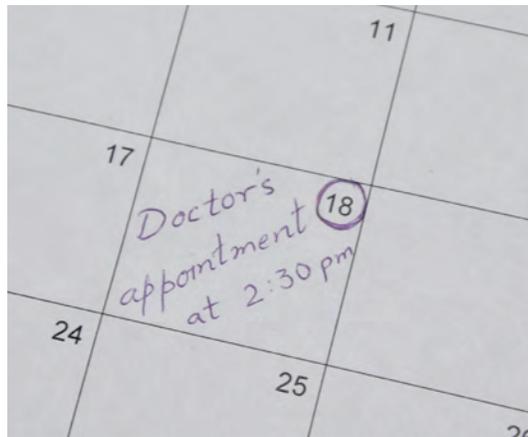
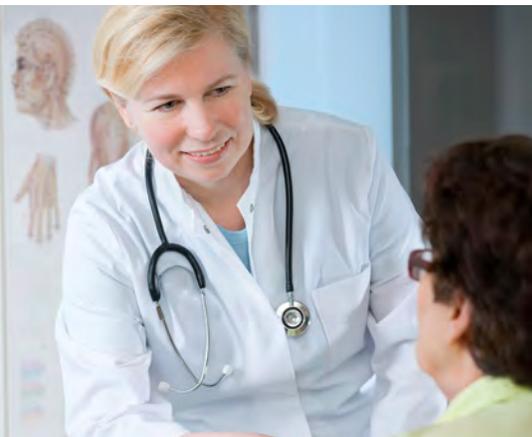


# HEALTH TALK

## A HEALTH LITERACY CURRICULUM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Health Care Access and Navigation



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### Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

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## Disclaimer

The information contained in Health Talk: A Health Literacy Curriculum for English Language Learners, Health Care Access and Navigation is intended for general understanding and education only. This Curriculum is in no way intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of a qualified health care provider regarding a medical condition. Nothing contained within the Curriculum is intended to be used for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

### **Note to Facilitators:**

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS), forty-eight per cent of Canadian adults, age 16 and over have low literacy. This means that 12 million Canadians cannot read or write or have limited reading and writing skills. Adults with limited reading and writing skills can only use and understand text that is simple and clearly presented in plain language. Other than reading and writing, literacy skills also include: listening, speaking, technological skills, numeracy, interpersonal skills, problem solving skills and lifelong learning.

The Health Literacy Curriculum for Low Literacy Immigrant Women Project was designed to assist immigrant women with limited formal education and literacy skills, and their families, access the health care system effectively. *Health Talk: A Health Literacy Curriculum for English Language Learners* seeks to enhance health literacy and communication skills that facilitate access and navigation of the health care system. Furthermore, it was constructed to empower learners to make informed health-related decisions. The curriculum will build learners' vocabulary of everyday terms related to health, hygiene, illnesses, injuries, symptoms and health care. They will build a better understanding of how to care for their bodies, attain the ability to recognize various common ailments associated with health and increase their knowledge of preventative health and hygiene practices. Most importantly, the objective is to enable learners to express their health needs and concerns.

### Rationale

Immigrant and refugee women face considerable barriers accessing the health care systems and communicating with health care professionals. Most are not be fully aware of health related services and facilities available in Canada. In order to access various facilities they need to be knowledgeable of the services provided in each facility and have the language skills required to access them with ease. Limited literacy skills, low English language proficiency, lack of learning strategies and essential life skills, age, low self-esteem and cross-cultural understanding are major challenges, amongst others, that impede them from obtaining the essential health information and care. The obstacles can accentuate their difficulties and delay their harmonious integration into the mainstream society.

### Needs Assessment

The *Calgary Immigrant Women's Association* (CIWA) is a not-for-profit organization that has sought to improve the lives of immigrant and refugee women, youth, children and families since 1982. CIWA has been running literacy programs for English language learners for over 10 years and strives to create innovative programs that address their unique learning and integration needs. One of the reoccurring needs observed with literacy learners was not only the lack of health related knowledge but also level appropriate materials. English language instructors spend a lot of time collecting and modifying health materials and the information to be used in class. As such, CIWA decided to embark on a collaborative endeavour with other immigrant serving agencies and Alberta Health Services to create a tool that could be used throughout Alberta by English language instructors or as a plain language tool for mainstream learners with limited literacy.

Various surveys, reports and program feedback also revealed the urgent need for improving the interaction between health care providers and low-literacy immigrant women. Accordingly, a *Health Needs Assessment* was conducted to identify the health needs of low literacy immigrant women and to elicit suggestions for improving the communications between them and the health care providers. Surveys were conducted in seven focus groups comprised of 84 low literacy immigrants to ascertain their health needs. This resulted in the compilation of the general needs required to enhance the health literacy of the sample population and for their effective utilization of the available health services. It was suggested to incorporate the recommendations in a simple curriculum that enhances the health literacy of low literacy immigrant women.

Accordingly a project was initiated to develop a curriculum for low literacy immigrant women that took cognizance of the aforesaid recommendations of the *Health Needs Assessment*. The current document is the outcome of that effort and has been developed in consultation with *Alberta Health Services* and other stakeholders.

## **Objectives**

The curriculum aims to address these problems by equipping the low literacy immigrant women with the essential skills required to enable them to recognize health problems, seek help by talking to the medical personnel and be able to record and act on essential health information. It attempts to build up the vocabulary of routine health care tasks and situations. Special consideration has been given to build up the abilities necessary to react appropriately to various medical emergencies and situations.

