

ESL Health Unit

Unit Two The Hospital

Lesson Two Surgery



Reading and Writing Practice Intermediate

Goals for this lesson:

*Below are some of the goals of this lesson. Which ones are your goals too?
Check (✓) them.*

- Understand more about what to expect before surgery
- Learn important information to have ready in case of an emergency

Lesson Two: Surgery

Reading Writing Practice

Before You Read!

In this lesson, you will read about the frustrating experience one patient had when he could not communicate with his doctor. Before you read, discuss the following questions with your classmates and your teacher.

1. Have you ever had a problem communicating with your doctor?
2. How does it make you feel when you have problems communicating something that you feel is very important?
3. Since the year 2000, in the United States, there has been an **executive order** that as a patient in a doctor's office or hospital, you have the right to be communicated with in a manner that is clear, concise and understandable. If you do not speak English, you should be provided an interpreter. Have you ever used an interpreter in your doctor's office or the hospital? If yes, who helped you to find this interpreter? Was he/she provided by your doctor's office?

4. One Spanish-speaking patient in Philadelphia said, *“I have had three surgeries. During all of the three surgeries, my children have been the translators.”* Do you have children, a friend or a caretaker who can help you in the case that you need translation at the doctor’s office or hospital?

Reading Two - Emergency Surgery

Now you are going to read about the experience one patient had when he could not communicate with his doctor. Please read the story and then answer the questions with your classmates and your teacher.

“Once I had a friend who was brought to the hospital in an ambulance and he needed **urgent** surgery, but when the doctors got together, they couldn’t understand [him] when he was talking about his symptoms, so my friend had to call his English teacher and ask her to come explain what was happening.”

-Russian Speaker, Philadelphia

Questions:

1. How did the patient get to the hospital?
2. How was the patient finally able to communicate with his doctor?
3. The Mayo Health Clinic suggests that your children, close friends and or caretakers should have the following information about you in case you are taken to the hospital for emergency surgery:

1. **Names of doctors.** This is the most important piece of information. Why? Chances are good that your doctors can provide important information such as details about your specific health history.
2. **Birth date.** Often medical records and insurance information are cataloged according to birth date. This can improve communication in an emergency or a crisis.
3. **List of allergies.** This is especially important if you are allergic to medication — penicillin, for example.

4. **Advance directives.** An advance directive is a legal document that outlines your decisions about your health care, such as whether or not agree with resuscitation efforts and the use of life-support machines.

5. **Major medical problems.** This includes such diseases as diabetes or heart disease.

6. **List of medications.** It's especially important that a doctor know if you use blood thinners.

7. **Religious beliefs.** This is particularly important in case blood transfusions are needed.

8. **Insurance information.** The name of your health insurance provider and your policy numbers.

9. **Prior surgery.** List past medical procedures, such as cardiac bypass surgery.

10. **Lifestyle information.** Do you drink alcohol or use tobacco?

Do you have someone (a child, friend or caretaker) who could provide this information for you in the case that you needed emergency surgery?

Health Watch: Questions to Ask Before You Have Surgery

What is the operation (procedure) that is recommended?

Ask your surgeon to tell you about the type of operation, technique used, and why it should be performed. (Ask for pictures and drawings to help you understand.)

What is the surgeon's experience with this procedure?

Ask the surgeon about his experience with this procedure – how many times has he performed the surgery? What is his success rate?

What is the reason that this procedure is necessary at this time?

Is the procedure being done to relieve pain, diagnose a condition, correct deformity, for cosmetic reasons, or what exact purposes?

What are the options if this procedure is not done?

What are the non-surgical or medical treatments available to help the condition? What will/might happen if the operation is not done. If the operation is not done at this time, can it be done later? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having the surgery now?

ESL Health Unit

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Lesson Two Surgery



Listening and Speaking Practice

Intermediate

Goals for this lesson:

Below are some of the goals of this lesson. Which ones are your goals too? Check (✓) them.

- Understand more about what to expect before and after surgery
- Learn important questions to ask my doctor before I choose to have surgery
- Use the present perfect tense to talk about my health history
- Understand the difference between “say” and “tell”



Lesson Two: Surgery

Listening and Speaking Practice

Before You Listen!

With your classmates or teacher, work together to create a list of instructions for patients to follow before they are admitted to a hospital for surgery. If you or your group members have never had an operation, try to imagine what kinds of instructions a doctor would give a patient who is going to have surgery

Listening Two – Understanding pre-op instructions

****Note to teacher: Do not pass out the dialogue below until students are ready for the “Talk About It!” activity. Record it onto a cassette and have students listen to the recording. Play once or twice before they begin to listen for specific information.**

Listen to the following telephone conversation and then discuss the answers to the questions with your classmates and teachers.

Nurse: You're surgery is on September 25th at 9am.

Patient: Are there any special instructions I need to know about?

Nurse: Yes, listen carefully. It is very important that you follow these instructions exactly. If you don't, it could endanger your life during the surgery.

Patient: Okay. What do I need to do?

Nurse: You need to fast after midnight the night before the surgery.

