# Wellbeing English — Under the Weather

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**Part 1. What kind of patient are you when you feel under the weather? Choose the one that sounds most like you, then say which one describes someone you know.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **The Soldier**<br>*Never takes a day off. Soldiers on with a stinking cold and tells everyone they're "fine".* | **The Drama Star**<br>*One sniffle and they're on the sofa under three blankets, telling everyone how terrible they feel.* |
| **The Self-Diagnoser**<br>*Looks up every symptom online and is convinced it's something serious by lunchtime.* | **The Home Remedy Expert**<br>*Has a cure for everything: ginger, garlic, honey, and something their grandmother swore by.* |

**Part 2. Discuss the questions.**

- How often do you come down with something, for example in the colder months or when the seasons change?
- What's the first sign that you're getting ill?
- When you're ill, do you want to be looked after or left alone?
- Do you go to the doctor quickly, or wait and see?
- Is being ill as an adult better or worse than being ill as a child? Why?

**Part 3. Look at these remedies. Which have you tried? Which do you swear by, and which sound like an old wives' tale? What does your family swear by?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Chicken soup | Honey and lemon |
| Ginger tea | A hot bath |
| Raw garlic | Vitamin C |
| Sleeping it off | Sweating it out under lots of blankets |
| A hot toddy (whisky, honey and lemon) | Going for a run to shake it off |

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**Part 4. Fact or old wives' tale? Tick your answer for each one and explain your thinking. Then check the answers with your teacher. Which one surprised you most?**

| | *Fact* | *Old wives' tale* | *Not sure* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. You lose most of your body heat through your head. | | | |
| 2. "Feed a cold, starve a fever." | | | |
| 3. Antibiotics help you get over a cold faster. | | | |
| 4. Chicken soup can help when you've got a cold. | | | |
| 5. Cold weather on its own makes you ill. | | | |
| 6. Washing your hands regularly helps you avoid catching colds. | | | |
| 7. Taking vitamin C every day stops you catching colds. | | | |

**Answers**

**1. Old wives' tale.** Your head loses heat like any other uncovered part of your body. It just feels that way because it's often the only part left uncovered.

**2. Old wives' tale.** With either, the usual advice is to drink plenty of fluids and eat if you feel like it.

**3. Old wives' tale.** Colds are caused by viruses, and antibiotics don't work on viruses.

**4. Partly true.** Warm soups and drinks can soothe a sore throat and help you feel better, but they don't cure a cold.

**5. Mostly an old wives' tale.** Colds are caused by viruses. We catch more in the colder months partly because we spend more time indoors, close together.

**6. Fact.** It's one of the simplest and most effective ways to stop colds spreading.

**7. Mostly an old wives' tale.** For most people it doesn't prevent colds, though it may shorten them slightly.

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**Part 5. Which would you rather? Choose one in each pair and explain why.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Staying in bed | *or* | carrying on as normal |
| Being looked after | *or* | being left alone |
| Asking a pharmacist | *or* | looking it up online |
| Taking medicine straight away | *or* | letting your body deal with it |
| Working from home while ill | *or* | taking a proper day off |

**Part 6. What would you do? Choose an option or come up with a better one.**

**You wake up with a sore throat and a pounding headache on the morning of an important presentation.**

1. *Soldier on and go in. You can rest later.*
2. *Ask to give the presentation online from home.*
3. *Ask a colleague to cover for you.*
4. *Postpone it. Your health comes first.*

**A colleague comes into the office coughing and sneezing everywhere. "It's just a cold," they say.**

1. *Say nothing and keep your distance.*
2. *Suggest, kindly, that they go home and rest.*
3. *Hand them some tissues with a meaningful smile.*
4. *Mention it to your manager.*

**Friends have invited you to a birthday dinner you've been looking forward to for weeks. You're feeling a bit rough.**

1. *Go anyway. It's only a cold.*
2. *Go, but leave early.*
3. *Cancel and send a little gift instead.*
4. *Join for a few minutes on a video call.*

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**Part 7. What's the worst thing about being ill? Number your top three and explain your choices.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Not being able to sleep | | A blocked nose | |
| Missing out on plans | | Feeling useless | |
| Losing your sense of taste | | Being on your own | |
| People telling you what to do | | The pile of work waiting afterwards | |

**Part 8. Do you agree, disagree or partly agree? Explain why.**

- People who come to work ill aren't dedicated, they're just spreading germs.
- Some people make a huge fuss over a little cold.
- You shouldn't need a doctor's note for a day or two off sick.
- Working from home has made it harder to take a proper sick day.
- Home remedies are more about comfort than cure.
- It's better to rest for two days than struggle on for a week.

**Part 9. Tell the story of a time you got ill at the worst possible moment: on holiday, before an exam, at a wedding, on the first day of a new job…**
**Think about:**

- Where you were and what was supposed to happen
- How you felt, and what you did
- Who helped, or didn't
- Whether you can laugh about it now

**Reflection**

**Complete the sentences in your own words.**

1. When I'm under the weather, the thing that helps me most is…
2. A remedy I swear by is…
3. One thing I'll do to stay well is…

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