## **Curriculum**

*Health Talk: A Health Literacy Curriculum for English Language Learners* effectively addresses the needs of immigrant and refugee women with limited formal education, who miss out on reaping the benefits of health care. It takes cognizance of the inherent obstacles and materializes the outcomes by conceptualizing/ contextualizing new learning. It is flexibly tailored to meet the unique needs of individual learning styles by incorporating various instructional methodologies. Fun activities have been employed selectively to complement the formal facilitation. These activities introduce and familiarize the learners with new learning and concepts through role plays, stories, surveys, games, arts & crafts, and drawing activities that stimulate learning. The learners are helped to assimilate learning by making connections with real time daily experiences. The curriculum will enable the learners to become functionally prepared to address their own day to day health needs and their family members.

The curriculum is divided into nine modules. The modules have been carefully selected on the basis of student needs and the relevance to their most pressing health care problems. Different activity sheets have been included in the plan of instructions to enable the learners to learn about health, hygiene and the body in innovative ways that enhance their learning, while captivating their interest. Health Care access and Navigation imparts knowledge about the health care options, symptoms, family doctor, appointments, form filling, medication, emergencies, and navigating the health care facility. It is divided into nine modules which focus on strategies of gaining access to health care and navigating through the myriad complexities of medical jargon and seemingly alien signs in a health care facility.

## **Methodology**

The curriculum provides information about health care to English language learners ranging from pre-benchmark to CLB 2. The facilitator is expected to keep both information about health care and language instruction in pace.

A general introduction of the modules has been provided for facilitators. It is recommended that the facilitators read the introduction so that they have complete information before going to the class. The introduction is written in plain language so that it can be incorporated into the lesson delivery. A sample lesson plan including an approximate Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level, time and additional information about the topic has been provided with all activities. A visual glossary has been provided to assist the facilitator in explaining new vocabulary. It is up to the instructor to include, omit or modify the activities according to the needs/ level of the learners.

The instructional approaches and methods include Language Experience Approach, Skills-Based Approach, Task-based Approach, Total Physical Response and Communicative Approach.

**Language Experience Approach** is a method of reading instruction in which learners dictated language is used as a reading source. Learners talk about pictures. The facilitator records exactly what the learner says, making no corrections. The facilitator then reads whatever the learner said and corrects it.

**Skills-based Approach** focuses on the learning of the four skills of language i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, in this curriculum numeracy has also been considered as an important skill. All activities specify the language skill learnt through them.

**Task-based Approach** focuses on the use of authentic (real life) language and meaningful tasks using target language. Dialogues, role plays, and realia are used to support second language learning.

**Total Physical Response** learning takes place by learners actually carrying out a physical activity. It focuses on understanding the spoken language before developing the skills of speaking. The facilitator says a command and then performs an action. The learners repeat after the facilitator.

**Communicative Approach** emphasizes interaction as a means of learning. Learner and not the facilitator are the centre point of learning process. Its primary focus is on helping learners create meaning rather than helping them develop perfectly grammatical structures or acquire native-like pronunciation. This means that successfully learning a foreign language is assessed in terms of how well learners have developed their communicative competence.

The activities are arranged from simple to complex; and from guided to free. It is up to the facilitator's discretion to choose from them according to the learners' level. Moreover, most activities are designed to be used with multiple levels of learners through simple modifications in delivery. Instructions for the activities are simple and brief. Facilitators are required to explain instructions in detail prior to commencing the activities.

Adult learners are motivated when they learn practical knowledge that can be used in their daily lives. Therefore, it is imperative that facilitators relate the classroom material to their experiences and incorporate real objects into the classroom activities as much as possible. Facilitators must also communicate information as opposed to speaking and writing i.e. through gestures, facial expressions, showing images, drawing pictures etc. A visual glossary is included for facilitators' use.

It is recommended that before doing the activities in this module, ask general questions related to the topic and have the learners brainstorm a list of words about the topic. Teach the vocabulary by writing the key words on the board and explain their meanings or by using the CD which provides a visual glossary. Say each new word and explain it by showing pictures. Ask the learners to repeat it several times. Have the learners complete the vocabulary activity provided. Ask yes/no questions to ensure that the learners understand the vocabulary.

## **Outcomes**

This curriculum is carefully designed to equip learners with basic skills and vocabulary needed to navigate Alberta's health care system. The curriculum will equip the learners to understand medical problems and find timely assistance for themselves and their families. The learners will gain knowledge and confidence to participate in society. They will be empowered to take a more active role in their health. In addition, they will become proactive in regards to their health and will be able to communicate their health issues effectively and accurately. This knowledge will also go a long way in encouraging the learners to find appropriate medical information independently.

Overall language proficiency will improve; and the learners will become more competent in the functional use of language.

## HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

### Summary

*Health Care Access and Navigation* is designed to help low literacy immigrants and refugees in understanding the health care facilities available in Alberta and how utilize them optimally. It builds up and reinforces the vocabulary related to the language and the situations learners are going to experience when accessing the local health facilities. A wide spectrum of activities and teaching techniques has been employed to make the learning process effective. A large number of classroom sets of activity sheets have been utilized which include pictures so that the learners identify the items and match them to words. The learners also learn by writing, circling and checking the correct words. The activities will assist the teacher and the learners to work together in order to accomplish better assimilation and reinforcement of the concepts.

The curriculum consists of nine modules that address some of the major problems faced by the low literacy immigrants in obtaining health care : *Getting Health Care When You Are Sick, Symptoms and Injuries, Family Doctor, Medical Appointments, Visiting Health Care Professionals, Navigating a Health Facility, Filling Out Medical Forms, Medical Emergencies and Medication.*

The first module, *Getting Health Care When You Are Sick*, explains the basic health care facilities available in Alberta. It elaborates the functions of *Health Link Alberta* and informs the learners about various options like the family doctor, walk-in clinic, urgent care centre and emergency department where help can be found. The importance of the Alberta Personal Health Card and the procedure to obtain it is illustrated in detail. The module also highlights the use of interpretation and translation services.

