



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

Sample Lessons

PREVENTION & DETECTION
ESL LEVELS 1 & 2

TEACHER'S EDITION



Developed by the Mayor's Office of Adult Education

Version 2008-2009



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red text = teacher

black text = student

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 learn about the importance of early detection and practice the skills they will need 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 the month of 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. Understand frequently used words in context.
2. Understand simple questions.
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 an opportunity for students to interview each other about the health screenings.

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 **H**DL – keep it **H**igh) keeps your blood flowing smoothly through your blood vessels and arteries; “bad” cholesterol (called **L**DL – 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
- 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	Review vocabulary from Introduction	High blood pressure Symptom Healthcare provider Blood Pressure Cuff Confidential	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: ESL LEVELS 1 AND 2

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

- Understand frequently used words in context
- Communicate survival needs
- Understand simple questions
- Write basic sight words and familiar words and phrases
- Write simple sentence
- Recognize common forms of print found in home and environment
- Able to communicate simple learned and repeated phrases

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 detection and they will be prepared to attend a health screening.

Introduction (see **Teacher Talking Points** and **New Words and Terms**)

- Understand frequently used words in context
- Understand simple questions

ACTIVITY 1 Attending a Health Screening: Mila's Story	Reading and discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Understand frequently used words in context▪ Understand simple questions
ACTIVITY 2 Mila's Questions about Health Screenings	Role-play with teacher followed by class discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Able to communicate simple learned and repeated phrases
ACTIVITY 3 "Get Screened. Stay Healthy."	Listening and discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Understand frequently used words in context
ACTIVITY 4 Mila Convinces Ricardo to Attend a Health Screening	Role play with class and short writing activity. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Understand frequently used words in context▪ Understand simple questions▪ Write basic sight words and familiar words and phrases▪ Write simple sentences

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

- Understand frequently used words in context
- Communicate survival needs
- Understand simple questions
- Able to communicate simple learned and repeated phrases

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 (see **“Teacher Talking Points”**)

- Understand frequently used words in context
- Understand simple questions

ACTIVITY 6

New Words

Matching Activity

ACTIVITY 7

Share Your Knowledge

Student Interviews

- Understand frequently used words in context
- Understand simple questions
- Able to communicate simple learned and repeated phrases

DAY 1

INTRODUCTION: TEACHER TALKING POINTS

Teacher Directions: Use this conversation to introduce the lesson. What you should say to your students is in bold and answers to the questions are in regular type. Use the board during this discussion and leave these notes up for the remainder of class. Ask students to take notes in the following table **New Words and Terms** (see next page).

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

1. Today we are going to talk about health problems.

- **What are some common health problems?**

(asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, HIV, depression, cancer)

- **What are some other words for health problems?**

(disease, illness, sickness)

2. Now let's talk about some solutions to those problems. What are some solutions?

(Write student responses on the board)

3. Another thing we are going to be talking about today is disease prevention.

- **Prevention means to stop or avoid something from happening.**

4. We will also talk about early disease detection.

- **Detection means to find something.**

5. Health screenings are the best way to detect a disease early.

- **To screen means to test or check for something. What do they look for at a health screening?**

(diseases/illnesses/sicknesses)

INTRODUCTION: NEW WORDS AND TERMS

Teacher Directions: Have students take notes while you introduce new concepts and vocabulary. Discuss the meaning of each word with your students and practice their proper pronunciation.

NEW WORD	DEFINITION
Disease	Sickness, Illness, Health problem
Prevention	To stop or avoid
	To stop or avoid
Detection	To find
	To find
Health screening	To test for a disease. Screenings help find diseases
High Blood Pressure	Disease that affects your heart
Symptom	Sign of a disease
Healthcare provider	Doctor, Nurse
Blood Pressure Cuff	A tool that measures blood pressure
Confidential	Something that is a secret or kept private

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

Teacher Directions: Read this story aloud for your class and ask them to follow along. Have students circle words that are unfamiliar to them and discuss this vocabulary after reading.



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 ESL class to improve her English. Mila has been thinking about her health a lot. This is because she is learning about health in class. She has learned that she should eat healthy food and be more active to prevent disease. She has also learned about early detection. Mila's teacher said that the best way to detect an illness early is to attend a health screening.



