



The New York City Health Literacy Campaign:
From Knowledge to Action.

Sample Lessons

**PREVENTION & DETECTION
ABE LEVELS 1 & 2**

TEACHER'S EDITION



Developed by the Mayor's Office of Adult Education

Version 2008-2009



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DEAR TEACHER,

Okay, bad news first: Many New Yorkers have no idea that they may have diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, high cholesterol, HIV, depression or cancer. These diseases are commonly dubbed “life-threatening” because they can lead to heart attacks, strokes and early death if they continue to go undetected and untreated.

Now the good news: Thanks to teachers like you who are passionate about teaching health literacy, our students can now learn about the importance of early detection and practice the skills they will need to be able to access free or very low-cost health screenings. This knowledge of health screenings and “navigational” skills to access them provides our students with a sense of ownership and agency about taking care of their health!

Throughout the month of October, adult education classes across the city will be participating in the City’s annual Take Care New York prevention and screening campaign. The Office of the Mayor has arranged special partnerships with the public hospitals in order to welcome your students during October. The following lesson is designed to prepare your class to take a field trip to a participating public hospital for free or low-cost health screenings. With some modification, this lesson can be used at other times, but is designed to be used primarily during the

October Take Care New York campaign. It is important that you contact your HHC “field-trip coordinator” as soon as possible in order to discuss a good time for your class to attend the health screening before implementation of this lesson.

The **three key messages** that your students need to know at the end of the lesson are:

1. Screening is affordable and confidential. Screenings will be free or low cost and your immigration status will be kept confidential.

2. Screening is essential to managing your health.

3. There are free or low-cost health screenings at all public hospitals during the month of October and from your doctor during the rest of the year as well.

Along the way, you will help your students:

1. Ask and respond to questions.
2. Participate in routine social conversations.
3. Recognize common forms of print in their environment.

DEAR TEACHER,
continued

This lesson is broken up into 2-hour sessions that will require 3 consecutive days of class.

Day 1 of the lesson will introduce the concepts of prevention, early detection and health screenings. Activities on the first day are also designed to build your students functional literacy skills while at the same time demystifying the health screening experience so that your students will feel prepared for their field trip.

Day 2 of the lesson will consist of your field trip to the participating public hospital or clinic of your choice. Please take advantage of this opportunity to get screened as well! Also, if you have a digital camera, the Mayor's Office would appreciate it if you would be willing to share some pictures of your experience with us.

Day 3 offers a time for your students to reflect on their field trip. Activities include a computer literacy activity or an alternative writing activity. If your students have some computer literacy skills, help them share their new knowledge and perspectives using technology. In order to prepare for this activity you will need to reserve a time slot in the computer lab. Also, your students need to have some experience with using PowerPoint. If your students are not computer literate, take this time to help them develop their writing skills in a poster-making activity.

With your guidance, your students will further their health literacy skills, access important public services and be able to spread their knowledge of prevention and early detection to their families and communities!

Yours,



Shannon Allen
Mayor's Office of Adult Education



“FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS” (FAQS)

What is prevention?

Activities people undertake to avoid disease development and/or ways that people can catch a disease at a very early stage.

What is high blood pressure and why is it bad?

Blood pressure is a measure of how hard the blood pushes against the walls of your arteries and veins as it moves through your body. It's normal for blood pressure to go up and down throughout the day, but if it stays up, you have high blood pressure. Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension. There are usually no symptoms; the only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to get checked. Doctors can't point to its exact cause, but several things are known to raise blood pressure. These include: being very overweight; drinking too much alcohol; having a family history of high blood pressure; eating too much salt; and just getting older. High blood pressure puts people at higher risk for heart disease, the leading cause of death among New Yorkers. This is especially true for people who have diabetes.

Can high blood pressure be cured?

No, but it can be treated and managed through diet, exercise and medication.

