

# A BRIEF CULTURAL COMPETENCY GUIDE FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Multicultural  
& multi-ethnic approach

NHMA

National Hispanic Medical Association

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# OBJECTIVES

## Ponder on this...

This cultural competency guide is designed to serve as a resource for medical students at the outset of their careers and healthcare professionals at all levels of practice.

As you engage with this guide, we encourage you to reflect on the following aspects of patient care: **How can we better train medical students and healthcare providers to communicate effectively with their patients? How can we refine interviewing techniques to minimize patient anxiety and foster trust? And how can we optimize clinical encounters to ensure patients adhere to prescribed treatments, complete necessary labs and imaging, and return for follow-up care?** By addressing these questions, this guide aims to promote culturally responsive care and enhance the quality of interactions between providers and patients, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes.

# WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCY?

In healthcare, **cultural competency** describes the capacity to provide effective care that respects and welcomes the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of diverse patient populations. Achieving this requires healthcare systems and providers to recognize and value diversity, engage in self-assessment, and adapt services to address the unique needs of various communities. While providers play a vital role in fostering culturally responsive care, healthcare systems must ensure access to resources and structural support to share this responsibility. This ongoing effort at both the organizational and individual levels is essential for delivering equitable, respectful, and effective care to all patients.

## **What is Cultural Humility and why is it an important framework?**

Cultural humility is the ongoing self-reflection and commitment to learning that emphasizes recognizing and addressing personal biases, power imbalances, and systemic inequities in relationships and systems. Unlike cultural competency, which focuses on acquiring knowledge and skills about different cultures, cultural humility prioritizes ongoing growth, listening without assumptions, and fostering equitable, respectful relationships. While cultural competency aims to develop cross-cultural understanding, cultural humility complements it by acknowledging that cultural learning is never complete and centers the lived experiences of individuals and communities. **Together, they promote meaningful and inclusive engagement across diverse cultural contexts.**

This toolkit uses the theoretical framework described above in order to introduce five key categories of cultural competency considerations in healthcare: **communication problems, time and attention constraints, beliefs and biases, education disparity issues, and cultural diversity challenges.**

# 1. COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

**Communication problems** related to cultural competence arise when there are misunderstandings or misinterpretations due to differences in language, cultural norms, and communication styles. These issues can include language barriers where patients and providers struggle to understand each other, differing cultural expectations about how information should be conveyed or received, and variations in non-verbal communication cues. Such problems can lead to reduced patient satisfaction, lower adherence to treatment plans, and potentially adverse health outcomes. Effective cultural competence involves addressing these communication challenges by using clear, culturally appropriate language, employing professional interpreters when needed, and being sensitive to the diverse ways in which individuals express themselves and understand information.

For instance, some cultures may expect more direct communication, while others may prioritize indirect or deferential exchanges.

**Non-Verbal Communication:** Variations in gestures, eye contact, and body language can lead to misinterpretation, creating unintended discomfort or distrust. These challenges can result in reduced patient satisfaction, lower adherence to treatment plans, and potentially adverse health outcomes.



## 2. TIME AND ATTENTION PROBLEMS

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Doctors' time constraints, limited bandwidth, and immediate interruptions can significantly impact cultural competency in healthcare. Due to the fast-paced nature of medical practice and the pressure to manage numerous tasks within limited timeframes, doctors may struggle to fully engage with each patient's cultural needs. This can lead to superficial interactions where cultural nuances are overlooked or inadequately addressed. Immediate interruptions, such as emergency calls or administrative tasks, can further disrupt the continuity of care and hinder effective communication. To mitigate these issues, healthcare systems can implement strategies like scheduled time for cultural competency training, the use of support staff or interpreters to handle specific tasks, and integrated systems for managing patient information that allow doctors to better prepare for and address cultural considerations during consultations. Ensuring that healthcare providers have adequate resources and time to address cultural factors is crucial for delivering comprehensive and respectful care.

### **Impact of Time Constraints:**

The fast-paced nature of medical practice and limited time per patient can hinder doctors' ability to address cultural nuances effectively. Superficial interactions often result when cultural needs are not adequately prioritized or understood.

### **Bandwidth Challenges:**

The multitude of responsibilities, including administrative tasks, emergency calls, and patient care, creates bandwidth issues for healthcare providers. These challenges disrupt continuity of care and reduce opportunities for meaningful engagement with patients' cultural contexts.

