



ESL Podcast 13 – Going to the Drugstore

GLOSSARY

drugstore – a store that sells medicine and medical supplies, and often cosmetics, magazines, greeting cards, and some types of food

* Valencia went to the drugstore to buy medicine for her headache.

toiletry – a category of products used to clean oneself

* Desmond needed to buy a few toiletries, such as shampoo and toothpaste.

prescription – a type of medication or treatment that one needs a doctor's permission to get

* Juana got a prescription from her doctor for a stronger pain reliever when the ones she bought at the drugstore didn't get rid of her back pain.

chain – a store, restaurant, or other business with the same name that is available in more than one location

* Jin likes to go to this chain restaurant, because no matter where he travels, he can always find a location and order his favorite dishes.

medication – medicine; legal drugs used to treat medical conditions

* Carmelo needed medication to treat his flu symptoms.

allergy – an unusual and negative response that the body has to a substance that does not usually cause a negative response in most people

* Latrice has an allergy to peanuts, causing her throat to become swollen whenever she eats something with peanuts in it.

hay fever – seasonal allergy to plants or flowers; a condition that causes one to have problems with one's eyes and nose when around certain types of plants or flowers

* When the pollen count is high, many people start to get hay fever.

to sneeze – to rapidly and unintentionally force air out of the nose or mouth

* The room was very dusty and anyone who entered it started sneezing.

up a storm - doing something with a lot of energy; doing something with a lot of interest and enjoyment

* Louisa and Ling had not seen each other in five years, and when they met up again, they talked up a storm.



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antacid – a small tablet or pill used to treat problems caused by stomach acid (a chemical that causes irritation)

* Some of Juan’s favorite foods bothered his stomach, so instead of not eating those foods, he took an antacid whenever he had them.

Band-Aid – a bandage with a center section of soft material to cover a small cut and two sides that stick to the skin to protect it while it heals

* Alyssa had a small scratch on her finger, so she put a Band-Aid on it.

refill – a supply of medicine that is given to a patient after the first supply has been used

* When the medicine for Kenneth’s heart condition was gone, he went to the store to get a refill.

pharmacist – someone who is trained to prepare legal drugs used to treat medical conditions and who prepares those drugs for a patient’s use

* The pharmacist was able to answer Catherine’s questions about the right way to use the medicine she was buying.

consultation – a discussion with a professional to get advice or guidance; a discussion a customer has with a pharmacist on the correct and best use of medicine

* All of the customer’s questions about the medicine were answered during the consultation.

co-pay – a small amount of money that one pays for medical services when another part of the payment is paid by an insurance company (a company that pays for health and medical expenses)

* The insurance company will pay most of the bill, but Terrance still has to pay a co-pay of \$10 for each visit with his doctor.

HMO – Health Maintenance Organization; personal health insurance; a business that pays part of the cost or the full cost for certain medical bills of its customers, in exchange for a monthly or yearly fee

* Debi felt very lucky to be a member of an HMO when she had to have surgery, because the HMO paid for most of her medical bills.

to foot the bill – to pay a bill or fee; to pay money owed

* Florencio likes to go out to dinner with friends, but doesn’t like to foot the bill.



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CULTURE NOTE

Waiting at the Pharmacy

At the pharmacy, about a meter and a half from the counter where you pick up your “prescriptions” (drugs the doctor gives you), you may see a small sign or “mat” (something you stand on that protects the floor or surface under it) that reads:

Please Wait Here / You’re NEXT / Respect Patient Privacy

“Please wait here” is clear enough. It means “Don’t go any farther! Stop here!” “You’re next” is telling you that you will be the next person who is helped at the counter. “Respect Patient Privacy” is a little more “involved” (complicated).

“To respect” means, in this case, to observe, to be careful of, or to look out for. “Patients” are people who are sick and need to see a doctor. “Privacy” comes from private, meaning to keep things secret from other people, not to let other people know your personal information. The reason the sign says “Respect Patient Privacy” is that the hospital doesn’t want us to stand too close to the patient at the counter. If we do, we could hear their private medical information, which is none of our concern.

There is a reason why hospitals and pharmacies have these signs now. In the early 2000’s, the U.S. government passed a set of laws to protect people’s personal medical information so that it would not be given to others without their permission. The law is called HIPAA, which stands for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. It was meant in part to protect people’s privacy when it comes to medical information. If you look closely at those pharmacy signs or mats, you may see the words “HIPAA Compliant,” meaning that this sign or mat meets the requirements of the HIPAA law. “To be compliant” means that you or your organization is doing the things necessary to obey a certain law.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 13: Going to the Drugstore.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 13. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

On this podcast, we're going to go to the pharmacy or drugstore. Let's get started!

[start of story]

I stopped by the drugstore last night on my way back home from work. I had a few toiletries to pick up, as well as my prescription. Fortunately, the chain pharmacy where I go has a little bit of everything: food, greeting cards, magazines – it's almost as big as a regular supermarket.

