

3.12 ESOL Health Care Tips

To the teacher:

- The list of tips on the following handout for your learners contains some basic helpful information about accessing health care in the U.S. that might not be obvious to your ESOL learners. Distribute the information to learners and go over the tips with them in class.
- While there is a lot of information on the page, it is information that can be *very helpful to lower level learners*. If the handout appears to be too much information for your learners to go over at one time, consider presenting a few tips at a time over several weeks. These tips can be paired well with the health literacy picture stories [Emergency!](#) and [A Doctor's Appointment](#).
- For more details on the right to a health care interpreter (Tip 2) and linguistically appropriate health care information, see the [National CLAS Standards](#), [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), and [Executive Order 13166](#), federal standards and mandates that apply to all health care organizations receiving federal funding.





ESOL Health Care Tips

At the hospital, you can ask for an interpreter like this:

- "I need an interpreter, please. I speak Spanish."

At the hospital, you can ask for a financial counselor like this:

- "I'd like to speak with a financial counselor, please."

1. See a doctor when health problems are small. Don't wait until small problems get big. Big problems are *very expensive* and *difficult to fix*.
2. Ask for an interpreter at the hospital or clinic.
The hospital or clinic **must** get an interpreter for you. It's the law.
3. If you go to the hospital and you don't have health insurance, ask to speak with a financial counselor. Sometimes a financial counselor can help make your hospital bill smaller.
4. If you don't have insurance, register for a low-cost clinic BEFORE you get sick.
5. Don't use children as interpreters at the doctor.
6. **Ask the doctor questions.** In the United States, doctor appointments are very quick. Plan your questions before you go to the doctor.
7. Write down or record what the doctor says.
8. Take another adult with you to the doctor. The other adult can help you ask questions and understand the doctor better.
9. Write a list of your health problems and all your medicines. Make a list for all the people in your family. Take the list to doctor appointments.
10. Tell the doctor if you take *herbs* or *vitamins*.
11. There is good health information on the Internet in English, Spanish, and other languages [Medline Plus](#) and Healthy [Roads Media](#).

