

IELTS Speaking Topic – Health and well-being #3

This is a sample response for IELTS Speaking Part 2 and 3. In addition to the model answer there are highlighted words and phrases. **Teal** is for vocabulary relating to this topic, **yellow** is for generally useful words and phrases.

IELTS Speaking Part 2

Describe a time when you had to take care of someone who was sick or injured

You should say:

- what was wrong with their health
- how you had to take care of them
- how long you did that for

and say if they recovered fully.

Model answer

I haven't had any experience of **looking after** sick people, so instead I'll share a story about my pet who got hit by a car. It happened many years ago when I was a teen. We lived in a small town with very few cars - we didn't even have proper roads **to start with**. Anyway, I was walking with my dog and it just so happened that a car out of nowhere rushed past us and the dog barely managed to avoid getting hit. They did hit one of his **hind** paws.

The dog **limped back** home with me, **whimpering**. Later that day we took it to an **x-ray** and it turned out to be a **fractured bone**. The vet put a **splint** on it to prevent the broken ends from moving and instructed me on how to take care of the dog. I had to make sure it lies still for at least a week and I had to see to him having food and water right next to him at all times. The challenging task was to keep dog from moving too much, because he was very active. Well, after a week the dog made almost **full recovery**. I guess we both learned a valuable lesson to pay extra attention whenever we are in **immediate vicinity** to roads and motorways.

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Health and age

How does a person's health change as they grow older?

It is **a common sentiment** that as you age you inevitably grow weak and **frail** and eventually fall apart. While it may be true for some, it is not necessarily the path everyone has to go down. If you keep exercising and challenge your mind, neither of those will ever let you down. The expression **"use it or lose it"** exists for a reason. Of course, age does **impose** certain limits. Senior citizens have to **fight an uphill battle** against lowering testosterone or estrogen levels and general hormonal shifts. This shouldn't mean that it is a fight not worth fighting though. There are many living examples of people in their later stages of life who still look and think almost as good as they did in their forties.

To sum up, I believe that ultimately it comes down to your lifestyle choices and your idea of **sustainable** health. Strong mind and body are not programmed to go downhill after a certain cut-off age - that is, unless you tell them to. So if one sets out to remain a well-functioning member of society, there should be little to stop them.

What can the government do to improve quality of life for older people?

Two most common issues older people face are related to their finances and health. I believe both of these could be

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alleviated with enough support from the state. The second issue could be made better in a variety of ways. For instance, government could make healthcare more affordable to senior citizens through **subsidies**, free drugs as well as preventive care that would stop more serious health conditions development. Addressing financial struggles of the elderly might prove more challenging. For instance, the government might consider establishing additional pensions funds to contribute to the retirement money old people have. A good idea would be to make it directly proportional to their employment history to make it more fair for those who worked harder. This would also **incentivise** adults to stay employed longer in order to **reap the benefits** of such programs.

How do attitudes towards aging and health vary across different cultures?

I will risk making some **sweeping statements** here - I think the western culture in general has less respect for the elderly than the eastern culture. Asian cultural groups in particular tend to **look up to** the seniors as sources of wisdom and experience. They see age and aging as blessing rather than an inevitable, unpleasant fact of life. The West mostly focuses on the perks and merits of the youth. Attractiveness, **boundless** energy and great learning capacity are the main things westerners **laud** in younger people. Another good example is cultures of the Middle East, where old age is connected to **elevated** spirituality and religiousness.

All in all it seems that most cultures have **prevalently** positive attitude to both old people and aging. I **concur** with this point of view - I'd say it would be silly to see the final years of your life as something dreadful. Instead it is a good time **to reflect on** things that you have done and all the experiences you have had.

Attitude to health

How can a person's attitude towards health affect their overall well-being?

