



CO Topic: Health

Lesson Topic	When to See a Doctor
Objective	By reviewing and categorizing symptom cards, refugees will demonstrate knowledge of when to see a doctor, when to go to the emergency room, and when to practice home care.
Lesson Time	45 minutes
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pictures of a doctor, a doctor with the image crossed out, and a hospital emergency room• Cards with drawings showing various symptoms of illness and injury (e.g., fever, broken bones, fainting, swelling, stomach pain, vomiting, coughing, and headache)
Discussion Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you are feeling sick, what do you do?• When you hurt yourself, what do you do?• When did you go to the doctor in your home country?
Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Go over the symptom cards with refugees. Ask refugees if they have had these ailments and what they did about them (stayed home and rested, went to the doctor, etc.).2. Place the three pictures of the doctor, the crossed-out doctor, and the hospital emergency room on the table.3. Ask refugees to take the symptom cards and place each one near the appropriate action: Should they see a doctor, not see a doctor, or go to the emergency room? As refugees deliberate what is appropriate for each symptom, discuss with them various circumstances in which one card might belong in more than one category. For instance, you may give a general rule as to the maximum time that one should wait before going to the doctor for a particular ailment. A fever lasting more than three days probably needs treatment, but a cold probably doesn't require any treatment at all.4. It may also be helpful to discuss the possibility that an illness may show more than one symptom. Being aware of the various symptoms will help when explaining the illness to a doctor, emergency operator, or friend.5. Ask the refugees to look at the cards of the doctor, the crossed-out doctor, and the emergency room and see if they can organize them by type of medical problem. (Possible answers: minor injuries or sicknesses that will get better on their own, injuries or sicknesses that might require medicine or treatment, life-threatening illnesses or injuries) The purpose of the exercise is to get refugees thinking about the kinds of judgments they might need to make when they or family members are sick or hurt. Remind refugees that if they are in doubt, they should call a friend or the agency office for guidance.
Cultural Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In some cultures, people may describe illness in what Americans would interpret as a vague or nondescriptive way, such as "I have a pain inside," or "I feel heavy inside." Some groups may use the phrase "I have a cold" to describe various symptoms. Also, in countries where malaria is prevalent, someone with a fever might say "I have malaria" regardless of the fever's actual cause. Thus, symptoms as we know them may require substantial explanation.• Some traditional home remedies are not recommended and may even be illegal in the United States. Investigate what these might be based on the cultural origins of the refugees so that you can specifically address them.
Evaluation	The trainer should evaluate the refugees' understanding by asking questions during the discussion and activity. The debate and discussion among refugees (when deciding which symptom requires which action) should demonstrate whether comprehension is taking place.