What is cholesterol and why is high cholesterol level unhealthy?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in all of your body's cells and bloodstream. There are two kinds: “good” cholesterol (called **HDL** – keep it **H**igh) keeps your blood flowing smoothly through your blood vessels and arteries; “bad” cholesterol (called **LDL** – keep it **L**ow) tends to collect in your blood stream, clogging up your arteries and increasing your chance of heart attack or stroke. About 1 in 4 New Yorkers have high cholesterol but do not know it. There are no symptoms; the only way to know if you have it is to get checked by your doctor.

Can high cholesterol be prevented and treated?

Yes! Exercise and a healthy diet can help control cholesterol. There are safe and easy medications as well.

What is depression and how is it different from just being sad?

Everyone has feelings of sadness, inadequacy or lack of satisfaction with their lives. People have been trained across cultures to hide these feelings out of shame. However, these feelings are a normal part of life and talking about them, meditating, or remembering one's own goodness usually helps them go away. Depression is a mental illness that occurs when people cannot “pull themselves together” and “get over it”. Depression often takes on a life of its own

“FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS” (FAQs): *continued*

and without treatment it can last for months or years. It interferes with people’s ability to function, especially to manage their health. Many people “treat” depression by drinking alcohol. There are much more effective treatments, like therapy and medication, and there is no shame in getting screened.

I thought health screenings and prevention were all about cancer?

Yes, cancer is a disease for which you can be screened. It can be prevented and/or treated early. Cancer screenings include mammograms for breast cancer, pap-smear for cervical cancer, colonoscopy for colon cancer, and more. But doctors and hospitals offer many other kinds of screenings as well.

What is HIV?

Human Immunodeficiency Virus is the virus that causes AIDS. People should take an HIV test to learn their HIV status (positive or negative). Many people live normal, happy lives with HIV if they get the medicine they need. Medicine can prevent HIV from becoming “full-blown AIDS.” The sooner people know they have HIV the better so that they can take care of themselves and not infect anyone else.

What is AIDS?

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a disease that destroys the body’s immune system. It is a global epidemic that has killed millions of people. While there is no cure or vaccine for AIDS, medicine and regular doctor’s care allow for people to live normal lives for many years with the disease.

What is a co-payment?

A co-payment is a patient’s share of a doctor’s fee or a health-care bill. The patient’s health insurance pays the rest of the amount.

I went to the screening and found out that I have a health problem. Now what?

See your regular doctor. If you don’t have a regular doctor, the clinic where you got screened would be happy to have you as a patient. They can help you.

Teachers are not expected to be medical experts or to give clinical advice. On the contrary, this lesson is designed to help you provide your students with the health literacy and functional literacy skills necessary to manage their own health. Remember, each student’s health status is completely confidential and they should seek the professional opinions of healthcare providers. If your student has problems getting follow-up care, each participating clinic has a contact person who can help. Ask your program director.

MATERIALS

- Take Care New York Health Screening Event Schedule
- Computers with access to Power Point and Internet OR poster-making materials
- Digital camera (Optional)

KEY VOCABULARY

(List vocabulary words on the board before each activity)

INTRODUCTION	ACTIVITY 1	ACTIVITY 2	ACTIVITY 3
Disease, Illness, Sickness Prevent Prevention Detect Early Detection Health Screening	Nervous	High blood pressure Symptom Healthcare provider Blood Pressure Cuff Confidential Failure	Other Common Diseases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asthma ▪ Cholesterol ▪ HIV ▪ Depression ▪ Cancer Take Care New York (TCNY) Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC)

NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM (NRS) DESCRIPTORS: ABE LEVELS 1 AND 2

These are skills that your students should master before moving to the next level:

- Read simple materials
- Comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs
- Write simple notes and messages
- Count, add and subtract

Look for these level-specific Descriptors in the following Lesson Outline.

DAY 1

Topic: Attending Health Screenings

Aim: Students will understand the concepts of prevention and early detection and will be prepared to attend a health screening.