Caring about your health can bring nothing but positive effects. Following a balanced diet rich in **nutrients** and avoiding **processed foods** will make sure that you get enough **daily intake** of all the necessary vitamins and minerals. You have no idea how much your productivity and mood are affected by what you eat. Exercising or otherwise exposing yourself to reasonable physical activity infuses you with **endorphins** which makes you happy and full of the sense of purpose. Finally, staying away from drugs and alcohol - I think that goes without saying. Nobody would seriously consider taking these substances if they were aware of how much long-lasting damage they cause.

Sure, you can miss out on social parties that revolve around alcohol, but it is worth the price. You might want to miss the joy of **pigging out on** fast food, but that joy is **fleeting** and has serious consequences. Laying on the couch all weekend might seem fun for a while, but the effects of passive lifestyle will soon follow, especially as you grow older. At the end of the day it's all about your attitude to you mind and body and how far ahead you can think to understand the impact of decisions you make today.

Does social media and the Internet affect our health? If so, are these effects positive or negative?

I think the problem with both is that they are awfully addictive. One of the issues that stems from spending too much time online is increasingly **sedentary** lifestyle. We spend a mindblowing part of our day **hunched over** at the computer screen or **slouched** on the couch scrolling your phone **news feed**. People of today often do not feel **compelled** to go outside, because evidently the most engaging events take place online, not in the real world. **Bad posture** affects our spine and leads to conditions like scoliosis. I guess it is also obvious that the eyes go through a lot of **strain** and you often become myopic - or shortsighted. Finally, staying indoors too much means you do not get enough sun, which is a rich natural source of vitamin D - one that makes you feel better and has many other benefits.

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Should schools pay more attention to educating students on the importance of staying healthy?

Well yes, they probably should. However, I think this responsibility should not lie on schools exclusively. I believe that **propagating** the idea of healthy lifestyle has to take place at home, work as well as your place of study. It has been scientifically proven that we are more likely to follow advice of a person we **hold in high regard**. Unfortunately, with teachers it is **not always the case** - some students might **resent** theirs or studying in general. That is why it has to come from somebody one respects - maybe it is their family or colleagues - it can **vary** from one individual to another.

All things considered, spreading the knowledge about health and its importance has numerous benefits. One that deserves particular attention is that a healthy individual contributes more to society as a whole. They are more productive and creative, eager to work overtime and participate in their community. Financial aspect of healthcare is not to be **overlooked** either - we all know how crazy high those hospital bills can get. Finally, I guess very few would spend their time in a hospital bed voluntarily.

Health and well-being vocabulary

Look after (phr v) - to take care of somebody, especially if they can't do that themselves. *Pet shelters are always on the lookout for volunteers willing to look after the animals.*

Limp back - to limp means to step carefully because one of the limbs is damaged. To limp back means to return somewhere slowly and carefully because of an injury or a damage. Can be used figuratively. *My car barely started so I had to limp it back home.*

Fractured bone - the term 'fractured' is a more medical one and means 'broken'. *Fractured bones heal much easier if you are younger.*

Splint (n) - a special medical casing that tightens two pieces of a fractured bone in place so they don't move, to prevent from damaging surrounding tissues and help recovery.

Full recovery - if somebody has recovered fully it means they are back to normal. *Full recovery from this illness might take years.*

Frail (adj) - weak and easily damaged or broken. *With age, bones become porous and much more frail.*

Nutrients (n) - substances that feed our body with elements necessary for survival. *This bread is rich with nutrients even though it is not that tasty.*

Processed foods - types of food that undergo chemical treatment to last longer. Used negatively. *Dietologists suggest avoiding processed foods even if it means paying extra for alternatives.*

Daily intake - a total amount of something that you eat or drink during the day. *I am trying to cut down on my daily carb intake to lose some weight.*

Endorphins (n) - natural hormones released during painful or stressful situations. They act like painkillers to mitigate the negative effects of such situations.

Pig out on - to eat something in great amount, especially because of stress or as part of binge eating.