The second module, *Symptoms and Injuries*, stresses the need to recognize symptoms and get treatment before the problem worsens. It teaches the importance of prevention and provides guidance about the appropriate places to seek diagnosis and treatment.

The third module, *Family Doctor*, elucidates the role of the family doctor. It informs about the situations when to visit the family doctor, considerations for choosing a family doctor, awareness to ask questions etc. The module also explains the procedure for annual checkups and the need for diagnostic testing. The importance of medical records and the utility of walk-in clinics are also brought out in simple terms.

The fourth module, *Medical Appointments*, addresses the need for and the ways to obtain appointments before visiting health care professionals and laboratories. Comprehensive practice activities have been employed to enable the learners to obtain medical appointments independently.

The fifth module, *Visiting Health Care Professionals*, explains in detail the salient points to be observed when visiting health care professionals. Elaborate exercise pace the learners through the manner of asking questions, seeking clarifications and anticipating and answering questions likely to be asked by the doctors.

The sixth module, *Navigating a Health Facility*, looks in detail at the procedures to find one's way in a health facility. The module explains various signs and complicated medical terminologies so that the learners may avoid confusion and wastage of time looking for a particular facility while visiting a hospital.

The seventh module, *Filling out Medical Forms*, seeks to mitigate the errors and the difficulties faced in filling out a plethora of medical documents likely to be encountered during visits to medical facilities.

The eighth module, *Medical Emergencies*, differentiates between medical emergencies and routine ailments. It educates about recognizing the real medical emergencies and the ways to respond to them effectively. Adequate practice provided through activities mimicking realistic situations prepares the learners to handle different medical emergencies in real life.

The ninth module, *Medication*, exposes the learners to the facts behind medication in a rational approach. The module explains various types of medicines, their packaging, dosages, over-the-counter and prescription medicines, label reading and directions to administer the medicines. The potential side-effects, allergic reactions, over-dosages, abuse and precautions are treated sensitively and warnings are emphasized through simple, yet effective, activities.

## Additional Resources

### Health Care Access and Navigation

Human Atlas Videos

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/224.asp>

Hundreds of 3-D animated medical videos with rotating models, labelled slides and printable text.

Health Literacy Canadian Public Health Association: <http://www.cpha.ca/en/portals/h-l.aspx>

Health Literacy: <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/factsbasic.htm>

Fact sheet (US Department of Health)

Road to Healthy Living

[http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/health\\_information/english\\_article.htm](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/health_information/english_article.htm)

Health Articles (English and other languages)

Alberta Health Services (AHS)

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/>

Primary Care Network (PCN)

<http://makinghealthhappen.com/main.php>

Emergency Medical Services – Calgary Zone (EMS)

Public Education Officer – 403-955-9606

Provides guest speakers and educational material

## Glossary

**211** – the number you call for community, social and government resources

**911** – the number you call for police, fire or ambulance

### -A-

**A.M.** –before noon (12:00 p.m.) or mid-day; time of day; the morning

**Accepting** – to agree to take (e.g. the doctor is accepting patients, the doctor is taking new patients)

**Accessible** – available, on hand, understandable, usable for disabled persons

**Advice** – something someone (such as a doctor) tells (suggests) you to do

**Afternoon** – the part of the day from noon (12:00pm) until sunset

**Alberta Health Services** – an organization that is responsible for providing health care for all eligible residents in Alberta; runs health care in Alberta

**Alberta Personal Health Card** – a card that lets you use health care services that the government will pay for

**Alcohol** – a drink that can lower your attention and slows your reaction; for example beer, wine, liquor, etc.

**Allergy** – something (i.e. dust or food or to something that touches the skin) that makes you sick; there are different reactions people can get: sneezing, itching, a runny nose, swelling, trouble breathing, etc.

**Ambulance** – a vehicle that takes sick or hurt people to the hospital quickly in an emergency

**Anemia** – tired, low iron, not enough red blood cells or red blood cells that are too small

**Annual Check-up / Periodic Check-up** – a visit to a doctor when you are not sick to make sure you are healthy

**Antibiotic** – drug, medicine, drug that kills bacteria

**Anti-inflammatory** – a drug that brings down swelling and pain; for example aspirin, cortisone

**Anxiety** – a feeling of worry or fear

**Application** – a form in which you request something (e.g. an application form for Alberta Blue Cross, signing up for additional insurance)

**Appointment** – a time you agree to meet or see someone

**Arthritis** – pain in joints; disease of the joints that causes swelling, pain, heat, and a sense of stiffness (hard to move)

**Ask** – to seek information/ directions

**Assess** – to find out what is wrong

**Assistance** – to help or assist

**Asthma** – disease that makes it hard for people to breathe; long term disease of swelling of the airways of the lungs; disease of lungs or respiratory system

**-B-**

**Backache** – pain in the back

**Bank machine (Automated Teller Machine – ATM)** – a machine that gives cash from your bank account

**Biking** – to ride a bike

**Blanket** – a piece of cloth used on a bed; used to keep a person warm

**Bleeding** – loss of blood

**Blood pressure** – the pressure/ force made by blood inside blood vessels (vessels: tubes that carry blood to different parts of your body; pressure: how much something is pushing on something else)

**Blood test** – You have blood taken from your arm using a needle and it is sent to the laboratory to be checked

**Bones** – parts of the body that makes the skeleton

**Brain** – part of the body that allows us to make sense of the world; it controls our whole body

**Breathing** – to take air into and out of the lungs

**Broken** – to crack or split; fracture

**Brother** – a boy or man who has the same parents as you

**Bruise** – when you are hurt and the skin turns black or blue

**Burn** – when you hurt/injure yourself by touching something very hot. Your skin gets red, sore or blistered.

**Buttocks** – part of the human body; butt, bottom, bum

**-C-**

**Calm** – without excitement; to be cool, composed. Not showing anger, happiness or sadness

**Cancel** – to not do; to call off

**Cancer** – when the body has no control over cells that begin to split; group of cells that grow uncontrollably. Cells are what make up our bodies. Cancer happens when these cells do not grow normally.

