

IELTS vocabulary for health

Vocabulary for illness, diet and mental health from passages on smoking, stress and health geography, with phrases like 'disrupt sleep' and 'coping with stress' from our model answers.

Words

infection /ɪn'fekʃn/ (noun, B2) an illness caused by bacteria or a virus

In the future, our ability to manipulate microbes means we could construct buildings with useful microbes built into their walls to fight off infections.

chronic /'krɒnɪk/ (adjective, C1) (of illness) lasting a long time or keeps returning

Further, it has recently been shown that rhesus monkeys kept on caloric-restricted diets for an extended time (nearly 15 years) have less chronic disease.

obesity /əʊ'bi:səti/ (noun, B2) being so overweight that it harms your health

And research has found that access to even the most basic green spaces can provide a better quality of life for dementia sufferers and help people avoid obesity.

symptom /'sɪmptəm/ (noun, B2) a sign that someone has an illness

In a study of over 200 patients with Alzheimer's disease, a degenerative brain disease, bilingual patients reported showing initial symptoms of the disease an average of five years later than monolingual patients.

immune /ɪ'mju:n/ (adjective, C1) not affected by a disease, poison or chemical

Not to be left behind are the disease-spreading pests, about 100 species of which have become immune to a variety of insecticides now in use.

nutrition /nju'trɪʃn/ (noun, B2) the food you eat and how it affects your health

Improvements in childhood nutrition in the first quarter of the twentieth century, for example, gave today's elderly people a better start in life than their predecessors.

mortality /mɔ:'tæləti/ (noun, C1) the number of deaths in a group or period

Macfarlane says: "The infant mortality rate halved in the space of 20 years, and this happened in both rural areas and cities, and across all classes.

epidemic /,epɪ'demɪk/ (noun, C1) a disease that spreads quickly to many people, animals or plants

A first epidemic, which occurred in the 1920s, gradually died down, but in the '70s a second epidemic was triggered by shipments of elm from Canada.

outbreak /'aʊtbreɪk/ (noun, B2) the sudden start of a disease or something unpleasant

In 2015, an outbreak of haemorrhagic septicaemia, caused by the normally harmless bacterium Pasteurella multocida, killed over 75% of the global adult saiga population in just three weeks.

antibiotic /,æntɪbaɪ'ɒtɪk/ (noun, B2) a medicine that kills bacteria

Our obsession with hygiene, our overuse of antibiotics and our unhealthy, low-fibre diets are disrupting the bacterial balance and may be responsible for soaring rates of allergies and immune problems, such as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

pharmaceutical /,fɑ:mə'su:tɪkl/ (noun, C1) medicines, or the businesses that make them

Pharmaceuticals is one of the most profitable industries in North America.

cardiovascular /,kɑ:diəʊ'væskjələ/ (adjective, C1) relating to the heart and blood vessels

When we are exposed to too much noise over the long term, however, those responses can lead to a multitude of health issues, from sleep disturbance to even cardiovascular disease.

respiratory /rə'spɪrətəri/ (adjective, C1) relating to breathing and the lungs

She says families who switch to the smokeless cooking method could expect fewer respiratory diseases.

ailment /'eɪlmənt/ (noun, C1) a minor illness

Cinnamon was also reported to have health benefits, and was thought to cure various ailments, such as indigestion.

prescribe /prɪ'skraɪb/ (verb, C1) (of a doctor) to say what medicine someone should take

In Europe, only orthodox doctors can prescribe herbal medicine.

well-being /,wel 'bi:ɪŋ/ (noun, B2) a state of good health and happiness

"Wetlands directly support the livelihoods and well-being of millions of people," says Dr Matthew McCartney, principal researcher and hydrologist at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

anxiety /æŋ'zaɪəti/ (noun, B2) a feeling of worry and nervousness

A tendency to procrastinate is linked to poor mental health, including higher levels of depression and anxiety.

fatigue /fə'ti:g/ (noun, C1) great tiredness of body or mind

Apparently, unpredictable noise produces more fatigue than predictable noise, but it takes a while for this fatigue to take its toll on performance.

expectancy /ɪk'spektənsi/ (noun, C1) (with "life") the number of years someone will probably live

The average captive animal will have a greater life expectancy compared with its wild counterpart, and will not die of drought, of starvation or in the jaws of a predator.

disorder /dɪs'ɔ:də/ (noun, C1) an illness or condition that affects the mind or body

In my previous research, I investigated how observing children at play can give us important clues about their well-being and can even be useful in the diagnosis of neurodevelopmental disorders like autism."

psychological /,saɪkə'lɒdʒɪkl/ (adjective, B2) relating to the mind and feelings

Not only are the physical demands greater than most people could handle, athletes also face intense psychological pressure during competition.

hormone /'hɔ:məʊn/ (noun, B2) a chemical made in the body that controls its functions

Our blood pressure goes up, muscles tense and glands release hormones that prepare us for fight or flight.

dementia /dɪ'menʃə/ (noun, C1) a brain illness that causes memory loss, often in old age

Other diseases of old age - dementia, stroke, arteriosclerosis and emphysema - are also troubling fewer and fewer people.

Phrases for Speaking and Writing

blood pressure the force of blood moving through your body

I'd just started my first office job, I was spending ten hours a day at a desk, and a routine check-up showed my blood pressure was creeping up.

routine check-up a regular medical examination

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out of breath breathing fast after physical effort

A colleague who ran regularly talked me into joining her for a five-kilometre loop around a lake near our office, and I remember being completely out of breath after the first kilometre.

keep fit staying healthy through regular exercise

So it's become far more than a way of keeping fit.

clear your head stop worrying and think more calmly

I was going through a fairly stressful period at university, and I started going for long walks in the evenings to clear my head.

regular physical activity doing exercise often

Nevertheless, I largely agree that regular physical activity improves academic performance, and I believe a modest shift in the timetable towards exercise is justified.

cope with stress dealing successfully with pressure and worry

In addition, sport is an effective way of coping with stress.

vigorous exercise hard physical activity that raises your heart rate

A child who has been sitting at a desk since eight in the morning absorbs very little by mid-afternoon, whereas even a short spell of vigorous exercise tends to sharpen alertness and lift mood.

lift your mood make you feel happier

A child who has been sitting at a desk since eight in the morning absorbs very little by mid-afternoon, whereas even a short spell of vigorous exercise tends to sharpen alertness and lift mood.

disrupt sleep stop someone from sleeping well

In addition, using a phone late at night is known to disrupt sleep, which affects both physical and mental health.

physical and mental health the health of both your body and mind

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go through a period of burnout have a time of exhaustion from too much work or stress

It follows a South African filmmaker called Craig Foster, who was going through a period of burnout and decided to start free-diving every day in a cold kelp forest near his home.

emergency department the hospital section for urgent, serious cases

He trained as a nurse straight after school and spent most of his career in the emergency department of a busy public hospital, which is an incredibly demanding job.

health risks possible dangers to health

Beyond tennis, I also respect the way she's spoken out about issues like equal pay for women and the health risks Black women face during childbirth, even when it attracted criticism.

have a calming effect make someone feel relaxed

I've read that green is supposed to reduce stress, and while I'm not sure how scientific that is, it certainly has a calming effect on me.

unwind after work relax after a working day

It's also quite sociable, because we normally grab something to eat after we've finished, so it's a nice way to unwind after work.