Sedentary (adj) - characterised by low mobility and spending a lot of time sitting. *His job is pretty sedentary - he sits at his desk and answers phone calls 10 hours a day.*

Hunch over (phr v) - to sit with your head and neck extended forward relative to the rest of your body. *If your eyesight is poor you tend to hunch over when working with computers.*

Slouch (v) - to sit or lie with your back not firmly against the back of the chair or sofa. Leads to poor posture.

Strain (n) - pain or discomfort caused by overstretching or overuse of a muscle or tendon, such as during physical activity or sports.

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General vocabulary

To start with - to begin with, in the first place. *In order to be fired from work I would need to find one to start with.*

Hind (adj) - (about limbs) relating to the back; rear. *Hind legs of hares are extremely strong and allow quick locomotion by leaping over great distances.*

Whimper (n) - a low high animals like dogs make when they are physically hurt or very upset. *I could hear a dog whimper in a dark alley next to the park.*

Immediate vicinity - very close or right next to something. *There are no shops in the vicinity, we might have to walk a while to find one at this late hour.*

A common sentiment - a popular idea held by many people. *The common sentiment nowadays is that jobs related to programming might be taken over by the AI relatively soon.*

Use it or lose it - an idiomatic expression that means if you don't use something like a skill you tend to forget it or get worse at it.

Impose (v) - to introduce certain rules or limitations, especially if you have authority in the matter. *The imposed sanctions hit the country's economy rather hard.*

Fight an uphill battle - to deal with a task or a problem that is especially difficult due to certain factors. *Many countries fight an uphill battle to save the economy while keeping unemployment at an acceptably low level.*

Sustainable (adj) - something that can be maintained for extended periods of time. *Investing in sustainable sources of energy is a lucrative business and it is attractive ethically.*

Alleviate (v) - to make something worse slightly better. *Take the pill three times a day to alleviate pain.*

Subsidy (n) - a financial initiative by some body such as the government to partially or fully cover the cost of something. *Manufacturing subsidies help small businesses start making things without exposing themselves to much financial risks.*

Incentivise (v) - to make something more attractive through various means. *To incentivise getting better marks I take my kids to ice-cream parlour as long as their marks are good.*

Look up to - to respect and try to learn something from people who are older or more experience/successful than you are.

Boundless (adj) - limitless, seemingly infinite. *His boundless energy comes from enthusiasm and youthfulness.*

Laud (v) - praise somebody. *The committee lauded the girl for showing exemplary academic performance throughout the year.*

Reap the benefits - to benefit from something that was done before by either you or somebody else. *My children will hopefully get to reap the benefits of my investments.*

Sweeping statement - a generalisation that due to its nature might be unfair or untrue for all cases. *To say that all Asian students are great at Math is a sweeping statement.*

Elevated (adj) - higher than usual, either literally or figuratively. *Jose's elevated mood was mostly because of his recent success with girls.*

Prevalently (adv) - (here) mostly, predominantly. *A prevalently middle-class neighbourhood.*

Concur (v) - to agree, to have the same opinion.

To reflect on smth - (here) to think about something carefully, to analyse it. *You should take your time and reflect on your achievements before moving forward.*

Fleeting (adj) - passing, disappearing quickly. *The fleeting sensation of grand celebration was gone shortly after the opening ceremony.*

News feed - a list of news and events that gets updated in real time, usually as a part of interface in some app or piece of software.

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Compelled (adj) - motivated, forced to do something.

Propagate (v) - to spread something, such as a belief or an idea.

Hold in high regard - to respect somebody or think highly of them. *We should hold all of our teachers in high regard for the immense contribution to our lives.*

To be the case - to be so, to be the way it is. *Jane is usually the first to answer teacher's question, but today wasn't the case. Jason, the new student, was much quicker to find the right answer.*

Resent (v) - to dislike something bitterly. *I resent doing math homework because I hardly understand anything in it.*

Vary (v) - to be different. Pronunciation is very similar to 'very'. *Watermelons can vary in shapes and sizes depending on their variation.*

Overlook (v) - to fail to notice something.