Patient: I'm sorry. I don't understand. What do you mean by “fast?”

Nurse: It means don't eat anything.

Patient: Nothing? Can I drink something?

Nurse: Yes. You can have clear liquids up to two hours before the surgery. After that, you cannot drink anything. Not even water.

Patient: Clear liquids means I can only have water?

Nurse: Clear liquids means anything you can see a newspaper through such as apple juice or chicken broth. Also, do not take any aspirin or ibuprofen for three weeks before the surgery.

Patient: Why can't I take those?

Nurse: It increases your risk of bleeding too much.

Patient: Okay. I'll be sure to follow those instructions.

Nurse: Great. If you have any questions feel free to call me.

Patient: Thanks. I will.

Questions:

1. Why is it important for the patient to follow the nurse's pre-op instructions?
2. What does "fast" mean?
3. When does the patient need to start fasting?
4. What is the patient allowed to drink after midnight?
5. What does the nurse mean by "clear liquids?"

6. Why isn't the patient allowed to take aspirin or ibuprofen for three weeks before the surgery?

Health Watch: What to Expect After Surgery

Depending on your type of surgery, you may wake up with...

(Ask your doctor what to expect for your type of surgery.)

- Intravenous lines (IV) in your arm or hand to give you medicine, fluids and/or nourishment. Don't worry if it starts beeping. This means your nurse needs to check it to adjust the fluids.
- A breathing tube (attached to a respirator) in your throat to help you breathe. Try to relax if this is uncomfortable.
 - Many people wake up with a gagging sensation. Relax and let the machine breathe for you until it's removed (usually within 12 hours).
 - You may have soft wrist restraints to remind you not to pull on the tube. (The restraints are removed when the breathing tube is taken out.)
 - You won't be able to talk with the tube in. You can nod your head "yes" and "no" to answer questions.
- Monitoring wires on your chest (EKG lines) or on your stomach (pacemaker wires) to check your heart.
- A tube placed through your nose to your stomach to remove

Talk About It!

First a grammar lesson on the present perfect

The present perfect is used to describe:

1. An action or situation that started in the past and continues in the present.

Example: *I have lived in Philadelphia since 1984* (= and I still do.)

2. An action performed during a period that has not yet finished. Example:

She ***has been*** to the doctor twice this week (= and the week isn't over yet.)

3. A repeated action in an unspecified period between the past and now.

Example: We ***have been*** to the emergency room several times.

4. An action that was completed in the **very recent** past, (expressed by

'**just**'). Example: I ***have just finished*** my exercise.

5. An action when the time is not important. Example: He **has had** heart surgery. (the **fact that he has had heart surgery** is what is important, not exactly when he had it.)

Note: When we want to give or ask details about *when, where, who*, we use the simple past. Example: He **had** heart surgery last week.

The present perfect of any verb is composed of two elements: the appropriate form of the verb **to have** (present tense), plus the past participle of the main verb. The past participle of a regular verb is **base+ed**, for example: *played, arrived, looked*.

For irregular verbs, see the **Table of irregular verbs** at the end of this lesson.

Example: *to visit*, present perfect

Positive Statements

Subject	to have	past participle
<i>She</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>Visited</i>

Negative Statements

Subject	to have + not	past participle
<i>She</i>	<i>hasn't</i>	<i>Visited</i>

Questions

to have	subject	past participle
<i>Has</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>visited..?</i>

Negative Questions

to have + not	subject	past participle
<i>Hasn't</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>visited...?</i>

Example: *to walk*, present perfect

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Positive Statements	Negative Statements	Questions
I have walked	I haven't walked	Have I walked?
You have walked	You haven't walked	Have you walked?
He, she, it has	He, she, it hasn't	Has he, she, it
walked	walked	walked
We have walked	We haven't walked	Have we walked?
You have walked	You haven't walked	Have you walked?
They have walked	They haven't walked	Have they walked?

Examples:

1. Actions started in the past and continuing in the present.
 - a. They *haven't lived* here for years.
 - b. She *has worked* in the doctor's office for five years.
 - c. We *have had* the same doctor for ten years.
 - d. *Have you smoked* since your were a teenager?

5. When the precise time of the action is not important or not known.
- a. Someone *has eaten my soup!*
 - b. *Have you seen* the doctor?
 - c. *She's studied* Japanese, Russian and English.

Activity One:

Rose has taken her sister to the emergency room and learned that she will need an operation. She needs to discuss her sister's medical background with the nurse by answering the following questions. Fill-in the blank with the correct form of the verb; either simple past or past perfect.

Nurse: I need to ask you questions about your sister's conditions. Ok? Has she had chronic health problems?

Rose: Yes she has high blood pressure and heart disease. For the past 10 years she (have) _____ some problems with asthma.

Nurse: How many years has she had these problems?

Rose: She (have) _____ high blood pressure for 20 years and heart disease since 1999.

Nurse: Has she had any heart attacks or strokes?

Rose: Yes. She (have) _____ a heart attack in 1999.

Nurse: Has she had any operations for her heart or any other problems?

