ask learners to explain the kind of information the pharmacist is giving in each speech-bubble (e.g. she is giving the customer something to make her child's hay fever better).
- When learners are confident about the purpose of each speech-bubble, ask them to match each one to a type of advice from the list on the page.

ESOL

As follow-up, work with learners to build up a bank of expressions for talking about timing (e.g. 'as soon as you notice ...') and dosage (e.g. 'one spoonful'). Start with the expressions used by the pharmacist on Resource 1 and then discuss and record other expressions, such as 'one tablet a day', 'twice a day', 'whenever you feel ...', 'before eating', etc.

ACTIVITY 2 56–57

Follow a pharmacist's advice on medication

- Play the two extracts of advice from the pharmacist and clarify the meaning of any unfamiliar vocabulary (e.g. 'catching', 'reapply' – ensure learners recognise the word 'apply' with the prefix 're-').
- Ask learners to suggest what problems are being discussed. Discuss the type of advice being given.
- Give out the gap-fill exercise on Resource 2.

- Play the first extract again, pausing the audio to allow learners time to complete the gaps.
- Encourage learners to identify the kinds of words and expressions they have filled in (e.g. instruction words and words that go with them; words and expressions associated with dose and timing).
- Play the second extract again. Ask learners to pick out one instruction word from the instructions on Resource 2 (e.g. 'take'), then underline all the other instruction words. Note that the last of these is a negative: 'don't take'.

Why is it important to know if something is 'catching'?

Support

- Play the two extracts one at a time, sentence by sentence.
- For the first extract, invite a volunteer to mime following the instructions. Then ask learners to count how many different instructions were given.
- Ask them to listen again and pick out the key instruction words, such as 'put', 'reapply', 'wash'.
- Provide on cards some simple instructions relating to taking medicines. Read them aloud for learners to imitate pronunciation and stress.
- Ask learners to place the instructions in the right order.

ESOL

- Revise recognition of instruction words (imperatives), such as 'put' and 'take'.
- Ask learners to pick out words that go with the instruction words (e.g. 'put on', 'throw away').
- As a group, draw up a list of instruction words (imperatives) that are useful for talking about medicines (e.g. 'apply', 'take', 'swallow', 'drink', 'come back', 'rub in', 'suck', 'dissolve').

ACTIVITY 3 58

Pick out key information about health problems

- Play the whole conversation between Robert and the pharmacist through once for gist.
- Give out Resource 3A and B. Ask learners to listen again and pick out all the key information the pharmacist gives. Suggest that they complete the tables in pencil with the key information as they hear it.
- In pairs, encourage learners to compare results and amend as necessary. Help with spelling if necessary, but this is primarily a listening exercise to check if learners have *heard* correctly.
- Discuss what other information learners might want from the pharmacist.

TIP

To help learners pick out key information, ask them to listen first for words that signal when the information they need is coming up (e.g. 'medicine' and 'symptom').

What other information might you want from a pharmacist?

Support

- Focus on key parts of the conversation and replay as necessary.
- In pairs, ask learners to discuss the tables and to draft answers as they remember them.
- When learners are confident, replay the whole conversation and ask them to complete the table in pairs.

ESOL

As follow-up, help learners to form suitable questions that they could ask the pharmacist (e.g. 'What are the side-effects?' 'How long do I need to take them for?' 'Will I be better by Tuesday?' 'Can any of my family take this medicine?').

- Together prepare a list of other health-related topics the pharmacist might help with, including some less obvious ones such as giving up smoking, the 'morning after' contraceptive pill, weight management, healthy eating.
- Ask learners to choose a topic to ask the pharmacist about.
- In groups, ask them to draw up a list of things they want to know and to prepare a table for the information they find, similar to the table on Resource 3.
- Encourage learners to visit a pharmacist for advice, then to fill in as much information on this table as they can.
- Review results, focusing on key expressions used.

