



**ACReS**  
Academic Career and Readiness Skills

**Life Skills**

**Unit**

**5**



National PASS Center  
Genesee Migrant Center  
3 Mt. Morris-Leicester Road  
Leicester, NY 14418  
(585) 658-7960  
(585) 658-7969 (fax)  
[www.migrant.net/pass](http://www.migrant.net/pass)

**Authors:** Kate Warner  
Linda Shanks  
Sally Fox  
Valerie Putney

**Editor:** Sally Fox

**Proofer:** Donna Katter

**Formatting:** Eva McKendry  
Kate Warner

**Graphics:** Eva McKendry  
Kate Warner  
Linda Shanks  
Sally Fox  
Valerie Putney

**Readability:** Flesch – Kincaid Grade Level 4.7  
Flesch Reading Ease 78.0

Developed by the National PASS Center with funding from the Strategies, Opportunities, and Services to Out-of-School-Youth (SOSOSY) Migrant Education Program Consortium Incentive under the leadership of the Kansas Migrant Education Program.

## Understanding Health Issues

**Words to know:**

- ✓ general practitioner
- ✓ prescriptions
- ✓ pharmacist
- ✓ chemical

**W**ouldn't it be a wonderful world if no one ever got sick or hurt? Think of all the fun we could have. If we eat healthy foods and take care to wash our hands and be aware of disease and illness, we can stay healthy. Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, we will get sick. When we do, we need to find a doctor. We need to make an appointment. We may need to get medications. It is important that we know how to take the medications. Sometimes the instructions on the label can be confusing.

Once in a while it is not illness that sends us to the doctor. Sometimes we get injured. If you or someone in your family gets hurt and needs to go to the hospital, you need to know how to find it. You need to know where to go so that you don't waste time.

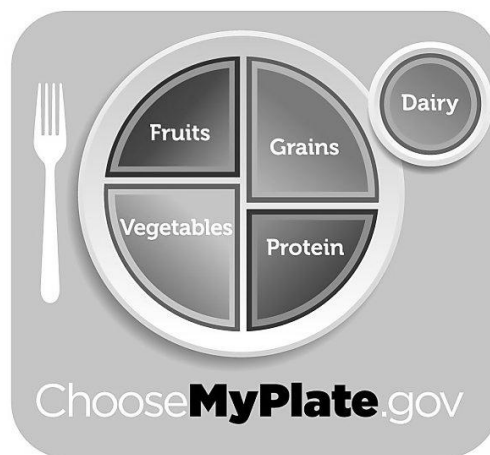
This lesson will help you understand how to stay healthy. It will help show you how to find a doctor and make an appointment. We will talk about how to get a

prescription filled. We will look at the directions on the prescription bottles and try to understand them. We will talk about over-the-counter medications and how to find a hospital in the event that you or a loved one needs emergency medical services.

Next, this lesson will talk about the many dangerous chemicals that we come in contact with every day at home and at work. We will talk about how to keep ourselves safe.

## Staying Healthy

Do you know how to stay healthy? It is something we have to be aware of every day. The first thing we can do is eat healthy foods. Doctors are discovering that many foods are like medicines. They can help the body fight disease and stay healthy. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) came out with a new picture for helping us eat better. It is called “my plate.” Look closely at the picture.



The picture shows that we should have lots of vegetables, some fruits, and equal amounts of grain and protein. It shows we should have a little dairy, like milk or cheese, on the side. You do not see oils or sweets in this picture. The USDA suggests that you leave those things out of your diet.

In addition to eating well, you should wash your hands a lot with soap and warm water. Doctors say that you should wash your hands with the soap for 20 seconds before rinsing it off with the water. Twenty seconds is the same as singing *Row, Row, Row your Boat* two times. If you do not know this song, find a song that you can sing in 20 seconds. It makes hand-washing more fun. Wash your hands several times during the day. Wash them after you sneeze or after using public items like a shopping cart.

One way to keep other people healthy is to cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. If you have a tissue, you should use it to cover your mouth or nose. Many germs will die on your tissue and won't be spread from person to person.

## Finding a doctor

Sometimes, no matter what we do, we are going to get sick. When this happens, we need to find a doctor. If you do not already have a doctor, you should ask family and friends if they can help you find one. The hospital in your area can also give you a list of doctors who are taking new patients. It is best to find a doctor when you are not sick because then you can look around. You will want to start with a **family doctor**, which is also called a **general practitioner**. These are doctors that can treat many illnesses or send you to a specialist if you have a special problem.

