

ESL Health Unit

Unit Five Taking Medications

Lesson Two: Taking Medications Safely



Reading and Writing Practice

Advanced Beginning

Goals for this lesson:

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

- Know the risk factors and prevention tips for falling
- Learn how to prevent dangerous drug interactions
- Review using prepositions to describe place and movement



Lesson Two – Taking Medications Safely

Reading and Writing Practice

Before You Read!

In this lesson, you will read about Supark and some problems he had with drug interactions. Before you read, complete the following activities with your classmates and your teacher.

Answer these questions with a partner:

1. Do you take more than one medication?
2. Do you know anyone who has suffered from a drug interaction?
3. Do you know anyone who has suffered from a serious fall?
4. What might happen if you take too many medications?

Vocabulary

*Study these new vocabulary words before you read. Read the sentences and guess the meaning of the **bold** words from context. Discuss the words with your teacher.*

- 1. A **drug interaction** is a problem that can occur from taking more than one medication at a time.*
- 2. The **stool** in front of my favorite chair is made of wood. I like to put my feet on it when I sit in the chair to read the newspaper.*
- 3. I **tripped** over the stool. I didn't see the stool and I fell.*
- 4. I was **injured** after my fall. My foot was swollen and I couldn't move.*
- 5. My springtime **allergies** are terrible. I can't stop sneezing and coughing.*
- 6. I was **dizzy** after taking my medication. My head was spinning and I lost my balance.*

Now read about Supark.

Reading Three: Dangerous Side Effects

This story was generated by the course developer for instructional purposes.

My name is Supark and I am from Thailand. I have several health problems. I am always on medication so I have to be careful about drug interactions. I had an accident in my home. I was walking across the living room and I tripped over a stool. I was injured, so my wife took me to the doctor.

The doctor asked me questions about my medications. I told him that I take pills for high blood pressure and painkillers for my knee. On that day I took a Benadryl tablet to help with my springtime allergies. My doctor told me that some of my pills could make me dizzy. He also said that anyone taking several medications is at risk of falling.

After that, my doctor and I discussed managing my medications. He also sent a social worker to our house to look at our rooms and show us ways we can prevent falling accidents. Now I am much more careful about walking in the house.

Activity One:

1. How did Supark fall?
2. Why does the doctor think Supark fell?
3. What did Supark's doctor do to help him with this problem?
4. Why did the social worker go to Supark's house?

Now read the following Health Watch article and answer the questions that follow.

Activity Two

Health Watch: What you Should Know about Drug Interactions

If you take several different medicines or see more than one doctor, be sure to discuss drug interactions. Talk about the drugs you take so that you can avoid problems.

Drug interactions can do the following:

- Make your medicine less effective.
- Cause **side effects**.

Some drug interactions can be **harmful** to you. Before you take your medication, you should always do the following:

- Read the label every time you use any prescription or over-the-counter drug.
- Learn about drug interactions.

Learning More About Drug Interactions

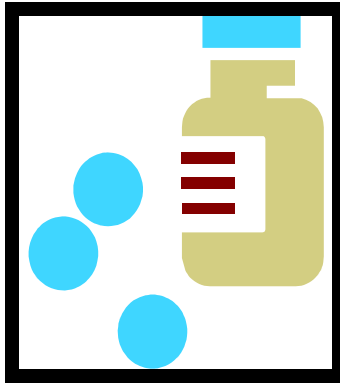
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the drugs you take.
- When your doctor prescribes a new drug, talk about all the drugs, dietary supplements, vitamins, botanicals, minerals and herbals you take, as well as the foods you eat.
- Ask your pharmacist for written information for each prescription drug you take. This will provides more information about potential drug interactions.

Answer the following questions about drug interactions.

1. What can drug interactions do?
2. What should you do before you take your medications?
3. How can you learn more about drug interactions?

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Listening and Speaking Practice

Advanced Beginning

Goals for this lesson:

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- Know the risk factors and prevention tips for falling
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Listening and Speaking Practice

Before You Listen!

Before you listen, read through the following Health Watch article. Discuss any words you do not know with your classmates and teacher and answer the questions that follow.

Health Watch: Preventing Falls

There are many reasons why a person can fall. If you know these reasons, you can prevent a serious fall.

