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**ESL Podcast 389 – Getting a Cold**

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**GLOSSARY**

**cold** – an illness that is very common, especially in the winter, but not very serious; an illness that often includes sneezing, coughing, a runny nose and other symptoms

\* Some people think that you might get a cold if you go outside when your hair is wet.

**contagious** – sharing an illness with other people; able to transfer one's illness to another person

\* Harold went to work while he was contagious, and now all his co-workers are sick.

**to play hooky** – to not go to school or work when one is supposed to, usually because one wants to do something fun

\* Jake played hooky from school on Wednesday, going to the movies instead of his classes.

**to run** – for a nose to have liquid coming out of it when one is sick or cold

\* Shannon's nose was running all day, so now the skin below her nose is bright red.

**puffy** – swollen; larger than usual, seeming to have air or water under the skin

\* After Terrence accidentally closed the car door on his finger, it became puffy and very painful.

**hoarse** – a voice that sounds strange and is lower and rougher than usual, often because one is sick or because one has been shouting for a long time

\* Janice cheered loudly at the basketball game last night, and today her voice is very hoarse.

**fever** – a body temperature that is higher than normal, usually because one's body is fighting against an illness

\* Having a fever of more than 103 degrees can be very dangerous.

**nasal decongestant** – a medicine that helps to clear one's nose so that one can breathe more easily when sick

\* Do you sell any nasal decongestants that won't make me sleepy?



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**eye drops** – a liquid that comes in a small bottle and is put in one’s eyes to make them less red or itchy, especially when one is sick

\* Wendy has horrible allergies, but she uses eye drops to stop her eyes from turning bright red.

**cough medicine** – a liquid medicine that one drinks to stop oneself from coughing (pushing air out of one’s throat and mouth very quickly while making a quick, loud sound when one is sick)

\* This cough medicine won’t make your cold go away, but it will make you feel better because you won’t be coughing as much.

**to suck** – to use one’s tongue to hold something in one’s mouth, often to get the flavor of it without biting or chewing

\* Does your baby suck his thumb?

**throat lozenge** – small, hard candies with medicine in them that one puts in one’s mouth so that the liquid comes off and goes down one’s throat, making a sore throat feel better

\* When she has a sore throat, she uses throat lozenges and drinks hot tea.

**to sneeze** – to push air and a little bit of liquid out of one’s nose very quickly and with a lot of force, usually making a loud noise at the same time, especially when one is sick or has allergies

\* When they cleaned their garage, there was a lot of dust in the air and it made them sneeze.

**to contaminate** – to make something dirty or impure

\* People are worried that the chemical factory is contaminating the river.

**Kleenex** – a brand of tissues, or very soft pieces of paper, that one uses to clean one’s nose or wipe away tears

\* Frannie always carries Kleenex in her purse when she goes to see a sad movie.

**to blow (one’s) nose** – to put a tissue (a very soft piece of paper) or a small piece of fabric in front of one’s nose and blow air out of one’s nose very strongly and quickly

\* Oliver didn’t have any tissues, so he blew his nose on a paper towel.

**germ** – bacteria; a very small thing that cannot be seen without a special tool, but that can make people sick

\* That bathroom is very dirty and must be full of germs!



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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. Which of these is a type of medicine?
  - a) A nasal decongestant.
  - b) A Kleenex.
  - c) A germ.
  
2. Which of these would you take if your voice were hoarse?
  - a) Eye drops.
  - b) Cough medicine.
  - c) Throat lozenges.

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**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**cold**

The word “cold,” in this podcast, means an illness that is very common, especially in the winter, but not very serious: “Danielle didn’t go to work today, because she has a cold.” Normally, the word “cold” refers to a low temperature: “Put on a hat because it is very cold outside today.” However, when we talk about people being “cold,” we mean that they are unfeeling, or that they don’t show very much emotion: “Reese is so cold that he didn’t even cry when his mother died.” Finally, the phrase “to get cold feet” means to become nervous or worried about something that one had planned to do, suddenly not wanting to do it anymore: “Some men get cold feet a few hours before their wedding.”

**to run**

In this podcast, the verb “to run” means for a nose to have liquid coming out of it when one is sick or cold: “The little girl’s nose started to run while she played outside in the cold air.” The phrase “to run to (somewhere)” means to go somewhere and do something very quickly: “Could you please run to the post office and buy some stamps this afternoon?” The phrase “to run off (something)” means to operate using a certain type of power: “Their computer runs off a special, long-lasting battery.” Finally, the phrase “to run for (something)” means to try to be elected for a position, especially in the government: “How many people are running for the presidency this year?”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

People who “catch a cold” (get a cold) have many other “symptoms” (a sign or signal that something is wrong with one’s body) “besides” (in addition to) the ones discussed in this podcast. For example, they may have a “sore throat,” when the inside of one’s throat hurts. Throat lozenges can help to make the pain go away, as can hot drinks and warmth.