Once you get a doctor's name, call their office. Ask if they take your insurance. Ask how much they charge for an office visit. If they take your insurance, make an appointment to be seen—even if you are not sick. Doctors like to get to know their patients. They can treat you better if they know about your health condition.

Talk to family and friends and get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three doctors you might want to go to see. If you have a doctor already, list his name first.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Do these doctors live close to your house? \_\_\_\_\_

How long would it take you to get to the doctor's office? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you get there? \_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet of paper, draw a map from your house to the doctor's office. Draw a map for each doctor.

Once you get in to see a doctor it is important that you tell her everything that is wrong with you. Make a list at home and take it with you. If you do not understand the doctor, ask her to explain what is wrong with you. These are the questions you must ask a doctor. You want to understand these answers before you leave the office.

- ✓ What is my main problem?
- ✓ What do I need to do?
- ✓ Why is it important for me to do this?

## Prescriptions

Sometimes the doctor will need to give you medicine to feel better. She will give you a **prescription** to take to the pharmacy and have filled. A prescription is a doctor's order for medicine. There are pharmacies in many stores. Ask your family and friends what pharmacy they use. Check to see if the pharmacy accepts your insurance. If you do not have insurance, talk to your doctor about giving you a prescription for a generic brand of medicine. These types of medicines cost less money. If you want to know how much your medicine will cost, ask the clerk at the counter. He will be able to tell you the cost before they get your medicine.

Once you have your medicine, you will need to take it as directed by the doctor. Sometimes these instructions can be confusing. If you don't understand the directions, ask the clerk at the pharmacy to explain it to you.

Let's look at some directions that may be confusing.

- Take 1 tsp. twice daily

Question: Does "tsp." mean teaspoon or tablespoon? \_\_\_\_\_

Question: What time of day do you need to take the medicine? \_\_\_\_\_

- Take one tablet by mouth every day

Question: Do you take this medicine in the morning or at night? \_\_\_\_\_

Question: Do you think it matters? \_\_\_\_\_

As you can see, prescriptions can be very confusing. For question one, "tsp." means teaspoon. It is a smaller amount than a tablespoon. A tablespoon is three times bigger than a teaspoon. Because it says "take twice a day," the patient should try to take the medicine twelve hours apart. So the patient should take the medicine once at 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning and then again at 7 or 8 o'clock at night.

For question two, the label doesn't tell you when to take the medicine. The medicine is supposed to be taken in the morning. The medicine should be taken one half hour before eating anything. The doctor gave the patient the extra information. The bottle did not have all the information on it.

Many times prescriptions will come with warning labels. It is important to read the warning labels. They are always on bright colored paper. Look at the labels below. Always pay attention to the labels on your prescription bottles. They give you extra information about the medicine.



It is important to take the medicine correctly. If you don't, the medicine could make you sicker. If you don't understand something on the label, talk to your doctor or the **pharmacist** about it. The pharmacist is the person licensed to prepare and distribute prescription drugs.

## Over-the-counter medicines

You do not need a prescription for all medications. Some of them you can buy off the store shelves. Medicines like aspirin or cold remedies or allergy tablets can be bought in any store. These items are still medicines. Each medicine has a label you must read. The label will tell you how to take the medicine. It will also give you warnings about the medicine. A warning tells you how the medicine can hurt you.



Let's look at a label from a medicine sold over-the-counter.

<b>Drug Facts</b>	
<b>Active ingredient (in each tablet)</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg.....	Antihistamine
<b>Uses</b> temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies: ■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes ■ itchy throat	
<b>Warnings</b>	
Ask a doctor before use if you have	
■ glaucoma ■ a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis	
■ trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland	
Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives	
<b>When using this product</b>	
■ drowsiness may occur ■ avoid alcoholic drinks	
■ alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness	
■ be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery	
■ excitability may occur, especially in children	
If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use.	
Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.	
<b>Directions</b>	
adults and children 12 years and over	take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
children 6 years to under 12 years	take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
children under 6 years	ask a doctor



The label tells you what symptoms the medicine helps. It gives you the warnings about how this medicine could hurt you. It tells you how you should take this medicine.

Look closely at the label and answer the following questions.

1. List two things this label warns you about:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
2. If you are 10 years old, how much medicine should you take? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What type of medicine do you think this is? (hint: look at the list of symptoms it helps) \_\_\_\_\_

All medicines can be dangerous. Many medicines can make you sick or slow down your driving skills. If you do not understand the warnings on the package, you can ask the pharmacist to explain it to you. The pharmacist can also help you make a decision about what medicine to take. He can also tell you what medicines NOT to take together. If you have questions, don't be afraid to ask. It is best to be safe.

