

3.13 Tips for Using a Health Clinic

To the teacher:

The following handout provides simplified basic information for learners about using low-cost and free clinics in Virginia. For lower level learners, go through the information with them box by box. The material can be used in many ways with higher level learners, as part of a reading comprehension exercise, for example, or as the basis for an information gap activity or a springboard for class discussion.

When and How to Find a Clinic

- Look for a clinic **before you get sick! Clinics are not for emergencies.** It can take weeks or months to get into a clinic.

- Some clinics have **wait lists for new patients.** Put your name on the wait list. Someone will call you when there is space at the clinic.
- Different clinics have different registration rules. **Ask what papers and information you need for registration.**
- Make a registration appointment.
- Take the necessary information with you to your registration appointment at the clinic.

Tips for Using a Health Clinic

How TO USE A



Costs at Clinics



Clinics are for people with no health insurance and little money. Some clinics are free; some cost a little money. You need to ask how much a clinic costs.



Some clinics have pharmacies with *low-cost* or *free* medicine. Some clinics do not have pharmacies. Some clinics can help you get low-cost medicine from other places.

Clinic Services

Clinics have different services. Ask which ones they offer. Some services may only be offered on certain days and times.



- Medical care
- Dental care
- Pediatric (children's health care)
- Women's health care
- Vision (eyes) and hearing (ears) care
- Case managers (social workers) to help you get the services that you need
- Low-cost pharmacies
- Mental health care
- Interpreters

What to Do Checklist

- Look for a clinic. Ask for registration information.
- Register yourself and your family at the clinic. (You may have to wait.)
- Make an appointment.
Ask for an interpreter when you make your appointment.
- Call and cancel your appointment if you can't go.

IMPORTANT!

- Some people do not have insurance but have a little too much money for a clinic. If you do not get a space in a clinic, when you are sick **try to see a private doctor.**
- Explain to the doctor's office that you don't have health insurance.
- Ask if the doctor can give you a **"self-pay discount."** Some doctors have lower costs for people without insurance.