To begin with, I needed to get some medications for my allergies. I've got hay fever, so I'm sneezing up a storm every morning when I wake up. While I was at it, I also got some antacids and some Band-Aids. Now it was time to pick up my refill.

I stood in line for a few minutes before being waited on. Since it was not a new prescription, the pharmacist didn't have to do a consultation with me. I just gave the clerk my insurance card and she rang up the sale. Fortunately, I have a low co-pay, so my HMO foots most of the bill.

[end of story]

Now let's talk about some of the words we used in our discussion of going to the drugstore. Let's start with that term "drugstore." A "drugstore" is the same as a "pharmacy." We could say that the word "drugstore" is synonymous with pharmacy. It means the same thing.

I said that I "stopped by" the drugstore last night. "To stop by" means that you are going somewhere, but before you go to that place, you go somewhere else first. For example, I was going to my friend's house over in Beverly Hills, and, on my way there, I stopped by a store in West Los Angeles to pick up a bottle of wine. "To stop by somewhere, then, means to go somewhere before you go



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somewhere else. It implies that you may or may not have been planning on doing that.

I said that I was coming back from work. I said, “I was on my way home.” “To be on your way” means to be going in that direction. I’m on my way to the store, for example. Now, normally we use the preposition “to” after the phrase “on your way,” but the word “home” is an exception. There’s no “to.” You just say, “I was on my way home.” For most other places, however, you have to add a “to” after the phrase “on my way,” such as “I am on my way to the hospital” or “I am on my way to buy a nice big hamburger.” Oh, that sounds good!

I said that I had to pick up some “toiletries.” “Toiletries” (toilettries) refers to anything that you would use in your bathroom. The word “toilet” and “bathroom” are often used to mean the same thing in the United States. Technically, of course, “toilet” is just the thing you use to do, well, what you normally do in a restroom or bathroom.

I said I had to “pick up” some toiletries. “To pick up” means to buy, to obtain, to get. It’s a two-word phrasal verb – “to pick up.” One of the things I had to get was my “prescription.” A “prescription” (prescription) is what the doctor gives you for some illness or some sickness. A prescription drug is something that you can only get with the doctor’s note, and that note is called a “prescription.” But we often use the term prescription to indicate both the drug as well as the note or piece of paper the doctor has to sign, or put his signature on.

I said that the pharmacy I went to was a “chain pharmacy.” When we talk about a “chain (chain) store,” we mean that there is more than one of these stores. There’s more than one “branch” (branch). So McDonald’s is a “chain’ restaurant, because there are thousands of branches, or in this case, restaurants, that are called McDonald’s. They all belong to the same company or group of owners.

Here in Southern California, there are many chain grocery stores. You can also have chain bookstores or a chain shoe store, or for any kind of business that sells things. You can even have a chain service business, such as a place that cleans clothes or cuts your hair.

I said that the pharmacy had a little bit of everything, including “greeting cards.” “Greeting cards” is a general term that means any sort of card that you would buy for someone to give them for some special reason, some special occasion. It could be a birthday card, a Christmas card, an anniversary card, or any type of special event card. A greeting card could also be for someone you love. I used to give my wife greeting cards all the time to say how much I love her. I still do,



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being the good husband that I am, right? Anyway, all of these are called “greeting cards.”

But I didn’t go to the drugstore to buy greeting cards. I went to there to get some “medications.” The term “medications” (medications) simply refers a type of drug. There are two basic kinds of medication you can buy in a drugstore or pharmacy. There are prescription medications, which require permission from your doctor, and there are “over-the-counter” medications. “Over-the-counter medications” are medications or drugs that you can buy that you do not need a doctor’s prescription for. Examples of over-the-counter drugs include cold medicines, cough medicine, medicine for your stomach, and certain pain killers, things you take for when you have a headache. Sometimes we call these by their initials, “OTC,” meaning “over-the-counter.”

I said that I needed to get some medications for my “allergies.” “Allergies” (allergies) are when your body reacts to different things it eats or smells or touches. It’s a negative reaction. You can have an allergy to animals, like dogs or cats. I, for example, have a cat allergy. So, whenever I’m close to a cat, I sneeze - “Achoo!” that’s a sneeze. That’s an allergy or an “allergic reaction.” You can have other kinds of allergic reactions. Some problem may appear on your skin. You may have red bumps on your skin, red marks on your skin. That might also be a reaction to something that you ate or smelled or touched. You can have an allergy to certain kinds of plants. You can have allergies to different foods. I also have an allergy to crab and lobster, which is too bad, because I used to love eating that kind of food but I can’t anymore. I developed an allergy as an adult.

Another type of allergy is called “hay fever.” “Hay (hay) fever” is an allergy to different plants and, well, I have that, too. My wife thinks I have an allergy to work as well. That’s probably true.