Factor #1: Lack of Physical Activity

If you do not exercise regularly your body loses strength and flexibility. This causes falls.

What you can do:

- Exercise every other day for about 15 minutes.
- Get your balance when getting up from a chair or bed.

Factor #2: Medications

Some medicines can make you lose your balance. If you are taking a lot of

medications you can fall more easily.

What you can do:

- Know the side effects of all the medications you take.
- Remove all medications you no longer use from your home.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review all of your current medications to look for possible dangerous interactions.

Factor #3: Environmental Hazards

The most common hazard for falls is **tripping** over objects on the floor.

What you can do:

- Walk through your home to look for problems.
- Ask an occupational therapist or social worker to visit your home.

- Use a bright color strip on steps.
- Put nonskid tape on carpet edges.
- Put one phone in each level of the home and post emergency numbers at each phone.
- Make sure lighting is bright.

Adapted from report by K.R. Tremblay Jr., Colorado State University Cooperative Extension housing specialist and professor, design and merchandising; C.E. Barber, Colorado State University professor, human development and family studies. 5/96. Revised 3/01.

1. Fill in the chart below using information from the Health Watch.

¹ESL Health Unit/Advanced Beginning, Unit Five: Taking Medications, Lesson Two: Taking Medications Safely, Listening and Speaking Practice

Problem	Suggestions
Getting no exercise	
Taking multiple medications	
Dangers in the home	

Listening Two: Making Your Home Safe

****Note to teacher: Do not pass out the written message in the box below. Record it onto a cassette (if possible with someone to play the second role in the dialogue) and have students listen to the recording. Play once or twice before they begin to listen for specific information.**

Listen to conversation between Berta and Dr. Gallagher, her social worker. Dr. Gallagher has come to Berta's house to talk to her about problems with her house that could cause her to fall or hurt herself.

Berta: I'm so glad you could come to my house Dr. Gallagher.
My daughter helps me keep my house clean, but I know there's more I can do to prevent falling. I really need your help. Why don't we start upstairs in the bedroom?

Dr. Gallagher: OK. It's dark here in your bedroom. You should have a telephone and a lamp next to your bed. Bright lighting helps you see better.

Berta: You're right. It's so hard for me to see in here at night.
Shall we continue downstairs? We have to go through this hallway. Oh, be careful. I left my purse there on the floor. Be careful not to trip.

Dr. Gallagher: Oh! Thanks for the warning! I didn't see that. Berta, you should make sure that there is nothing on the floor in your hallways. This could make you fall!

Berta: Yes, I know. I just put it there for a moment.

Dr. Gallagher: You have no handrails on your stairs. This is a dangerous falling hazard, Berta. You should put in handrails on both sides of the stairways. You will need to hold on to them. You should do this as soon as you can.

Berta: OK, I think my son-in-law can help me do that. Let me show you the living room.

Dr. Gallagher: I see a lot of electronic equipment here – a computer, television, DVD player. In this area, you should

remove the electrical cords from your walking paths.
You might trip and fall. Berta, always try to keep your
pathways clear.

Berta: Oh, I'm used to those cords. I don't trip on them.

Dr. Gallagher: Maybe you won't trip, but your houseguests might. It's always a good idea to keep objects off the floor and keep the pathways clear.

Berta: You've told me quite a few things. Can I write them down? I don't want to forget what we've discussed.

Dr. Gallagher: Sure. Here are the tips you should remember: Don't leave anything on the floor. Use handrails so that you can hold on to something. Make sure all of your rooms have good lighting. Keep a telephone and lamp next to your bed. If you do fall, call someone for help immediately.



**USE HANDRAIL
AND MOVE ONE
STEP AT A TIME**

Activity One:

Listen for the main idea and write it in the space below. What are Dr.

Gallagher and Berta talking about?

Activity Two:

Listen and check the tips that you hear Dr. Gallagher say.

- Keep the floors wet
- Leave the lights on when you go to bed
- Keep a telephone next to your bed
- Leave things on the floor
- Put in handrails on the stairways
- Put little rugs on all of the floors
- Remove cords from walking paths

Activity Three:

Listen again and try to fill in the missing words from the tips Dr. Gallagher gives for each of Berta's rooms listed below.

