

EPISODE 24
LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



VISITING A DOCTOR



Julia goes to see a doctor for her routine annual **check-up** (= a medical exam).

"Hello, my dear," greets her the old family doc. "How are you?"

"I'm perfect, thanks!"

"Really? That's great. I remember you as a kid - you had some **ailments** (= health problems) all the time! You had a rash and we had to **apply ointment** to it (= smear the skin with a medicinal "cream"). Or you fell down and cut your arm so we had to **put stitches** on you (= bring the edges of the skin together and fasten them like two pieces of material). I was wondering if maybe I should **refer you to a hospital** - **call for an ambulance** to take you there - the wound seemed pretty serious!"

"I remember! If I hadn't been so wild as a child, I wouldn't have so many scars now, I'm sure. But I remember something else as the ultimate tragedy of my childhood," laughs Julia.

"Coming here to **get the shots** (= **injections** of drugs, i.e. when an amount of medicine is put under the skin and into the body using a plastic **syringe** and a sharp **hypodermic needle**."

"Oh yes... And it was a real nightmare when I had to **draw your blood** (= take a small amount of blood into a syringe to have it tested). Happy memories, hmm?" he jokes.

"Well... If you weren't such a lovely person, these visits would have been even more nightmarish, I'm sure", says Julia and the old doctor smiles, embarrassed.

More contexts for the new words:

- He had already had three **shots** of tequila and was really very drunk.
(= one "portion" of an alcoholic drink)
- My eating habits are not very healthy but even I **draw the line at** eating chips with mayonnaise at around midnight!
(= to never do something because you believe it is wrong)



EXERCISE 1

Match the question halves, then answer the questions.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. What ailments did you suffer from | a. your blood? |
| 2. Have you ever been referred | b. to a hospital? Why? |
| 3. How do you react when a nurse draws | c. as a child? |

ENGLISH IN USE



Look at this sentence from the text:

*"If I **hadn't been** so wild as a child, I **wouldn't have** so many scars now."*

This is another example of an unreal conditional. It doesn't describe reality: in reality, Julia was wild as a child and has many scars now. What is interesting about this sentence is that it combines talking about the present (having scars) with talking about the past (being a wild child). We use tenses accordingly - the sentence is made up like a 3rd conditional in its part about the past and like a 2nd conditional in its part about the present. More examples? Here you are:

*"She **wouldn't be able** to speak Chinese now if she **hadn't spent** her childhood in China."
"If I **had studied** harder at university, I **would have** a better job now."*

Now look at another sentence from the text:

*"If you **weren't** such a lovely person, these visits **would have been** even more nightmarish."*

In the first part (about the doctor being a lovely person) we don't talk about any particular moment in time, but rather about the doctor in general. We use 2nd conditional structure for that. But the second part of the sentence clearly refers to the past, and that's why we use 3rd conditional structure in it. Here are some more examples:

*"If I **didn't like** you so much I **wouldn't have gone** with you to this horrible place yesterday, believe me."*

*"She **wouldn't have lent** you the money if she **was** more assertive."*

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Why did you pay off your loan so early? You still had a few months to go.

B/ I believe that **A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE**.

'A stitch in time saves nine' is a saying which means that it is better to act or deal with problems immediately, because if action is delayed, things will get worse and the problems will take longer to deal with.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. If you PICK UP an illness, you get it.

*Most tourists are worried that they'll **pick up** a stomach bug.*

*He **picked up** malaria when he was visiting Africa on business.*

2. If your body FIGHTS OFF an illness, it prevents the illness from making you ill.

*His organism is very strong, I'm sure he'll **fight off** the flu really quickly.*



EXERCISE 2

Complete the conversation. Use the prompts and the phrasal verbs/ idiom you have learnt.

A. How are you feeling?

B. Terrible. I'm afraid [up] a cold.

A. Why don't you go to see a doctor?

B. I hope I will be able to [off] myself.

A. Still, I believe you should go today.

B. Why?

A. Because [stitch]

NEWS



CORRUPTION AMONG DOCTORS

A recent report has revealed that Poland is a country with one of the highest corruption rates in Europe. It is estimated that two thirds of doctors take bribes regularly, and a third of them do it **on a daily basis**. Only ten percent of doctors claim that they have never taken a bribe. What are the most frequent reasons for giving doctors this extra **remuneration**? The most important explanation given by patients is that they want to get better treatment in hospital. The second reason for giving doctors extra money is when you want to go on **sick leave**, but are not really ill. And number three involves getting prescriptions for drugs you don't really need – such as a woman asking for Viagra for her husband. However, we must not forget that all the bribes given by patients combined, are nothing in comparison with the money doctors receive from pharmaceutical companies for prescribing their products.

GLOSSARY

- **on a daily basis** – every day
- **remuneration** – money you get
- **sick leave** – time off work when you're ill

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex. 1

1. c
2. b
3. a

Ex.2

1. I have picked up
2. fight it off
3. A stitch in time saves nine