

Unit 2: Asking about Health

A. Asking about health

Health is the state of the body. When doctors or nurses want to know about a patient's usual health, they ask questions such as "What is your general health like?" or "How's your health, generally?"

If you are in good health, you are well and have no illness (disease). If you are healthy you are normally well can resist illness. If you are fit, you are well and strong.

Not ill	Ill
Fit	In poor health
Fit and well	Not very well
Healthy	Not well
In good health	Unfit
Very well	Unhealthy
Well	Unwell

B. Sickness

Sickness has a similar meaning to illness. It is also used in the names of a few specific diseases, for example **sleeping sickness** and **traveler's sickness**. Patients also talk about sickness have they mean nausea and vomiting.

Patients says	Possible meanings
I was sick this morning.	I was ill this morning. I felt unwell this morning. I vomited this morning.
I feel sick.	I feel ill. I feel unwell. I am nauseous. I feel the need to vomit.

The combination **sickness and diarrhea** means vomiting and diarrhea.

C. Recovery

When a patient returns to normal health after illness, they have recovered. We can also say:

The patient	made a	good full complete	recovery.
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If the patient's health is in the process of returning to normal, the patient is improving. The opposite is deteriorating. We can also say that the patient's condition improved or deteriorated.

In speaking, we often use the verb **get** to talk about change:

get	over (an illness)	= to recover
	better	= to improve
	worse	= to deteriorate

If a patient is better, but then gets worse again, the patient has **relapsed**.
Another word (synonym) for **improvement**, especially in recurring conditions such as cancer, is **remission**.

Two years later she remains in complete remission.

2.1 Listen and complete the conversation.

Conversation 1 (Audio "Unit 2_2.1.1")

Kim: You look kind of green.

Olivia: _____. I am feeling sick to my stomach.

Kim: Have you had anything to eat lately?

Olivia: I had fried shrimp and clams for lunch.

Kim: Perhaps the food was bad.

Olivia: Perhaps, but _____.

Kim: Has anything been upsetting you lately?

Olivia: My stress level is _____ what is usually is.

Kim: Do you think that _____?

Olivia: _____ like I may have caught a bug.

Conversation 2 (Audio "Unit 2_2.1.2")

Kalia: Good morning, may I speak with Professor Clark, please?

Prof. Clark: You are speaking with Professor Clark.

Kalia: Professor, I am Kalia from your morning literature class.

Prof. Clark: Yes, _____?

Kalia: I ran my car into a tree yesterday. _____.

Prof. Clark: Oh, my God! _____.

Kalia: I have a concussion, but _____.

Prof. Clark: How much school will you miss?

Kalia: I only need to _____.

Prof. Clark: I appreciate you calling and telling me that you won't be in class. See you next week!

Conversation 3 (Audio "Unit 2_2.1.3")

Ashley: Professor, excuse me, but I need to leave early.

Prof.: _____?

Ashley: I am not feeling well.

Prof.: What is bothering you?

Ashley: I think _____ an asthma attack.

Prof.: Would you like someone to walk you over to the _____?

Ashley: No, I think that I should just go home because _____.

Prof.: Do you need a ride home?

Ashley: I live in the dorms across the street, so I'll be OK.

Prof.: OK, then, _____. Check your e-mail for missed assignments.

Conversation 4 (Audio "Unit 2_2.1.4")

Mary: You looked tired. Didn't you get enough sleep last night?

John: No, I had _____ over, and we partied until the wee hours.

Mary: No wonder _____!

John: I guess I just can't take late nights like I used to. _____, and I have a migraine.

Mary: I think you need to _____.

John: I wish I could, but I don't think I can keep my eyes open long enough to drive home.

Mary: Don't worry! I'll give you a ride home. But next time, watch the partying, OK?

Conversation 5 (Audio "Unit 2_2.1.5")

Sam: _____!

Alice: You don't look so good, either. _____?

Sam: My head's stuffed up. _____, and I'm aching all over.

Alice: Poor guy! What are you taking?

Sam: Nothing so far. Do you have anything I can take?

Alice: Let me go look. In the meantime, drink lots of orange juice.

Sam: (Moan.) OK, but hurry back!

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Alice: I'm back, Sam. How are you doing?

Sam: I still feel like death warmed over.

Alice: Well, I bought you a few things.

Sam: Great! _____.

Alice: _____ and I brought some cold and flu medicine. It'll help you sleep.

Sam: Thanks! I really appreciate it.

2.2 Choose the correct word to complete each sentence.

deteriorated	good	got better	got over	illness	improved	poor
recovered	recovery	relapsed	remission	sickness	unhealthy	unwell

1. Her condition _____ and she died.
2. He _____ and was allowed to go home.
3. The cause of sleeping _____ was discovered in 1901.
4. The patient made a full _____.
5. It was a month before I _____ the illness.
6. I have been in _____ health for months and feel very fit.
7. He seems rather _____ his diet is bad.

References:

<https://www.eslfast.com/easydialogs/health.htm>

<http://www.focusenglish.com/dialogues/conversation.html>

Professional English in Use, Medicine (2007). pages 10-11.

Vocabulary Learnt This Week

Vocabulary	Synonym / Meaning in English	Sample Sentence
1. You look kind of <u>green</u> .		
2. sick to my stomach		
3. pretty		
4. flu		
5. all right		
6. take this week off		
7. bother		
8. asthma		
9. health center		
10. medicine		
11. My head is spinning.		
12. take a rest		
13. awful		
14. My head's stuffed up.		
15. runny nose		
16. In the meantime		
17. cough syrup		
18. deteriorated		
19. good		
20. got better		
21. got over		
22. improved		
23. poor		
24. recovered		
25. recovery		
26. relapsed		
27. remission		
28. sickness		
29. unhealthy		
30. unwell		
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