*What would **you** like to ask your pharmacist?*

Advice from the pharmacist

RESOURCE 1

The pharmacist can give you different **types of advice** about medicine:

- what medicine to take for a simple health problem
- what a medicine is for
- symptoms
- dosage
- side-effects
- medicine you may need to get from a doctor.
- get healthy lifestyle advice
- support for self-care
- support for those with long-term conditions



1 Give him one spoonful. He can have another spoonful after 4 hours if he needs it, but not more than four doses in 24 hours.

2 It might make him a bit sleepy, and it gives some people a headache, but that isn't very common.

3 You don't need antibiotics. Antibiotics are for bacterial infections, and you'd need a prescription from your doctor.

4 This anti-histamine syrup is very good.

5 Give him some as soon as you notice any symptoms of hay fever.

6 The symptoms can be sneezing, a runny nose or itchy eyes.

7 If he had a common cold, I'd advise you to make sure he has plenty of fluid, rest and painkillers, if necessary. Common colds are caused by a viral infection so antibiotics won't help.

8 If you do need to take an antibiotic for a bacterial infection, it's important to finish the course.

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Gap-fill exercise 56

- 1 _____ a bit of this cream _____ your skin as soon as _____ .
- 2 _____ the cream every _____ hours.
- 3 _____ your hands _____ cold sores are very catching.
- 4 _____ anyone else _____ your cold sore.
- 5 Put on a bit of cream _____ . Keep applying the cream _____ even if your cold sore stops feeling _____ or _____ .
- 6 _____ the tube of cream back to the _____ for safe disposal when it's past the expiry date.

Instructions 57

When you get home, take two spoonfuls of the medicine. Then make yourself a hot drink and go to bed. Sleep is very good. Try to sleep for a couple of hours, then have another hot drink. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables for lunch. That'll give you vitamin C. It's important that you keep warm. Keep taking the medicine until you feel better. Don't take it more frequently than it says on the leaflet!

Advice from the pharmacist

RESOURCE 3A

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<p>Health problem 1</p>		
<p>Symptoms</p>		
<p>Name of medicine</p>		
<p>Form of medicine</p>		
<p>Dosage</p>		

<p>Health problem 2</p>		
<p>Symptoms</p>		
<p>Name of medicine</p>		
<p>Form of medicine</p>		
<p>Dosage</p>		

ACTIVITY 1 / Resource 1

- 1 Give him one spoonful. He can have another spoonful after 4 hours if he needs it, but not more than four doses in 24 hours. = dosage
- 2 It might make him a bit sleepy, and it gives some people a headache, but that isn't very common. = side-effects
- 3 You don't need antibiotics. Antibiotics are for bacterial infections and you'd need a prescription from your doctor. = medicine you may need to get from a doctor
- 4 This anti-histamine syrup is very good. = what medicine to take
- 5 Give him some as soon as you notice any symptoms of hay fever. = what the medicine is for
- 6 The symptoms can be sneezing, a runny nose or itchy eyes. = symptoms
- 7 If he had a common cold, I'd advise you to make sure he has plenty of fluid, rest and painkillers, if necessary. Common colds are caused by a viral infection so antibiotics won't help. = support for self-care
- 8 If you do need to take an antibiotic for a bacterial infection, it's important to finish the course. = support for self-care

ACTIVITY 2 / Resource 2

Gap-fill exercise

- 1 Put a bit of this cream on your skin as soon as possible.
- 2 Reapply the cream every few hours.
- 3 Wash your hands immediately afterwards cold sores are very catching.
- 4 Don't let anyone else touch your cold sore.
- 5 Put on a bit of cream five times a day. Keep applying the cream for 5 days even if your cold sore stops feeling painful or itchy.
- 6 Take the tube of cream back to the pharmacy for safe disposal when it's past the expiry date.

Instructions

When you get home, take two spoonfuls of the medicine. Then make yourself a hot drink and go to bed. Sleep is very good. Try to sleep for a couple of hours, then have another hot drink. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables for lunch. That'll give you vitamin C. It's important that you keep warm. Keep taking the medicine until you feel better. Don't take it more frequently than it says on the leaflet!

