

# Talking About Medicines

**AIM**

To raise students’ awareness of different approaches to medical conditions and different treatment practices in the U.S. and their native countries.

**OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the session, students will be able to:

- Discuss medical remedies from their native countries and other cultures

**TARGET GROUP**

Low Intermediate-Intermediate level 4 to level 6  
(For the purpose of this lesson, the target group levels range from 1 through 8, with the following guidelines: 1 = beginning, 5 = intermediate, 8 = advanced.)  
Lessons can also be adapted for 8th-through 12th-grade students on health and health education programs.

**LENGTH**

One 90-minute class period

**MATERIALS**

Realia: common remedies, first aid items

**OVERVIEW**

In this lesson, students discuss medicinal treatments in different countries. They compare common remedies used in different cultures and reflect on how they have changed medical treatments since coming to the U.S.

**ACTIVITIES**

**1.** Ask students to work in groups and share common remedies used in their cultures.

**2.** Bring in items from instructor’s “first aid kit.” Tell students the names and use for each. If instructor is knowledgeable, bring in items which may be used in target countries’ treatments, e.g., ginger for nausea.

Ask students:

- If they use the items in their countries.
- What symptoms they are used for.

Welcome comparisons and contrasts.

**3.** Ask students to interview each other about treatments from their native countries for the following symptoms. (See list of possible other symptoms.)

	Ha (Vietnam)			
Stomachache	Ginger			
Sore throat				
Fever				
Itchy eyes				
Headache				

**Note:** Other physical problems could be selected such as runny nose, sneezes, hiccups, soreness, breathing difficulty, fatigue, cuts, bee stings, sun burn, toothache, canker sores, nosebleed, mosquito bites, earaches, acne, cuts, athlete’s foot, bad breath.

**4.** Reassemble as a class. Ask students to share other remedies used in their countries and write the treatments in a large chart so that all students can see similarities with and differences from their own cultures.

**5.** Ask students to articulate their findings.

For example:

“The way they treat \_\_\_\_\_ (health problem) in \_\_\_\_\_ is the same as/different from the way we do it at home.”

“I’m excited to learn that people from \_\_\_\_\_ use the same remedies as people in my area to take care of \_\_\_\_\_ (health problem).”

“It’s interesting to find out that people from \_\_\_\_\_ (place) \_\_\_\_\_ use \_\_\_\_\_ (ingredient) to \_\_\_\_\_ (action) to care for a person with \_\_\_\_\_ (health problem).”

**6.** Ask students to interview each other about medical treatments in their native countries.

Possible questions:

- Who do you go to in your native country to get medicines?
- How are the medicines packaged to take home?
- Are the medicines always pills or a drink?
- Does the patient need to help prepare medicines?
- Are medicines affordable?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this topic?

Share responses with the whole group.

Ask students to interview each other and compare how they have changed medical treatments since coming to the U.S.

- Who do you go to in the United States to get medicines?
- What changes have you made in medical treatments?
- Do you think it is for the better?
- Do you think it is has been harmful? In what ways?

Reassemble as a class.

Ask each student pair to report one or two discoveries about medical treatments. Compare and contrast students’ differing views about what is good medicine. Discuss whether they would use native medicines and/or U.S. medicines or a combination.

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