**Caplets** – a solid, stretched out (long) tablet (medicine), coated to make it easy to swallow

**Capsules** – a small, gel pill that has medicine inside. It melts in the stomach.

**Cardiologist** – a heart doctor

**Cardiology** – medical department that treats heart problems

**CAT scan (CT scan)** – test that shows inside body parts, scan, special x-ray, test

**Cavity** – tooth decay, holes in teeth; damage to teeth

**Cervix** – the lower part of the uterus

**Check / Examination** – to look at; to try and find if there is something wrong

**Check blood pressure** – to look at the amount of force/pressure with which your blood is pumped (moved) through the body. If too high or too low it is not good.

**Check ear** – look inside the ear for problems

**Check Pulse** – look at how fast your heart is working (number of beats per minute)

**Check throat** – look inside the mouth at the back to see the throat

**Check-in** – to let someone know that you are there for an appointment or to see the doctor

**Chewing** – bite or grind food with your teeth before you swallow

**Chiropractic** – a person who works to make the health of a patient better by adjusting the back and other parts of the body.

**Choking** – when you cannot breathe because something is blocking the air from reaching the lungs (for example a piece of food) or because of an allergic reaction and the throat is swollen

**Cirrhosis** – disease of the liver (liver gets damaged)

**Clammy** – cold and sweaty

**Clench** – to close tightly (i.e. clench teeth or clench fist)

**Clinical psychologist** – a person who studies the mind and how people act

**Cold** – illness which affects the nose and throat (coughing, sneezing, sore throat, runny nose)

**Community** – refers to a group of people living in the same area

**Community Health Centre** – a type of health centre that provides free health care. It is located in a community/ area of a city.

**Condition** – a medical problem, a disease, an illness

**Confirm** – to make sure; verify (e.g. to verify that you will be able to go to an appointment)

**Confused** – cannot think clearly

**Congestion (stuffy nose/blocked nose)** – hard to breath from your nose

**Conscious** – awake; aware of what is around you

**Consciousness** – to be awake

**Constipation (irregularity)** – hard stool/ poop that does not come out

**Cough** – quick noisy push of air from mouth

**Coverage** – when you have insurance such as Alberta Health Care that pays for health care (help from a doctor or nurse)

**Cream** – a semi-solid form of medication (like lotion); thick liquid

**Chronic disease/illness** – a sickness that does not end; for example: heart disease, diabetes, cancer

**Cut** – to break the skin with a sharp object (such as a knife, scissors or a scalpel)

**-D-**

**Date of birth** – when you were born, the day, month and year you were born

**Dental** – to do with teeth and gums

**Dentist** – a teeth and gum doctor

**Department** –an area within the hospital like emergency department or maternity department

**Depression** – sadness or unhappiness that lasts a long time

**Dermatologist** – skin doctor

**Device** – a thing made for a particular purpose/reason; a tool or machine (i.e. measuring tool)

**Diabetes** – disease with too much sugar in the blood, problem making food into energy

**Diagnose** – test, find out, figure out, learn cause, name

**Diagnosis** – finding out the cause of an illness, condition, disease, medical answer

**Diarrhoea** – watery poop/stool

**Digestive problems** – problems with how the body absorbs food and uses it for energy

**Discuss** – talk about; talk with; talk over

**Disease** – illness; sickness

**Divorced** – to end a marriage

**Dizziness/ dizzy** – feeling wobbly/faint; to loose balance; not steady

**Doctor** – a person who treats (takes care of) you if you are sick

**Dose/ dosage** – amount of medicine, chemical, or radiation; amount, size

**Drops** – medicine that is in a liquid form (for eyes or ears or nose)

**Drowning** – sinking, to go under water and not being able to breathe

**Drowsy / Drowsiness** – sleepy, not fully awake

**Drugs (medication/ medicine)** – used to treat (care for/heal) or prevent (stop) illnesses or disease. You take these when you are sick and want to get better.

**Drugs (illegal)** – something like medicine which is not legal that people take for pleasure (such as: marijuana, opium, cocaine, etc.)

**-E-**

**Ear drops** – medicine that you put into the ear

**Earache** – pain in the ear

**ECG electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG)** – heart test

**Elevator** – a lift that carries people from one floor to another; you take an elevator when you can not or do not want to climb the stairs

**Emergency** – urgent, threat, disaster, crisis

**Emergency contact** – person you would want someone to call if you were hurt or unwell

**Emergency Department** – The place in the hospital you go when you have a life threatening problem and you need help straightaway

**Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)/Paramedic** – a health care worker; works on an ambulance and takes care of sick or hurt people.