Rose: Yes she (have) _____ an operation for her heart.

Nurse: How many operations?

Rose: She (have) _____ only one.

Nurse: When?

Rose: She (have) _____ bypass surgery in November, 2002.

Nurse: Has she had any previous hospitalizations other than for her heart attack and surgery?

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Rose: No. She (have not) _____.

Nurse: Does she smoke?

Rose: No. She (smoke) _____ until her heart attack but then she quit.

Nurse: Does she drink alcohol?

Rose: Yes. Sometimes

Nurse: Does she take any illegal drugs?

Rose: No

Nurse: When did she last eat?

Rose: She (have) _____ breakfast this morning at 6:00 but she (not eat) _____ anything since then.

Activity Two:

Now role-play this same situation with a partner. Imagine you are going into the hospital for surgery. Take turns acting out the conversation with one person playing the role of nurse asking the questions above and the other person playing the role of the patient.

Activity Three:

Before you begin this activity, remember:

Use *say* for direct quotations.

The doctor said, “Take this medicine.”

Use **tell** for indirect quotations.

The doctor told me to take this medicine.

*Part One: Write the correct form of **say** or **tell** in the blank spaces. Read the sentences to a partner.*

1. The nurse _____, "Drink this liquid."
2. He _____ the patient to relax.
3. The registration clerk _____ her to fill out the forms.
4. She _____, "Fill out these forms."
5. The anesthesiologist wanted to _____ me what would happen.
6. I _____ to him, "Give me the injection in this arm."
7. He _____ the nurse to give him the injection in his left arm.
8. I was _____ the doctor where it hurt when the phone rang.
9. They were _____ that the medicine was expensive.

10. The surgeon had _____ him to be careful of pulling the muscle.

Part Two: (Instructions for the teacher)

1) Two people leave the classroom. While they are gone, the teacher passes out three to four index cards with medical instructions (see chart B for the cards) to one of the remaining students. That student reads the cards aloud and the class discusses the card to make sure everyone understands.

2) Student number one returns to the classroom. The cards are read to the student two times. He/she may ask two questions for clarification.

3) Student number two returns to the classroom. Student number one must tell student number two what was read from the cards. The other students in the room may correct anything that is incorrect or missing. The cards are read again to check the accuracy of student number one's memory.

Chart B: Medical Instructions

Take two Tylenol and lie down for two hours.	Fast after midnight.	Drink only clear liquids after midnight.
Do not take any aspirin.	Keep your foot elevated as much as possible.	Stay in bed for a week.
Call the hospital if you have not gone to the bathroom by noon	Do not eat any salt.	Eat only bland food for a week.

tomorrow.		
Take 3 cc's of this medicine every four hours.	Drink plenty of fluids.	Call the ER if you have a fever over 102° F.

ESL Health Unit

Unit Two The Hospital

Lesson Two Surgery



Real Practice Intermediate

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Lesson Two: Surgery

Real Practice!

The best way to stay safe and get the best care possible in your hospital is to be an active member of your healthcare team. Review these simple suggestions before you are admitted to the hospital.

What Can You Do?

- Tell all of your doctors about any prescriptions and over the counter medicines as well as dietary supplements, such as vitamins and herbs that you are taking.
- Make sure your doctor knows about any allergies and adverse

¹³ESL Health Unit/Intermediate, Unit Two: The Hospital, Lesson Two: Surgery, Real Practice

reactions you have had to medicines.

- Make sure that all health professionals involved in your care have important health information about you.
- Make sure that someone, such as your personal doctor, is in charge of your care.
- If you are having surgery, make sure that you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree and are clear on exactly what will be done.
- Learn about your condition and treatments by asking your doctor and nurses and by using other reliable resources.
- Ask for information about your medications in terms you can understand. If you feel you need translation services ask for them.
- Speak up and ask questions anytime you have concerns or are unsure about your care.
- When you are being discharged from the hospital ask your doctor to explain the treatment plan you will use at home.
- When your doctor writes you a prescription, make sure you can read it.
- When you pick up your medicine from the pharmacy, ask questions such as: Is this the medicine my doctor prescribed for me? How often should I take the medicine? Are there any special

food or drug interactions with this medicine? Ask for written information about side effects your medicine could cause.

*A Thematic Unit for Intermediate Level ESL Teachers
Intermediate Level, Unit Two: The Hospital
Lesson Two: Surgery*

Checklist for Learning

Vocabulary Log:

In the space below, write down all of the new words you learned during this lesson that you want to remember. Try to separate your list of words into nouns (person, place or thing), adjectives (describing words) and verbs (action words). For extra practice use them in sentences of your own.

New words I learned during this lesson:

Nouns:

Adjectives:

Verbs:

What can you do?

Below are some of the language goals you worked on during this lesson. Check (✓) what you learned from this lesson. Add more ideas if you wish.

I learned to...

- Use the simple past and past progressive tense when telling a story
- Learn how to effectively communicate with the 9-1-1 dispatcher in the case of an emergency
- Pronounce numbers and street addresses
- _____