Some people have many “aches and pains” when they catch a cold, meaning that their body, or only certain body parts, hurt. In particular, they might have a “headache” (a pain inside one’s head). Other people “have the chills,” meaning that they feel cold even when the room is warm. They get “goose bumps” (small, raised areas on one’s skin when one is cold), even while other people who are not sick might be “complaining” (saying negative things) about how warm the room is. In addition, people with a cold sometimes feel “fatigued” (tired) or “weak” (without very much energy; not strong).

Unfortunately, there is no “cure” (something that one can do to become healthy again) for the common cold, so people just have to wait for it to end. However, they can do many things to “alleviate” (make something less bad) the symptoms. Nasal decongestants, cough medicines, eye drops, and throat lozenges can all help to “ease” (make a little bit better) the symptoms. It is a good idea to rest in bed, drink lots of liquids, and stay warm. Many Americans believe that eating a bowl of hot chicken soup can also make them feel better when they catch a cold.

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – c



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 389: Getting a Cold.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 389. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com). You can download an 8 to 10 page Learning Guide for this episode on our website. The Learning Guide will help you improve your English even faster. You get all of the vocabulary words, definitions, new sample sentences, additional definitions not talked about on the audio podcast, culture notes, comprehension checks, and a complete transcript of everything we say on this episode.

This episode is called "Getting a Cold." It's dialogue between Walt and Irene. Irene is getting sick; she's getting a cold. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Walt: What's the matter with you?

Irene: I have a bad cold.

Walt: Why didn't you stay home from work? You're probably contagious!

Irene: I had no choice. I have an important presentation this afternoon and I can't play hooky.

Walt: You can't give a presentation in your condition. Your nose is running, your eyes are red and puffy, your voice is hoarse, and you look like you're running a fever.

Irene: Gee, thanks. I know I look terrible, but I'll get through it. I'm taking a nasal decongestant, I'm using eye drops, and I'm taking cough medicine and sucking on throat lozenges. I should be better by the time of the presentation. Ahchoo!

Walt: Oh, geez! You just sneezed all over me. You've contaminated me for sure!



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Irene: Sorry. Where's the Kleenex? I need to blow my nose.

Walt: I'm out of here! You're a walking germ machine.

[end of dialogue]

Walt begins our dialogue by asking Irene, "What's the matter with you?" "What's the matter?" means what is wrong, so: "What is wrong with you?" Irene says, "I have a bad cold." A "cold," in this case, means a very common illness or sickness. It usually causes you to sneeze (sound of a sneeze), to cough (sound of coughing), to have a runny nose, so that when you talk you sound a little funny. These are all parts of having a cold; it's very common, not serious, but not very fun, either. "Cold" has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Walt says, "Why didn't you stay home from work?" meaning why did you come to work, why didn't you just stay at your house. "You're probably contagious!" he says. Notice Walt doesn't really care about how Irene feels; he's only worried that she is contagious. To be "contagious" means to be able to give your sickness, or transfer your illness, to another person. Some diseases – some sicknesses – are contagious; if you have it, you could give it to another person. A cold is an example of that.

Irene responds, "I had no choice (I had no option). I have an important presentation this afternoon and I can't play hooky." The expression "to play hooky" is an informal one that means not to go to school or work when you're supposed to, usually because you want to do something fun. I never did this when I was a student, but some students will not go to school, and instead go play games or go do something else instead of going to school. Some people do this for their work, as well. We call it "to play hooky," it means you are doing something fun instead of what you should be doing.

Walt says to Irene, "You can't give a presentation in your condition (meaning you are too sick to give a presentation). Your nose is running, your eyes are red and puffy, your voice is hoarse, and you look like you're running a fever." These are all things that can happen if you have a cold. To say that your nose is "runny," or that your nose is "running," means that you have liquid coming out of your nose. This happens when you are sick, when you have a cold. "To run," as a verb, has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look, once again, at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations.