Introduction (see **Teacher Talking Points** and **Introduction: Prevention, Early Detection and Health Screenings**)

ACTIVITY 1 Attending a Health Screening: Mila's Story	Reading and discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Read simple materials▪ Comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs
ACTIVITY 2 Mila's Questions about Health Screenings	Student Role Play. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Read simple materials
ACTIVITY 3 "Get Screened. Get Healthy."	Reading and discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Read simple materials▪ Comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs
ACTIVITY 4 Mila Convinces Ricardo to Attend a Health Screening	Class-wide role play and short writing activity. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Read simple materials▪ Write simple notes and messages

HOMEWORK

New Word Journal

DAY 2

Topic: Take Care New York Health Screenings.

Aim: Students will attend a TCNY screening and have a rewarding experience.

ACTIVITY 5
Health Screening

Field Trip

DAY 3

Topic: What did we learn from participating in the health screening?

Aim: Students will be able to communicate their knowledge and their impressions of the health screening field trip to an audience of peers.

Reflection

ACTIVITY 6
Share Your Knowledge

Computer Literacy: PowerPoint Presentations

- Write simple notes and messages

ACTIVITY 6
Share Your Knowledge
(Alternative)

Poster-Making and Presentations

- Write simple notes and messages

DAY 1

INTRODUCTION: TEACHER TALKING POINTS

Teacher Directions: Use these “Talking Points” to lead a discussion about the concepts of prevention, early detection and health screenings. Ask students to take notes on the following page during your discussion.

Note: This is only intended as a warm-up exercise. You are not responsible for correcting your students’ ideas about various means of prevention or detection.

1. What skills will you need to pass the GED?

(Students will be taking the Reading, Social Studies, Science, Writing and Math Tests. Two of the major skills we will work on today are reading comprehension and writing.)

2. This lesson is about health. Is it important to be healthy? Why?

3. What skills do you need to live a healthy life?

4. What common health problems do you know about?

5. One thing we are going to be talking about today is disease prevention.

- What does the word prevent mean? (To keep from happening)
- What do we prevent in our daily lives? (We prevent gun violence by taking guns off the street; we prevent having cockroaches in our homes by taking out the trash.)

6. What does disease prevention mean?

(Actions taken to avoid getting sick or to stop a disease from getting worse)

7. How can we prevent disease?

(Actions taken to avoid getting sick or to stop a disease from getting worse)

8. Another topic we will talk about today is early detection of disease.

- What does the word detect mean? (To find or discover something that was hidden or unknown)
- When do we hear this word in our daily lives? (Smoke detector; detective; metal detector; to detect a lie)

9. What does early detection of an illness mean?

(If you can't prevent an illness, then the best thing to do is to become aware of it early and begin treatment as early as possible.)

10. The best way to detect a disease early is to attend a health screening. Does anyone know what a health screening is?

(Health screenings are tests done by a healthcare provider to see if you have or may develop certain diseases.)

11. Has anyone ever attended a health screening before? Describe your experience.

12. What types of tests are offered at health screenings?

(Screenings for vision, hearing, blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, depression, asthma, cancer, HIV, diabetes)

INTRODUCTION: PREVENTION, EARLY DETECTION AND HEALTH SCREENINGS

Teacher Directions: Have students take notes during your introductory discussion.

1. What GED skills will we build today?

2. Name some common health problems:

- What words mean the same thing as “health problems”?
-

3. What is Prevention?

- Define the word prevent:
- Use prevent in a sentence:
- What is disease prevention?
- How can we prevent diseases?



4. What is Early Detection?

- Define the word detect:
- Use detect in a sentence:
- What does early detection of a disease mean?



5. What are Health Screenings?

- Define the term health screenings:

ACTIVITY 1: ATTENDING A HEALTH SCREENING: MILA'S STORY¹

Teacher Directions: Have each student read a sentence aloud for class. Ask students to circle any unfamiliar words.