**Employment status** – if you are working or not working (employed or unemployed)

**Evening** – time of day between afternoon and night (5:00 pm – 9:00 pm)

**Examination** – to try and find if there is something wrong

**Excessive** – too much of something

**Exercise** – work out, physical activity (i.e. run, walk, play soccer, etc.)

**Expiry** – how long something (like medicine) can be kept and still be safe and effective (work well)

**Eye drops** – medicine that you put into the eye

## **-F-**

**Fainting** – to suddenly lose consciousness; pass out

**Family** – a group of people who are related (e.g. mom, dad and children)

**Family doctor/ physician** – a health care provider who you go to visit to keep you healthy or who you visit when you are sick

**Family history** – health information about your family

**Father** – male parent

**Fatigue** – very tired/ weak

**Fever** – body temperature is too high; your body is trying to fight an infection (sickness)

**Fine** – okay, well, good

**First come-first served** – no appointment needed, people are seen in the order they come (arrive)

**Five senses** – ways we perceive (take in) things (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch)

**Flossing** – to clean between teeth with a string/thread

**Flu** – illness (virus) that affects breathing (respiratory system) or stomach (intestinal system)

**Food poisoning** – sick from bad food (old or dirty food)

**Fracture** – break (e.g. to break a bone)

**Friend** – a person you know well and trust

**-G-**

**Gastrology** –type of health care to help people with stomach diseases / sicknesses

**Gender** – male or female

**Good** –fine, okay, well

**Great** – very good

**Grind** – press or clench

**-H-**

**Habit** – something that you do repeatedly (over and over again), such as waking up at the same time everyday, biting your nails, smoking, etc.

**Hang up** – to put the phone down or turn off; to end a call

**Hay fever** – allergic reaction; affects breathing and eyes; causes sneezing, a runny nose and itchy, watery eyes

**Headache** – pain in the head

**Health /Healthy** – you feel good and you don't have a health problem

**Health care** – the care you get from a doctor/nurse, health centre or at a hospital to keep you healthy or make you well when you are sick

**Health care card** – a card that helps cover the cost of health care/ services (for example: Alberta Personal Health Card)

**Health care providers** – people who take care of your health; they keep you healthy or make you well when you are sick (i.e. doctors, nurses, lab attendants, etc.)

**Health insurance** – a program where you pay a small amount of money each month to help pay for big medical cost that you may have (e.g. Alberta Blue Cross)

**Health Link Alberta** - a telephone service you can phone to get health information and speak to a nurse. You can ask for an interpreter. Toll free in Alberta: 1-866-4085465

**Hear** – one of the 5 senses; to be aware of sound by the ear

**Heart** – an organ that pumps blood

**Heart attack** – the heart gets damaged (hurt)

**Helpful** – useful, to assist

**Herbal medicine** – a medicine prepared with herbs

**Hesitate** – to pause or hold back

**Hollow** – something that is empty on the inside; not filled

**Hospital** – a place where you go if you are very sick or injured

**Hurting** – to be in pain

**-I-**

**Immediate** – right away; at once

**Immunization /vaccination/inoculation** – getting a vaccine; medicine given by a needle that prevents sickness

**Immunize** – to protect against disease, usually with a needle

**In pain** – hurting, sore

**Infant** – a small baby; newborn baby (before they can walk or talk)

**Infection** – disease; illness; sickness; virus; bug; illness caused by germs; a sickness you get from germs

**Inflammation** – swelling, pain, heat, redness

**Information desk** – located in the entrance of a hospital or health center where you can go to ask questions; front desk where you can ask questions

**Inhaler** – breathing medicine/drug, asthma medicine, device that helps give medicine into the breathing tubes

**Injection** – to give medicine by needle; booster; dose

**Injury** – you have hurt a part of your body

**Interpreter** – a person trained to translate information from one language to another

**Itchy** – to want to scratch skin; irritation maybe from a bug bite, or something that you have touched that makes you want to scratch

**-J-**

**Jogging** – running slowly

**Joint** – where bones come together (join)

**-K-**

**Kidney** – organ that filters/ cleans the blood

**-L-**

**Lab / Laboratory** – your medical tests go here to get checked

**Lab test** – a test done where they have special equipment and trained staff (for example, a blood test, urine or stool test, etc.)

**Life threatening** – you have a serious problem and could die if you do not get help right away

**Located /Location** – where something is

**Lotion** – a liquid type cream that is used on the skin

**Lungs** – breathing organs

## **-M-**

**Machinery** – equipment that moves; something that helps a person do something (e.g. cars, robots, clocks, screws, etc.)

**Major injury** – to get hurt badly, maybe life-threatening

**Malaria** – fever caused by a bite from an infected mosquito

**Manage** – to be in control, take care of, watch

**Married** – a union between two people; like a contract; matrimony; husband and wife

**Massage** – to rub a body part to ease pain and aches

**Measuring** – to calculate (measure) how much of something; amount (e.g. 10mL of medication)

**Medical Emergency** – when there is a life threatening problem (could cause death) and you need help right away

**Medical/Health History Form** – tells the doctor which problems you and your family have now or have had in the past; it includes your personal information

**Medical test** – a kind of medical procedure done to find out if something is wrong, or see if the illness is getting better or worse, and see how to treat the patient

**Medication** – drug, pill, medicine

**Medicine** – drug; medication

**Mental health services** – helps people with feelings, emotions, how they think and personal problems

**Message** – to communicate information with someone who is not there (e.g. leave a voice mail, email, note)

**Morning** – beginning part of the day; time between sunrise and noon (12:00pm)

**Mother** – female parent

**Muscles** – a source of power within the body; the heart is a muscle

**Muscular pain** – sore muscles

## **-N-**

**Neighbours** – a person who lives next door to you or close to you

**Neurology** – a type of health care that helps people with problems with the brain and spine (nervous system)

**Next of kin** – your closest family member (person you would want to contact in an emergency)

**Non-life threatening** – not a serious problem; person will not die if they do not get help immediately

**Not so good** – so-so; bad

**Numb/ numbness** – to not feel

**Nurse** – a health professional who gives medical care to sick or hurt people.

**Nutrition** – what you eat and how it affects your health

**-O-**

**Obstetrics/ gynaecology** – type of health care for women during pregnancy and childbirth and with female health problems