ACTIVITY 3 / Resource 3

Health problem 1	cold
Symptoms	1 headache 2 blocked nose 3 sore throat 4 chesty cough 5 aches and pains
Name of medicine	Cold Beater
Form of medicine	liquid medicine
Dosage	two spoonfuls every four hours

Health problem 2	cold sore
Symptoms	1 painful 2 itchy
Name of medicine	acyclovir
Form of medicine	cream
Dosage	put on a bit of cream 5 times a day. Keep applying for 5 days

ACTIVITY 1



- 1 Give him one spoonful. He can have another spoonful after 4 hours if he needs it, but not more than four doses in 24 hours.
- 2 It might make him a bit sleepy, and it gives some people a headache, but that isn't very common.

- 3 You don't need antibiotics. Antibiotics are for bacterial infections, and you'd need a prescription from your doctor.
- 4 This anti-histamine syrup is very good.
- 5 Give him some as soon as you notice any symptoms of hay fever.
- 6 The symptoms can be sneezing, a runny nose or itchy eyes.
- 7 If he had a common cold, I'd advise you to make sure he has plenty of fluid, rest and painkillers, if necessary. Common colds are caused by a viral infection so antibiotics won't help.
- 8 If you do need to take an antibiotic for a bacterial infection, it's important to finish the course.

ACTIVITY 2



Extract 1

Put a bit of this cream on your skin as soon as possible. Reapply the cream every few hours. Wash your hands immediately afterwards – cold sores are very catching. Don't let anyone else touch your cold sore. Put on a bit of cream 5 times a day. Keep applying the cream for 5 days even if your cold sore stops feeling painful or itchy. Take the tube of cream back to the pharmacy for safe disposal when it's past the expiry date.



Extract 2

When you get home, take two spoonfuls of the medicine. Then make yourself a hot drink and go to bed. Sleep is very good. Try to sleep for a couple of hours, then have another hot drink. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables for lunch. That'll give you vitamin C. It's important that you keep warm. Keep taking the medicine until you feel better. Don't take it more frequently than it says on the leaflet!

ACTIVITY 3



Pharmacist: Good morning.

Robert: Good morning. Can you help me? I feel dreadful. I don't think I've got the flu, I think it's just a very bad cold, but it's gone on for four days now. What can I take to get better?

Pharmacist: Oh, you *have* got a cold, haven't you! There's a lot of it about at the moment. This medicine's very good. It's called Cold Beater. It's for all the symptoms of a cold: headache, blocked nose, sore throat, chesty cough. It contains paracetamol for your headache and aches and pains, and something to clear your nose and chest.

Robert: Oh, that's great. Thank you.

Pharmacist: You need to take two spoonfuls no more than every four hours.

Robert: Two spoonfuls no more than every four hours, OK.

Pharmacist: When you get home, take two spoonfuls of the medicine. Then make yourself a hot drink – a fruit drink like orange or blackcurrant is best – and go to bed. Sleep is very good. Try to sleep for a couple of hours, then have another hot drink. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables for lunch. That'll give you vitamin C. Vitamin C helps you to fight off colds. It's important that you keep warm. Keep taking the medicine until you feel better.

Robert: Right. Thank you. Oh, and I think I'm getting a cold sore on my lip. What can I take for that?

Pharmacist: Put a bit of this cream on it – it's called acyclovir. If you feel a cold sore, put some on as soon as possible and reapply every few hours. Oh, and wash your hands immediately afterwards – cold sores are very catching. Don't let anyone else touch your cold sore. Put on a bit of cream 5 times a day. Keep applying the cream for 5 days, even if your cold sore stops feeling painful or itchy. Take the tube of cream back to the pharmacy for safe disposal when it's past the expiry date.

Robert: Thank you. You're very helpful. How much do I owe you?

Pharmacist: I'll just add it up. Would you like some vitamin C tablets as well?

Robert: Yes, thank you. Anything to get rid of this cold.