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Walt says, also, that Irene’s eyes are red and puffy. Something that is “puffy” (puffy) means swollen, larger than usual, something that is bigger than it should be. If your eyes are puffy, that means they are bigger than they should be, around your eyes in particular. “Your voice is hoarse.” When we say your voice is “hoarse” (hoarse), we mean it sounds strange. It’s lower or rougher than usual, usually because you are either sick or because you have been shouting for long time. People go to sporting events – to football, basketball, or baseball games – and they are yelling – they are shouting for their team. Afterwards, their voice may be hoarse; it may sound strange because they have been shouting.

Walt also says to Irene that it looks like she’s running a fever. A “fever” is when your body temperature is higher than normal. Often, this happens because you are fighting against – or your body is fighting against this sickness – this illness. Notice the verb “to run.” You’re “running a fever.” That means you have a high fever; your temperature is higher than it should be.

Irene says to Walt, “Gee, thanks.” She’s trying to be funny here; Walt it is telling her all the terrible things that are wrong with her, and, of course, that’s not a very complimentary – a very nice – thing to say to someone. Irene says, “I know I look terrible, but I’ll get through it,” meaning I’ll survive. To “get through” something means to go through something and still be able to complete it. She says, “I’m taking a nasal decongestant.” A “nasal decongestant” is a medicine that helps clear your nose, so you can breathe more easily when you have a cold or are sick. “Nasal” refers to your nose.

Irene also says she’s using eye drops. “Eye drops” are a kind of liquid that comes in a small bottle. You put the drops – the little pieces, if you will, of liquid into your eyes to make them less red. Usually this is something that people do if they are sick, if they are having problems with their eyes. Irene also says she’s taking cold medicine and sucking on throat lozenges. “Cough medicine” is usually a liquid medicine that you drink so that you don’t cough as much – to stop you from coughing. She says she’s sucking on throat lozenges. “To suck” means to use your tongue to hold something in your mouth, without biting or chewing it. A “throat lozenge” is a small, hard piece of candy, really, with medicine that helps you feel better if you have a sore throat. If your throat is hurting you, you can put a lemon or cherry throat lozenge in your mouth, and that will help your throat feel a little better.

Irene says, “I should be better by the time of the presentation,” but then she sneezes. Walt says, “Oh, geez! You just sneezed all over me.” To “sneeze,” of course, means that things come out of your nose very quickly; you may sneeze if you have a cold. Walt is complaining that Irene sneezed all over him, meaning



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when she sneezed little pieces of liquid fell on him. He says, “You’ve contaminated me for sure!” To “contaminate” means to make something dirty or not pure.

Irene says, “Sorry. Where’s the Kleenex?” “Kleenex” (Kleenex) is what many Americans call tissue paper that you use when you have a cold. They’re very soft, small pieces of paper that you use to clean your nose, for example. Kleenex is the name of some tissues that are made by a particular company, but because they’re so popular people just refer to these soft pieces of paper – these tissues as Kleenex.

Irene says, “I need to blow my nose.” To “blow your nose” means to take one of these small pieces of tissue – a piece of Kleenex – and put it in front of your nose, and then blow air out of your nose to get the liquid out from your nasal cavities (your nasal area – your nose). So, blowing your nose is something you would do with, for example, a small tissue or a handkerchief, which is also used to blow your nose with. A handkerchief is usually made of cloth, however, not paper.

Walt says, “I’m out of here!” meaning I’m leaving right now. “You are a walking germ machine,” he says to Irene. The word “germ” is another word for bacteria; germs are bacteria. They are small things that you can’t see, normally, but that make you sick. When Walt says Irene is a germ machine, he means that she is creating these germs – creating these things that will make other people sick, including him. Once again, Walt is more interested in his own health than in the fact that Irene is not feeling well. So, let’s hope that Walt gets sick!

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Walt: What’s the matter with you?

Irene: I have a bad cold.

Walt: Why didn’t you stay home from work? You’re probably contagious!

Irene: I had no choice. I have an important presentation this afternoon and I can’t play hooky.





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Walt: You can't give a presentation in your condition. Your nose is running, your eyes are red and puffy, your voice is hoarse, and you look like you're running a fever.

Irene: Gee, thanks. I know I look terrible, but I'll get through it. I'm taking a nasal decongestant, I'm using eye drops, and I'm taking cough medicine and sucking on throat lozenges. I should be better by the time of the presentation. Ahchoo!

Walt: Oh, geez! You just sneezed all over me. You've contaminated me for sure!

Irene: Sorry. Where's the Kleenex? I need to blow my nose.

Walt: I'm out of here! You're a walking germ machine.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by someone who never plays hooky, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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