Well, when I have hay fever, I sneeze. I said I was “sneezing up a storm.” “To sneeze up a storm” means to sneeze a lot. A “storm” is normally when you have a lot of rain or a lot of wind. So, “to sneeze up a storm” is a metaphor, an expression that we use comparing one thing to another.

I said that “While I was at it, I also got some antacids and some Band-Aids.” This expression “while I was at it” means since I was doing something at the same time, that was in the same place, or that was somehow similar, I did something else. For example, you may say, “Could you go to the store and buy me some milk? And while you’re at it, could you also get me some cereal for breakfast?” So “while you’re at it” means “while you’re also doing something else, please do this as well.”



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I said that, “While I was at it, I also got some Antacids.” “Antacids” (antacids) are to help your stomach when you are not feeling well when you eat something that makes your stomach feel weird, feel funny, or makes your stomach hurt. You could take an antacid. I also mentioned buying “Band-Aids.” “Band-Aids” is technically a brand of bandages in the United States. A “brand” (brand) means one particular company owns and uses the rights to that name. “Apple,” for example, is a brand of computers. “Coca-Cola” is a brand of soda pop.

There is a brand of bandages is called “Band-Aids.” But they’re so popular that now, many of us call almost all bandages “Band-Aids,” even when they’re made by a different company. There are different companies that make bandages. Bandages are things you would put on your skin. For example, if you cut yourself, you would put a bandage or a Band-Aid on to protect the area where you cut your skin.

I said I had to pick up a “refill.” A “refill” (refill) is a prescription that the doctor says you can get more than once or a drug that you can take multiple times – many times. So, for example, I have a prescription for my allergies, and I have five “refills.” That means I can go back to the pharmacy after I wait a few weeks, usually, and get a bottle of the allergy medicine. I can do that five times. I have five refills. After that, I have to go back to the doctor to get another prescription to get more drugs. So, “to refill a prescription” means to get more of a drug that you have already taken before.

I said I stood in line for a few minutes before being “waited on.” That expression “to stand in line” means to be in line. “To be waited on” is an expression you often hear in a restaurant, but we also use the phrase for any sort of service situation, any place where someone is going to help you, such as in a store or at the post office.

I said that the pharmacist didn’t have to do a consultation with me. A “pharmacist” is the person who, of course works at a pharmacy. We used to have a term, “druggist” (druggist), to refer to someone who worked at a drugstore, but now, you normally just hear the word “pharmacist.” To become a pharmacist, you have to go to a special kind of medical school called a “pharmacy school” where you will get a degree in pharmacy. You need that to dispense drugs. “To dispense” (dispense) means to give out, usually to give out a drug or some kind of medicine. When you have a new prescription, when you’re using a drug for the first time, the pharmacist will have “consultation” with you. A “consultation” just means that they tell you what the drug is, what you should use it for, and how



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you should use it. In our story, I am not picking up a new prescription drug. I'm picking up a refill so I don't need a consultation.

I said that "I gave the clerk my insurance card and she rang up the sale." The term "clerk" means anyone who works at a store, usually the person who takes your money, the person who, as I say in the story, "rings up" your sale. "To ring up a sale" means to process the sale, to take your money, to put the money into what's called a "cash register," which is the place where the store keeps its money. The clerk will also give you a receipt for your purchase, for the things that you bought, usually a little piece of paper, although nowadays, some stores say they can email you your receipt. I've had that happen, at least once or twice.

I also said that I had a "low co-pay." "Co-pay" stands for "co-payment." When you have medical insurance in the United States, usually you have to pay a small amount of money every time you go to the doctor and every time you pick up a prescription. It's not the same amount you would pay if you did not have insurance. It's always less than that. The insurance company pays for most of the cost of the drug or most of the cost of the doctor's visit. But you usually have to pay maybe five, ten, perhaps twenty dollars of the cost of the drug or of the visit. That's called a "co-pay."

I said that "My HMO foots most of the bill." "HMO" stands for "Health Maintenance Organization." In the United States, an "HMO" is a private company that provides you, that gives you, medical service. They have doctors, they have hospitals, they have pharmacies, and you buy insurance so that you can be a member of the "HMO." Not everyone is a member of an "HMO." Many people in the United States can't afford, do not have money for, the private insurance, so they have to go to a public clinic or hospital.

I said that my HMO "foots most of the bill." "To foot (foot) the bill" means to pay for, to take care of the expense or the cost. "Who's going to foot the bill for tonight's dinner?" That means "Who's going to pay for tonight's dinner?" It's an informal expression. (And, no, I'm not going to foot the bill for dinner tonight!)

Now let's listen to the story this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

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[end of story]

Our scriptwriter writes about a little bit of everything. Thank you for that, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again right here on ESL Podcast.

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