Mila's teacher told the class that they will be taking a trip to a free or low-cost health screening. She said that they will be screened for diseases like high blood pressure. Mila is nervous. She is nervous because she has not seen a doctor in 3 years. She is nervous because she has never attended a health screening before. She is nervous because she has no documentation. Finally, she is nervous because she has no insurance and cannot pay for the screening.

Questions for discussion:

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; no documentation; no insurance)
4. **What can Mila do to feel better about going to the screening?**
(If she is nervous she should ask her teacher questions!)

Teacher Directions: After the discussion, ask for a volunteer to play Mila in the following role play. Take the role of the teacher and model the dialogue for your class. Have students break into pairs and practice role play. Ask students to circle unfamiliar words. Discuss new vocabulary after role play. If appropriate, have students practice role-play in pairs.

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

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 will keep your information confidential. It will also be free if you do not have insurance.



Healthcare Providers

Mila: But I feel healthy! Why should I go to the health screening?

Teacher: Even people that feel healthy need to get screened. Many people have high blood pressure but do not 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: What is high blood pressure?

Teacher: High blood pressure is a disease that can lead to a stroke, heart attacks, heart failure or kidney failure.

Mila: How will they check my blood pressure?



Blood pressure cuff

Teacher: Healthcare providers will put a cuff on your arm. This will measure your blood pressure. It is fast, easy and painless.

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

Teacher: It will be fine! You may have to take medicine. If you need to take medicine, remember to take it every day. You will also have to eat healthy food and quit smoking.



An ESL 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: TEACHER TALKING POINTS

Check for new vocabulary and then use these questions to lead the discussion about blood pressure screenings.

1. Why should Mila get her blood pressure screened?

(She should get screened for high blood pressure because it has no symptoms so people do not know if they have it.)

2. What does it mean that high blood pressure has “no symptoms”?

(There are no signs of the disease such as pain or weight gain.)

3. How did Mila feel before talking to her teacher?

(She felt nervous.)

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

(She feels better because she knows what to expect, that her information will be kept secret and that it will be free because she does not have insurance.)

5. The people at the hospital will keep all information “confidential”

What does that mean?

(They will keep your health history and your immigration status completely secret. No one will know if you are here illegally.)

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

(People should go to health screenings because they can catch a disease in its earliest stages and get treatment.)

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 then read it as a class. Use these questions 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”?

(To be careful, prudent or watchful)

2. What does it mean to “get screened”?

(To get tested or checked for diseases)

3. Name all of the diseases mentioned in the advertisement.

(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, 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 clinics)



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 4: MILA CONVINCES RICARDO TO ATTEND A HEALTH SCREENING

Teacher Directions: Read aloud with class.

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 the class 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

ACTIVITY 5

FIELD TRIP: HEALTH SCREENING AT AN HHC FACILITY

- 1. Be sure to contact the Field Trip Coordinator at your HHC Facility of choice. Please see the schedule for contact information. Set up your appointment before starting the lesson.**
- 2. Before the field trip discuss with your students the travel plans. Will you be going as a class? Will you be meeting at the facility? Be sure to discuss bus and train options. Remind your students to bring Metrocards.**
- 3. If you have any trouble scheduling an appointment or planning your travel please contact the Mayor's Office.**

REFLECTION: TEACHER TALKING POINTS

- 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: MATCHING

Teacher Directions: Have students draw a line from the picture on the left to the word or term on the right. An example has been done for you.

		Detect (v.)
		Blood pressure cuff (n.)
		Prevent (v.)
		Health screening (n.)
		Healthcare providers (n.)
		Nervous (adj.)

ACTIVITY 7: SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Teacher Directions: Have students break into pairs and interview each other. Make sure that students take turns being the interviewer. This could be a great opportunity to have students from other classes interview each other if there is another teacher at your school with a similar level class.

Interview a friend at school

1. What is your name?
2. What is Prevention?
3. What is Early Detection?
4. What are Health Screenings?
5. Why should I get screened?
6. Where did you go to get screened?
7. What screenings did you do?
8. Will you go to a screening again?

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

