

8A Doctor's orders

1 VOCABULARY & SPEAKING

health and medicine

How much medical vocabulary do you know? Do the quiz in small groups.

How good a doctor are you?

1 When might you get...?

- a a bruise
- b a blister
- c a rash
- d side-effects

2 Why might you be given...?

- a a plaster
- b a bandage
- c antibiotics
- d stitches
- e an X-ray
- f a scan
- g an anaesthetic

3 When might you need to see...?

- a your GP
- b a specialist
- c a surgeon

4 What are the symptoms of...?

- a a cold
- b the flu
- c food poisoning
- d a heart attack
- e asthma
- f a stroke

5 What might happen to you if you...?

- a had to stand for a long time in a hot, crowded room
- b were stung on your hand by a bee
- c switched on a light with wet hands

2 READING

- a With a partner, look at the list below. Which things do you think most doctors might not want to do themselves?

follow a low-carb diet
go to the doctor with a long list of symptoms
have a full health check
have cosmetic surgery
see a counsellor
smoke or drink alcohol
sunbathe
take anti-malaria pills when visiting a country where it is endemic
take sleeping tablets
take vitamin supplements
use alternative medicine
vaccinate their children against childhood illnesses like measles

- b Read the article on page 75 once and complete the headings A–G with a treatment or habit from a.

- c Read the article again. Why wouldn't the doctors do these things? Match reasons 1–7 with paragraphs A–G.

- 1 ☐ Because it might be difficult later to stop doing this.
- 2 ☐ Because the doctor may take you less seriously.
- 3 ☐ Because the short-term benefit may be outweighed by long-term problems.
- 4 ☐ Because you may develop another illness as a result of unnecessary treatment.
- 5 ☐ Because you may end up getting treatment you didn't really need.
- 6 ☐ Because you may not necessarily be treated by a professional.
- 7 ☐ Because you are doing something that is deliberately damaging.

LEXIS IN CONTEXT

- d Look at the **highlighted** phrases. With a partner, work out what they mean and try to paraphrase them.

- e Work in small groups.

- Do any of the doctors' opinions surprise you?
- Might their opinions affect the way you behave? Why (not)?
- Is there anything connected with medicine or health that you would never do?

What doctors won't do...

Doctors reveal the treatments or habits they would avoid

I would never...



A I would never take up the regularly advertised offers by private medical companies. Why? Well, if you have symptoms, you go to your GP and they listen to your history, examine you, request investigations, and reach a decision. This process is known as 'diagnosis'. A full check when you feel totally well is not diagnosis, it is 'screening'. There are few screening tests where **the advantages outweigh the disadvantages** and they could lead you to have potentially harmful investigations, or indeed treatment, that you may not have needed. One hears anecdotes about the advantages of health checks. One hears anecdotes about people who have fallen out of sixth-floor windows and lived, but I wouldn't try it myself.

Mike Smith, GP

B Patients often think this helps, but **it makes the doctor's heart sink**. They're not going to be able to deal with everything in one go and, most importantly of all, it makes them think you haven't got one particular problem, you've got a multiplicity of problems, which is a sure sign of a hypochondriac.

Carol Cooper, GP

C **People underestimate the risk**. They think, 'My skin looks all right; how can it be damaged?' Even if your skin doesn't look aged, you can end up with skin damage that sets you up for potential cancers in the future. Sunbathing in your teens and early 20s is a very strong risk factor. We are now seeing cancers in the under 40s that we used to see only on the faces of old, weather-beaten guys who had spent a lifetime outdoors. I would go out in the sun, but I would never lie in it with the purpose of getting a tan.

Carol Cooper, GP

D I have come across many patients who have been taking them for decades. They are addictive and it can be very difficult for people to wean themselves off them; the side-effects can include falls, confusion, sleepiness in the daytime, and the feeling that increasingly high doses are needed to achieve the same effects. I can't imagine any situation in which I would start using them.

Helen Drew, GP

E Why? Because although you will probably lose weight, it may kill you. **Don't take my word for it** – read about the 43,396 Swedish women followed for an average of 15 years. Those who stuck to low carbs and high protein had a rising risk of dying from heart attacks and strokes. There was a staggering 62% higher risk of such illnesses among the women eating the strictest diet over those who ate normally. Eating is for enjoyment; these diets turn food into medicine and it's the wrong medicine.

Tom Smith, GP

F The reason for my reluctance? **Nothing to do with** anaesthetics (safe these days), but entirely to do with surgery, which should never be undertaken for what you might call 'soft' reasons. It's not that surgery is so dangerous that I would worry about death. Mainly it's the worry of an infection, which can be very unpleasant.

Mark Patrick, consultant anaesthetist

G I would never see a 'counsellor' if I was having mental health problems. Absolutely anyone can claim to be a counsellor – it's an entirely unregulated area. As a result, there's a huge variation in quality and I have seen too many patients who have been further psychologically damaged by seeing poorly-qualified counsellors.

Max Pemberton, psychiatrist

Glossary

screening the testing or examining of people to see if they have a disease when they have no symptoms

From The Guardian

3 LISTENING & SPEAKING

- a** Look at these types of alternative medicine. Do you know what any of them involve?

acupuncture aromatherapy chiropractic
homeopathy hypnotherapy osteopathy

- b** **4 21** Listen to four people talking about alternative medicine. Answer these questions for each speaker.

Did they have any treatment?

- **Yes** What treatment did they have?
What for?
Was it successful?
- **No** Why not?

- c** Listen again. Which speaker...?

- 1 ☐ doesn't believe in alternative medicine of any kind
- 2 ☐ was told by a doctor to use alternative medicine
- 3 ☐ had been taking traditional medicine, but it hadn't worked
- 4 ☐ doesn't really believe in alternative medicine, but was willing to try it
- 5 ☐ thinks alternative medicine only works because of the placebo effect
- 6 ☐ felt better with fewer than the recommended number of treatments
- 7 ☐ might consider repeating the treatment as a last resort
- 8 ☐ was having one alternative treatment when he / she was given another type of alternative medicine

- d** Which forms of alternative medicine are popular in your country? Have you ever tried any forms of alternative medicine, or do you know anyone who has? Was your / their experience positive or negative?