Mila is 35 years old. She is an immigrant from the Dominican Republic. She has lived in New York City for 5 years. Mila attends an ABE class because she wants to improve her reading, writing and math skills. Mila has been thinking about her health a lot. This is because she has been learning about health in her class. She has learned that the prevention of disease means eating healthy food and being more active. She has also learned about the early detection of illness. Mila's teacher said that one way to detect an illness early is to attend a health screening. Mila just found out her class will be taking a trip to a health screening. Her teacher told the class that they will be screened for diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes.



Mila is nervous for many reasons. She has not been to see a doctor in three years. She has never attended a health screening before. She is an immigrant, and she does not have any documentation. She has no health insurance, and she cannot afford to pay for the screenings. To feel better, Mila will ask her teacher some questions.

Small Group Questions:

1. **What is Mila's problem?** (She is nervous.)
2. **Does this problem relate to your life?**
3. **How?**
(Maybe your students have: not been to the doctor in a long time; never been to a health screening; have no documentation; have no insurance...)
4. **What can Mila do to feel better about going to the screening?**
(She can ask her teacher questions so that she will feel less nervous.)

Teacher Directions: After the discussion, tell students that they will have the chance to become teachers in the following role-play. Before starting Activity 2, go over **New Words and Terms** on the following page. Then have students pick partners (try to partner stronger students with weaker students). Model the role-play with the students before they read the role-play in their pairs. Have students circle any words they do not understand. Ask for one or two volunteers to perform role play for class.

¹Adapted from a health lesson developed by Tilla Alexander and Diana Raissis at MMALC

ACTIVITY 2: NEW WORDS AND TERMS

Teacher Directions: Discuss the meaning of each word with your students and practice their proper pronunciation. Have students take notes during your discussion.

1. What is high blood pressure? (High blood pressure is a disease that can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney failure if undetected and untreated. It has no symptoms.)

2. What are symptoms? (Warnings signs or indications of a disease)

3. Who are healthcare providers? (Doctors, nurses, lab technicians)

4. What does the word confidential mean? (Secret, private or classified)

Match New Words and Terms to Their Definition

1. Healthcare provider	Doctor, nurse, or lab technician
2. High blood pressure	A disease that has no symptoms
3. Confidential	Another word for secret
4. Symptom	A sign of disease

ACTIVITY 2: MILA'S QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEALTH SCREENING²

Teacher: How are you Mila? You look nervous.

Mila: I can't go. I have no documentation or insurance!

Teacher: Don't worry. The hospital promises to keep all of your information secret, and the health screening is free if you do not have insurance.

Mila: I feel healthy. Why should I go to the screening?

Teacher: Everybody needs to get screened, even people that feel healthy. Many people have high blood pressure but never know it. This is because there are no symptoms. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to get screened by a healthcare provider.

Mila: Why does high blood pressure matter?

Teacher: High blood pressure can hurt your whole body. It can lead to a stroke, heart attacks, heart failure or kidney failure.

Mila: How will healthcare providers check my blood pressure?

Teacher: Healthcare providers will put a cuff on your arm. This will measure your blood pressure. It is fast, easy, and painless. It is important to get your blood pressure checked by your doctor often.

Mila: What will happen if I have high blood pressure?

Teacher: It will be fine! If you have high blood pressure, you will need to get screened by your doctor often. You will also have to eat healthy foods, quit smoking, and take medicine. Taking your medicine is an important part of controlling your blood pressure.



Blood pressure cuff



An ABE student getting her blood pressure checked at a health screening

²From American Heart Association's High Blood Pressure Library found at:http://www.americanheart.org/beatyourrisk/en_US/main.html

ACTIVITY 2: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Teacher Directions: After one or two groups have preformed the role-play for the class, have students work in their pairs to answer the following questions. Answers to questions should be written in complete sentences. When pairs are ready, have students share their answers with the class by writing their answers on the board. Take time to discuss students' use of writing conventions as well as their reading comprehension.