**Ointment** – a semi-solid substance (thick cream) that you apply to skin to soothe aches or relieve itch

**Okay** – good; fine

**Oncology/Cancer Center** – it is to help people with cancer

**Operator** – someone who answers the phone

**Ophthalmology** – type of health care that helps people take care of their eyes

**Optometrist** – a doctor who cares for the eyes

**Oral/Dental health** – to take care of teeth

**Orthopaedic** – type of health care that helps with bones and joints

**Over the counter** – medicines anyone can buy

**Overdose** – to take too much medicine

**Overweight** – weighing more than you should (having more body fat than is healthy); too heavy

**-P-**

**Paediatrician** – baby doctor; children’s doctor

**Paediatrics/Children’s Clinic** –health care for children; helps with health problems of children

**Pap test/ pap smear**– a test for the cancer of the cervix (the lower part of the uterus)

**Paper cut** – a cut you get when a paper slices your finger

**Paramedics (EMT)** – a person trained to give emergency medical treatment

**Parenting** – being a father or a mother; raising kids; information (skills and experiences) used to teach and care for a child

**Patch** – a bandage that has medicine on it

**Patient** –a person being treated for a medical problem

**Personal information** – name; address; telephone number; Alberta Personal Health Card number; family history

**Pharmacist** – a person who works in a pharmacy and fills the prescriptions

**Pharmacy** – where you buy medicine

**Photo ID** – a document with a picture of you that says who you are

**Physical check-up** – to check the body to see if it is healthy

**Physician** – a doctor

**Physiotherapy** – treatment for pain and weakness through exercise

**Plastic surgery** – surgery to fix or change external (outside) body parts so that they look or function (work) better

**P.M.** – after noon (12:00pm); after A.M.

**Podiatry** – treating feet problems, medical care for feet, foot doctor

**Poison** – something that can hurt or kill a person; can be something that you eat/drink or that you breathe in

**Post-natal services** – help women get with a new baby - information on how, when and what to feed your baby.

**Pre-natal services** – help pregnant women get before the baby is born

**Pregnancy** – a baby is growing inside you for 9 months

**Prescription** – a note from a doctor to get special medicine

**Prevent** – to stop something from happening (to stop you from getting sick/ injured)

**Problem** – difficulty; trouble

**Proof** – verify, confirm; show that something is true or not true

**Prostate** – part of a man's reproductive system a walnut-sized gland that men have; located just below the bladder

**Psychology** – type of medical care for the mind (how you think) and feelings

**Pulse** – the regular beating in the arteries; your heart pumping blood through your body

**Purse** – bag; used to carry money, keys, etc.

**-Q-**

**Questions** – enquiry; examine; probe; ask

**-R-**

**Radiology/Diagnostic Imaging** – x-ray department; where they take pictures of the bones and other parts inside the body

**Rash** – irritation of the skin, causes redness of the skin; skin is itchy and/or red

**Reaction** – your body's response to something you eat or touch; an allergy (for example something that you touch makes you itchy)

**Receptionist** – You see this person first when you go to a health centre. They answer the phone, schedule appointments, and take your information.

**Recorded message/Answering machine** – a telephone message you get when no one is there to answer your call; may have information about hours and location

**Recovered** –feeling better after being sick; healed

**Recovery** – getting better after being sick

**Reduced-fee** – to pay less than regular cost (amount of money)

**Referral** – a note that your doctor writes so you can see a special doctor

**Refill** – number of times you can get more medicine from the drugstore without going back to the doctor

**Registration** – sign up; enrol; join

**Repeat** – to do again; so say again; to go over

**Restroom** – where people use the toilet; wash their hands

**Runny nose** – unusual amounts of nasal fluid; nose dripping watery; often due to a cold or allergies

## **-S-**

**Safely** – free from risk; carefully

**Schedule** –all things to be done or all events to occur at or during a time period.

**Screening** – a medical test that checks for certain health problems (e.g. Pap smear, mammogram, etc.)

**Sedative** – medicine that calms you; may cause you to sleep

**Seizure** – a sudden disorder of the brain that can make your body shake and you can go unconscious.

**Sensitive** – easy to hurt or damage; sore

**Separated** – married but not living together

**Serious** – important; vital; critical

**Severe** – very bad

**Shortness of Breath** – hard to breath; cannot get enough air

**Shoulders** – part of the body between neck and arm

**Sick** – do not feel good and you have a health problem

**Side effects** – reaction; reaction to medicine (a reaction someone might have to medicine. Some side effects are a rash, breathing problems, throwing up or a cough.)