Look in your medicine cupboard at home. Choose three medications that you can buy at the store. Choose medicines like cough syrup, ibuprofen, or allergy tablets. If you do not have any medication at home, take a field trip to a local store. Write the names of the medicines below. Write down at least one warning they have on their package.

- (1) Medicine name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Warning: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Medicine name: \_\_\_\_\_

Warning: \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Medicine name: \_\_\_\_\_

Warning: \_\_\_\_\_

## Finding a hospital

Do you know where the hospital is in your town? Do you have more than one? Which is the closest to you? These seem like unimportant questions until you or someone you know gets injured and needs to make a trip to the emergency room.

If you or a family member had an accident at home that required stitches, would you know what to do? How would you get to the hospital? Would you ride the bus? Would you take a cab? Would you take your own car or call an ambulance? How you answer this may depend on the injury or the medical emergency. If the injury is bad enough, you may need to get to the hospital in a hurry.

Draw a map from your house to the hospital. Mark the location of the emergency department. If you have never been there, go now and check it out.

Once you reach the hospital, you will not need to worry about getting a doctor. There is always a doctor on-call and he, or his assistants, will take care of you. Be sure that you understand his orders when you leave. Don't forget to ask those three important questions before going home:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

## Dangerous chemicals

Every day you handle dangerous **chemicals**. Chemicals are substances made by chemistry. We use them at home and at work. Think about all of the cleaning bottles you have under your sink or in your kitchen cabinet. Did you know that window cleaner can be a dangerous chemical? What about bleach? Did you know that was dangerous? Check your cupboards for chemicals that you think would be dangerous and list them below. If you need help, read the labels.

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_

Did you find five? Good job! Were you surprised to find out that some of these things were dangerous?

Think about work for a minute. If you have a job, can you think of any products there that might be dangerous? If you do not have a job, think about a job as a worker on a farm. Can you think of any products that might be harmful? Are there pesticides in the field? Are there medications, like flea spray, you must put on animals? Are there cleaners you use for the equipment or the stalls? Do you fix vehicles? Do you think gas and oil are dangerous chemicals? It is important to be aware of all the chemicals you deal with on a daily basis. You must protect yourself from them to keep yourself healthy.

List two dangerous chemicals you may find at work.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

## How to protect yourself

There are many ways to keep yourself safe when working with chemicals. Listed below are some good things to do.

- ✓ Read the warning labels. Just like on a bottle of medication, the warning label will let you how to handle the chemical in a safe way. Many chemicals will have a skull and crossbones picture on the label. This tells you and the chemical is dangerous and to be careful.



- ✓ Wear protective clothing. It can be a pair of overalls or a special pair of jeans and tee shirt. You will want to take special care of the clothes. Wash them separately from the rest of the laundry.
- ✓ Wear disposable gloves to keep the chemicals off your hands.
- ✓ Do not eat or drink near chemicals.
- ✓ Wash your hands, face, and bare skin after working with chemicals. Be sure to use lots of soap and fresh water. Take a shower if your whole body has been in contact with the chemical. Use shampoo on your hair.
- ✓ Always keep medicines and chemicals in a safe place and away from children.

## Responsible Decision Making

The last topic we will talk about is making good decisions about boyfriends and girlfriends. It is important to respect each other and to make decisions that will keep you safe and healthy. Here is a list to things to think about when you are dating.

**Talking:** Talk to your boyfriend or girlfriend about your relationship. Do you agree to date just each other? Do you want to date other people, too? Do you just want to kiss and hold hands? Do you think you will have sex? Do you both want to have sex? If not, then you need to set limits. “No” means no. You shouldn’t push another person to do something they do not want to do.

**Respect:** It is important to respect the limits that you agree to set. Listen to what your boyfriend or girlfriend is saying. Do not try to make someone do something they do not want to do. Respect the wishes of your partner.

**Diseases:** People can get many diseases from having sex with each other. You might have heard of diseases like HIV/AIDS, herpes, and gonorrhea. If you and your partner agree to have sex, you should visit a doctor or the Health Department. You should be tested for diseases. A doctor or nurse can talk to you about ways to stay healthy.

**Babies:** Having sex can make babies. Do you want to have a baby right now? Children are a big responsibility and will change your life forever. Be sure to talk to a doctor or nurse about ways not to have a baby.

**Protection:** If you choose to have sex, you need to talk to a doctor or nurse.

They will tell you how to keep yourself safe and healthy. They can tell you how to keep from having a baby. If you do not have a doctor, you can go to the Health Department. They will be able to provide you with information.

**Notes:**

∞ End of Lesson 3 ∞