1. Why should Mila get her blood pressure screened?

(High Blood Pressure has no symptoms, so the only way to know you have it is to get screened. If high blood pressure goes untreated it can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney failure.)

2. How did Mila feel about health screenings before talking to her teacher?

(She felt nervous.)

3. How do you think she feels after talking to her teacher?

(She feels better because she understands what is going to happen.)

4. What is the point of going to a health screening?

(Many people have diseases but don't know it. Attending health screenings helps people detect diseases and begin treatment before it is too late.)



TAKE CARE NY

Get Screened.
Stay Healthy.

A simple health check for asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, HIV, depression or cancer can help keep you healthy. This October, NYC public hospitals and health centers will offer the health screenings you or your family need at little or no cost.*

Dial **311** or visit **nyc.gov/hhc** to find the HHC hospital or health center near you.

And Take Care, NY.



nyc.gov/hhc

Bellevue • Belvis • Coler-Goldwater • Coney Island
Cumberland • East New York • Elmhurst • Gouverneur
Harlem • Jacobi • Kings County • Lincoln • McKinney
Metropolitan • Morrisania • North Central Bronx
Queens • Renaissance • Sea View • Woodhull

*If you have health insurance, it will be billed. You will be responsible for any co-payments. If you don't have insurance, there is no cost to you.

ACTIVITY 3: “GET SCREENED. STAY HEALTHY.”

Teacher Directions: Let your students know that, just like Mila, they will also be attending a health screening with you during the following class. Refer students to the TCNY advertisement and read it as a class. Use the questions below to lead the discussion. After your discussion, make students aware of the hospital or clinic you have chosen to visit and your plan for the following day

Teacher Talking Points

- 1. What does it mean to “take care”?** (be careful, prudent or watchful)
- 2. What does it mean to “get screened”?** (get tested)
- 3. What are all of the diseases mentioned?** (diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, cholesterol, HIV, depression, cancer)
- 4. Why should people get screened?** (A health screening will detect the illness early. That way you can start managing and treating the disease before it is too late.)
- 5. How much will it cost?** (If you are uninsured it will be free. If you have Medicaid or Family Health Plus it will be free. If you have insurance, there will be a co-payment. However, if you cannot afford to pay the co-payment, let financial representatives at HHC know and they will waive the charge.)
- 6. What does TCNY stand for?** (Take Care New York)
- 7. What does HHC stand for?** (Health and Hospitals Corporation, the City’s public hospitals and health clinics)

ACTIVITY 3: “GET SCREENED. STAY HEALTHY.”

Teacher Directions: Copy this table onto the board along with all of the information in black type. Let your students know that they will be screened for diseases other than high blood pressure and diabetes. Ask your students:

1. What does it mean to PREVENT disease?
2. Do you know how to prevent any of these diseases?
3. What does it mean to DETECT disease?
4. Do you know how you can detect any of these diseases early on?

Discuss with your class and copy their thoughts onto the board. Have students copy down information onto their table. Share provided information if necessary.

Common Diseases	Prevention	Early Detection
High Blood Pressure →	Eat healthy and be active →	Screening: Blood Pressure test
Diabetes	(Eat healthy and be active)	(Finger-prick test)
Asthma	(Eliminate exposure to smoke, dust, pets, pests, mold)	(Lung test)
Cholesterol	(Eat foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol, be active, manage your weight, don't smoke)	(Finger-prick test)
HIV	(Practice safe sex or abstinence and do not share needles)	(Mouth swab test)
Depression	(Eat healthy, be active, avoid drugs and alcohol)	(Patient Health Questionnaire)
Cancer:		
Breast cancer	(Eat healthy, be active)	(Breast X-ray)
Colon Cancer	(Eat healthy, be active)	(Colonoscopy)
Lung Cancer	(Stop smoking)	(Chest X-ray)

ACTIVITY 4: MILA CONVINCES RICARDO TO ATTEND A HEALTH SCREENING



Mila left her class feeling much better.
She is happy that she asked her teacher questions.
Now she wants to tell her friend Ricardo about what she learned in class today.