**Sign-in** – check-in; to let the receptionist know you are there and why

**Single** – a person who is not married or common law (not married but living together)

**Sister** – a female who has the same parents as you

**Smell** – one of the 5 senses; to perceive through nose

**Sneeze/ sneezing** – force of air through nose and mouth (with force)

**Sore throat** – pain in the throat

**Soreness** – hurt, pain, ache

**So-so** – okay; all right; fair

**Sour** – type of taste; lemon

**Specialist** - a person who is an expert for a health issue

**Sprain** – muscle injury or tear

**Spray** – liquid medicine that you squirt; mist (e.g. nose spray is inhaled through the nose)

**Stairs** – set of steps that go up or down

**Stomach** – internal body part; where food goes to digest

**Stomach ache** – pain in your belly/ tummy/ stomach

**Stress** – pressure; worry

**Stroke** – sudden loss of brain function caused when the supply of blood to the brain stops.

**Struggling** – to have difficulty; hard to complete

**Suffers** – to feel pain (in body or mind)

**Surgeon** – doctor who operates on a patient

**Surgery/Operation** – doctor cuts you open to remove a sickness or fix a body part that is not working well; you need to be asleep during it

**Surname** – last name

**Sweet** – type of taste; sugar, candy

**Swollen/ Swelling** – puffed up

**Symptoms** – a sign of sickness or disease; warning

**Syrup** – a thick liquid medication that you drink

## **-T-**

**Tablets** – pill; powder pressed into a solid

**Taste** – one of the 5 senses; perceive through the mouth/tongue (sour, sweet, spicy, etc.)

**Teeth** – part of the body; found in the mouth; used to chew food

**Teething** – when a baby's first teeth start growing

**Temperature** – how hot or cold something or someone is; fever

**Terrible** – very bad; awful; horrible

**Thermometer** – a tool used to measure temperature

**Throat** – part of the body; in the front of the neck; below the chin

**Thumbs** – part of the body; first digit on the hands

**Tingling** – to have a pricking or stinging feeling; feeling pins and needles

**Toilet** – restroom; bathroom; a place you go to empty your waste (pee or poop) and flush with water after

**Tomorrow** – the day after today

**Toothache** – pain in your tooth

**Treatment** – a way to make you better when you are sick or hurt; medicine; therapy

**Trouble breathing** – cannot breathe well, short, quick breaths or long, hard breath

**Tuberculosis (TB)** – infectious disease that affects your lungs and other parts of the body

## **-U-**

**Ultrasound** – a type of radiology (x-ray); used to see inside the organs inside the body

**Unconscious** –when someone is not awake but not asleep and will not wake up; non-responsive; can be a life threatening problem

**Uncontrolled** – not under control

**Underweight** – weighing less than you should (less than what is healthy)

**Urgent** – something that needs to be done right away

**Urgent care centre** – a place where you go if you are sick or injured and need same day treatment

**Urology** – type of health care to help people who have problems with their urinary tract (bladder, peeing)

**Uterus** – an internal part of a woman’s body where the baby grows; womb

**Utility Bill** – a statement (letter) sent to you at your home for water, gas or electricity

## **-V-**

**Vaccination** – medicine given through a needle; helps prevents a disease (sickness); needle; poke with a needle

**Victim** – a person who suffers because of what someone has done to them or happened to them

**Vision** – to see

**Visit** – to go and see

**Visiting hours** – the time when you can go and see someone in a hospital

**Vitamins** – tiny things in food that the body needs to be healthy

**Vomit** – to throw-up from the stomach

## **-W-**

**Wait** – to stay in one place;

**Waiting room** – where you wait to see the doctor

**Walk-in clinic** – where you go to see a doctor; you do not need an appointment

**Wallet** – something in which you carry your papers and money

**Warning** – sign of trouble; alert

**Weigh** – to measure how heavy something is

**Weight** – how much something weighs

**Wheezing** – to breathe with a whistling sound. It is a sign that a person is having trouble breathing.

**Widow(ed)** – a person whose husband or wife has died (passed away)

**Work out** – exercise; to do physical activity (i.e. run, walk, play soccer, etc.)

**Wrists** – part of the body; between the hand and the forearm

**-X-**

**X-ray** – A picture of the bones and other parts inside the body

**-Y-**

**Yellow Pages** – a book where you can look up telephone numbers

## Resources and References

### Health Care Access and Navigation

Barnett, A., Rushton, N. and Mumaw, L. (2009) *What to Do: For Senior Health*. Institute for Healthcare Advancement, California, USA.

Mestman, S. and Herman, A. (2009) *What to Do: For Healthy Teeth*. Institute for Healthcare Advancement, California, USA.

Mayer G, R.N. and KuKlierus A, R.N. (2008) *What to Do: When Your Child Gets Sick*, Institute for Healthcare Advancement, California USA

Mayer, G., R.N. and KuKlierus, A., R.N. (2008) *What to Do: When You're Having a Baby*. Institute for Healthcare Advancement, California USA

From Here Through Maternity – A Resource For Families (2009)  
Alberta Health Services

Alberta Health Services  
Health Link Alberta

<http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/doctor/index.html>

Calgary Health Region Health Link

<http://content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Buisiness+Units/Community+Neighbourhoods>

Alberta Health Services  
Emergency Departments & Urgent Care Centres

<http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/em/index.htm>

Interpretation and Translation Services

[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity)

Alberta Health Services  
Q&A Emergency Department

<http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/em/questions.htm>

Health Quality Counsel of Alberta  
It's Okay to Ask

[www.hqca.ca](http://www.hqca.ca)

Family Doctor

Various topics (cold, flu, chronic disease, etc)

[www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
Women's Health

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/byAudience/ForWomen/default.htm>

Alberta Health Services

Human Atlas Videos – Hundreds of 3-D animated medical videos with rotating models, labelled slides and printable text

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/224.asp>

Health Literacy Canadian Public Health Association:

<http://www.cpha.ca/en/portals/h-l.aspx>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Health Literacy: Fact sheet

<http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/factsbasic.htm>

Alberta Health Services

Road to Healthy Living – Articles (English and other languages)

[http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/health\\_information/english\\_article.htm](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/health_information/english_article.htm)

Making Health Happen

Primary Care Network (PCN)