Bedroom:

OK. It's dark here in your bedroom. You should have a telephone and a _____ next to your bed. Bright _____ helps you see better.

Hallway:

Oh! Thanks for the warning! I didn't see that. Berta, you should make sure that there is nothing on the _____ in your hallways. This could make you _____!

Stairs:

You have no handrails on your _____. This is a dangerous _____ hazard, Berta. You should put in handrails on both sides of the _____. You will need to hold on to them. You should do this as soon as you can.

Living Area:

I see a lot of _____ equipment here – a computer,
_____, DVD player. In this area, you should remove the
electrical _____ from your walking paths. You might
_____ and fall. Berta, always try to keep your pathways
clear.

Talk About It!

Remember Supark from Reading One of this lesson? Let's talk about Supark's risk for falling before his accident and some of the ways he can make improvements. Before you begin, review the meanings of the following prepositions of position and direction with your classmates and teacher.

Prepositions of Position

at the back of	between	on the other side of
at the bottom of	in the corner of	to the right of
at the top of	in the middle of	on the side of
behind	next to	on top of
beneath	to the left of	opposite

List from http://esl.about.com/library/grammar/blgr_prep9.htm

Activity One:

Work with a partner to practice using prepositions of position. Look at the picture. Complete the sentences with the correct preposition of position based on the picture.



Picture taken from: <http://www.cita.on.ca/EAOnline/FlashedESL/CatsMX.swf>

1. The lamp is _____ the chair and the sofa.
2. The sofa is _____ the window.
3. The flowers are _____ the dresser.
4. The table is _____ the room.
5. The bunk beds are _____ the room.

Activity Two:

Read the description of Supark's living room below. Underline the prepositions of position.

Supark's Living Room

Supark lives in a small apartment. In his living room there is a large sofa, two end tables, a coffee table, a large chair, a television, a fan, and a bookcase. There is a broken lamp on top of one of the tables.

The sofa is old and comfortable but it is difficult to get in and out of. The two tables are to the left and to the right of the sofa.

The coffee table is in front of the sofa and is covered with magazines. There are also magazines beneath the coffee table, on the floor in front of the television and on top of the bookcase. The bookcase is full of books.

There is a cord on the floor connecting the fan to an outlet in the wall. The only way to turn the fan on and off is by unplugging it. The plug is behind the chair.

In the middle of the room, between the sofa and the television there is a rug that covers the hardwood floors.

Next, think about the falling hazards (dangers) in Supark's living room. How can he make his home safer? As you discuss your solutions, remember to use correct prepositions to describe the changes you think Supark should make to his living room.

1. What are the falling hazards?
2. What changes do you think Supark should make to his living room to make his home safer?

ESL Health Unit

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Real Practice

Advanced Beginning

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Real Practice!

Checking your Home

Carefully walk through your home with the checklist below. Answer yes or no to each question. Report the results to your class and discuss any actions you have taken or need to take.

FLOORS

My floors are always dry. Yes No

There is nothing laying on my floors (papers, cords, etc.) Yes No

There are no loose rugs on my floors. Yes No

LIGHTING

All of my lights are bright enough to see clearly. Yes No

STAIRS

I have handrails on my stairs. Yes No

My stairs are well-lit. Yes No

BATHROOM

I can get on and off the toilet seat easily. Yes No

I have grab bars in my bath and shower. Yes No

KITCHEN

I can easily reach the items that I need. Yes No

The kitchen is well-lit. Yes No

LIVING ROOM

I can easily get in and out of my sofa and chair. Yes No

There are no cords or papers or loose rugs on the floor. Yes No

BEDROOM

I have a telephone and lamp next to my bed. Yes No

I can easily get in and out of my bed. Yes No

OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSE

The steps are clearly marked. Yes No

There is a handrail on the steps Yes No

The steps are well-lit. Yes No

What things do you need to do to make your house safer?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Checklist and suggestions from the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service, Sydney Australia

*A Thematic Unit for Intermediate Level ESL Teachers
Advanced Beginning Level, Unit Five: Taking Medications
Lesson Two: Taking Medications Safely*

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...

- Know the warning signs of poor nutritional health and what you can do to improve your diet.
- Understand the difference between count and non-count nouns
- Be able to use the phrase “used to”
- _____