Teacher Directions: Explain that you will be doing an open-ended role play. Choose one student to play Ricardo. Model the activity by playing Mila first (keep your answers short and simple). Then break class into pairs and have students take turns playing Mila and sharing what they have learned with each other in their own words.

Ricardo: What did you learn in class today?

Mila: I learned about health screenings.

Ricardo: What are health screenings?

Mila: (Health screenings are tests or check-ups.)

Ricardo: What kind of screenings can I get?

Mila: (You can get tests for diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, HIV, etc...)

Ricardo: Who should get health screenings?

Mila: (Everyone.)

Ricardo: Why should I attend a health screening?

Mila: (You may have a disease like high blood pressure and not know it.)

Ricardo: Where can I get a health screening?

Mila: (You can go to any HHC public hospital during October for a free or low-cost screening.)

Teacher Directions: After you have gone over the role play as a class, have each student write down their favorite answers to Ricardo's questions on the lines above.

DAY 3

TEACHER TALKING POINTS: REFLECTION

- 1. What was your favorite part about our field trip to the health screening?**
- 2. Was anything surprising?**
- 3. Was anything difficult or painful?**
- 4. Will you attend health screenings in the future? Why?**
- 5. Share one thing you could tell your neighbor about health screenings.**

ACTIVITY 6: SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Teacher Directions: Reserve time in the computer lab for your class. Pick your strongest students to be group leaders. Review key concepts and vocabulary with class. Divide up the rest of the class then assign each group to a leader. Assign student groups with the task of completing and presenting ONE slide of a PowerPoint presentation. Have students follow the slide outline below. Allow thirty minutes for presentations at the end of class for presentations. (OPTIONAL: Invite other teachers and their classes to attend the presentations.)

Make a PowerPoint Presentation

Titles of Slides:

1. Title and name of presentation. (Good option for a lower-level student.)
2. What is “prevention”?
3. What is “early detection”?
4. What are “health screenings”?
5. Who should get screened?
6. Where did you go to get screened?
7. What screenings did you do?
8. Why should people get screened?
9. What was your experience like?
10. What is one thing you would tell a friend about health screenings?

ACTIVITY 6: SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Alternative: Instead of using computers, assign questions to a student/pair of students. Review key concepts and vocabulary with class. Ask them to make a poster on 8X10 or chart paper. The poster must include a sentence in response to the question. Encourage students to decorate the poster as well using poster-making materials. After students have completed their posters, ask students to present their posters in succession by taping them around the room. (OPTIONAL: Invite other teachers and their classes to attend the presentations.)

Poster Presentations

Poster Titles:

1. **Title of presentation** (Good option for a lower-level student.)
2. **What is “prevention”?**
3. **What is “early detection”?**
4. **What are “health screenings”?**
5. **Who should get screened?**
6. **Where did you go to get screened?**
7. **What screenings did you do?**
8. **Why should people get screened?**
9. **What was your experience like?**
10. **What is one thing you would tell a friend about health screenings?**

AFTER THE LESSON:

You or your students may want to know more about a certain subject after you have completed the lesson. The following are additional health-related resources for program staff that may be useful in the development of further lessons on prevention, early detection and health screenings:

Look to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's web-site for more information on key public health messages, NYC specific health statistics, and city-wide public health initiatives:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/home/home.shtml>

Want to know more about HHC hospitals and clinics? Look to HHC's official web-site for more information on accessing health care and finding a healthcare facility:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/hhc/html/home/home.shtml>

Want to know more about common diseases such as cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol? Look to these websites for more information on these specific health issues and more:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

www.cancer.org

www.diabetes.org

www.americanheart.org