<http://makinghealthhappen.com/main.php>

Alberta Blue Cross

<https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/>

Government of Alberta: Health and Wellness

Alberta Personal Health Card

<http://www.health.alberta.ca/AHCIP/contact-AHCIP.html>

211

<http://www.211calgary.ca/>

Alberta Health Services

Community Health Centres

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/services.asp?pid=service&rid=7528>

Alberta Health Services

Reduced Fee Dental Care

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/services.asp?pid=service&rid=1670>

Alberta Health Services  
Primary Care Network (PCN)  
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/Publications/ahs-pub-pr-2010-06-pm-primary-care.pdf>

## **Symptoms and Injuries**

Poison and Drug Information Alberta  
Poison Checklist for the Home  
[http://www.padis.ca/client/media/2/01/06.03.17\\_poison\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.padis.ca/client/media/2/01/06.03.17_poison_checklist.pdf)

Poison and Drug Information Alberta  
Poison Prevention Tips  
<http://www.padis.ca/descviewer.php?title=Poison+Prevention+Tips&oid=20>

WordNet  
Definitions for various terms throughout curriculum  
<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>

## **Family Doctor**

US National Library of Medicine  
Physical Exam – frequently asked questions  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002125.htm>

College of Physicians and Surgeons Alberta  
Finding a family doctor in Alberta  
<http://www.cpsa.ab.ca/PhysicianSearch/AdvancedSearch.aspx>

Alberta Health Services  
Regular Check-ups  
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/595.asp>

Family Doctor  
[www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)

Health Quality Counsel of Alberta  
It's Okay to Ask  
[www.hqca.ca](http://www.hqca.ca)

Word Net  
Definitions for various terms throughout the curriculum  
<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>

Essortment

Medical History Forms

[http://www.essortment.com/all/personalmedical\\_rxou.htm](http://www.essortment.com/all/personalmedical_rxou.htm)

Yellow Pages

<http://www.yellowpages.ca/>

MedicineNet

Search for medical information and terminology

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=13683>

American College of Emergency Physicians Foundation

What to Do in an Emergency

<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/EmergencyManual/WhatToDoInMedicalEmergency/Default.aspx>

American College of Emergency Physicians

What to Do in a Medical Emergency

<http://www.acep.org/patients.aspx?id=26028>

Health Canada

Preparing for an Emergency

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/life-vie/emerg-urg-eng.php>

## **Medical Appointments**

Alberta Health Services

Regular Check-ups

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/595.asp>

Word Net

Definitions for various terms throughout curriculum

<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>

Essortment

Medical History Forms

[http://www.essortment.com/all/personalmedical\\_rxou.htm](http://www.essortment.com/all/personalmedical_rxou.htm)

## **Visiting Health Care Professionals**

Mosaic PCN (Primary Care Network - Calgary)

<http://www.mosaicpcn.ca/>

Alberta Health Services  
Regular Check-ups  
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/595.asp>

Health Quality Counsel of Alberta  
It's Okay to Ask  
[www.hqca.ca](http://www.hqca.ca)

Word Net  
Definitions for various terms throughout curriculum  
<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>

## **Navigating a Health Facility**

Word Net  
Definitions for various terms throughout the curriculum  
<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>

## **Filling Out Medical Forms**

Essortment  
Medical History Forms  
[http://www.essortment.com/all/personalmedical\\_rxou.htm](http://www.essortment.com/all/personalmedical_rxou.htm)

## **Medical Emergencies**

Poison and Drug Information Alberta  
Poison Checklist for the Home  
[http://www.padis.ca/client/media/2/01/06.03.17\\_poison\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.padis.ca/client/media/2/01/06.03.17_poison_checklist.pdf)

Poison and Drug Information Alberta  
Poison Prevention Tips  
<http://www.padis.ca/descviewer.php?title=Poison+Prevention+Tips&oid=20F>

What to do in an Emergency  
American College of Emergency Physicians Foundation  
<http://www3.acep.org/PrintFriendly.aspx?id=26024>

What to do in a Medical Emergency  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/EmergencyManual/WhatToDoInMedicalEmergency/Default.aspx?id=252>

## Medicine

Ask Your Pharmacist

[http://www.askyourpharmacist.ca/questions\\_to\\_ask\\_pharmacist.html](http://www.askyourpharmacist.ca/questions_to_ask_pharmacist.html)

<http://www.askyourpharmacist.ca/>

City of Calgary

Poison Prevention

[http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_0\\_766\\_243\\_0\\_43/http%3B/content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Living/Safety+and+Health/Safety+Tips/In+The+Home/Poison+Prevention.html](http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_766_243_0_43/http%3B/content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Living/Safety+and+Health/Safety+Tips/In+The+Home/Poison+Prevention.html)

Safe Kids USA

Medication Poison Prevention Tips

<http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/poison/medication-poison-prevention-1.html>

Giving Medicine to Children (various)

[http://www.essortment.com/all/childrenmedicin\\_rjjo.htm](http://www.essortment.com/all/childrenmedicin_rjjo.htm)

<http://www.gerberlife.com/gl/view/newsletter/mar06/article2.jsp>

[http://www.ideamarketers.com/?Tips\\_for\\_Safely\\_Giving\\_Your\\_Child\\_Medicine&articleid=836709](http://www.ideamarketers.com/?Tips_for_Safely_Giving_Your_Child_Medicine&articleid=836709)

<http://healthmad.com/children/tips-for-giving-medicine-to-children/>

[http://www.emedicinehealth.com/drug\\_overdose/article\\_em.htm](http://www.emedicinehealth.com/drug_overdose/article_em.htm)