### **Role of Immediate Interruptions:**

Frequent interruptions compromise effective communication and the ability to address cultural concerns thoroughly. These disruptions exacerbate the difficulties in creating a patient-centered, culturally aware care environment.

# 3. BELIEFS AND BIASES PROBLEMS

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Belief systems significantly impact cultural competency in healthcare as they shape how individuals perceive health, illness, and treatment. Cultural competence involves recognizing and respecting these diverse belief systems, which can vary widely across different racial, ethnic, and social groups. For example, phrases like “Si Dios quiere” (God willing) reflect deeply rooted spiritual or religious beliefs that influence patients' views on health and outcomes. Similarly, some cultures may prioritize traditional healing practices over conventional medicine or hold unique perspectives on the causes and treatments of illness.

## **Healthcare providers can address these beliefs effectively by:**

- Understanding the role of faith and spirituality: Acknowledge how beliefs influence health behaviors and respect their importance to the patient.
- Incorporating cultural beliefs into care plans: Align medical advice with the patient’s cultural or spiritual framework to improve acceptance and adherence.
- Encouraging open dialogue: Ask respectful questions like, “Are there any cultural or spiritual practices important to you as we discuss your care?”
- Training staff in cultural competency: Equip providers to navigate sensitive discussions empathetically and respectfully.

By integrating these considerations into care, providers can build trust, improve patient engagement, and enhance treatment outcomes, ensuring care is both effective and culturally relevant.

# 4. EDUCATION DISPARITY PROBLEMS

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Education disparities can hinder cultural competency in healthcare, creating gaps in understanding between patients and providers.

Patients with varying health literacy levels may struggle to comprehend medical information, follow treatment plans, or engage in healthy behaviors. Providers, in turn, may face challenges in effectively communicating with these patients, leading to poor outcomes and mistrust in the healthcare system.

For example, a patient with limited health literacy may struggle to interpret instructions like “complete the full course of antibiotics,” risking incomplete treatment and poor outcomes. Similarly, a lack of familiarity with preventive care concepts, such as routine screenings or vaccination schedules, may lead patients to prioritize acute issues over long-term health.

- **Simplify Communication:** Use plain language and avoid medical jargon to ensure patients understand health information. Employ visual aids and demonstrations to enhance comprehension.
- **Use Teach-Back Methods:** Ask patients to repeat instructions in their own words to confirm understanding and address any confusion in real-time. This ensures clarity and reinforces key health messages.
- **Collaborate with Community Health Workers:** Engage community health workers who understand local languages and cultural nuances to act as liaisons between patients and providers, improving trust and communication

Implementing these strategies can help mitigate the impact of education disparities, leading to improved health outcomes, decreased anxiety and overall patient satisfaction.



# 5. CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY CHALLENGES

Cultural and linguistic diversity can further compound on the challenges described above. Assuming all Hispanic/Latino patients speak Spanish can alienate those who primarily speak indigenous languages or have limited Spanish proficiency. For example, patients from Guatemala may speak K'iche' or Q'eqchi', while others in Texas may not speak Spanish at all. Similarly, Afro-Latinos and other subgroups may have unique cultural identities that require tailored approaches.

An additional layer of complexity arises from **regionalisms in medical terminology**, as the same word or phrase may carry different meanings across Spanish-speaking countries. For example, a "resfriado" (common cold) is understood widely, but in Mexico and Colombia, "gripa" is used instead, while in Spain, "catarro" is more common. Similarly, "calentura" is often used for fever in Central America and the Caribbean, whereas "fiebre" is standard in other regions. These linguistic nuances can lead to miscommunication if not addressed. The section on regionalisms at the end of this guide offers a practical reference to help healthcare providers navigate these differences.

## **To address cultural and linguistic challenges, providers should:**

- Ask about language preferences respectfully to avoid assumptions.
- Use educational materials at appropriate literacy levels and in relevant languages, including indigenous ones.
- Recognize the diversity within Hispanic/Latino communities to foster trust and improve care.

Adopting these strategies can bridge educational and cultural gaps, enhancing outcomes for diverse patient populations.

What follows is a list of resources from the **Journal of the National Hispanic Medical Association** and other organizations, agencies and individual researchers, that serve as an invaluable resource hub to better understand and dig deeper into the theoretical framework around cultural competency, language, and its intersection with health outcomes.

## FROM OUR JOURNAL

# JNHMA

Journal of the  
National Hispanic  
Medical Association



**A Call for the Professionalization of Medical Language Education to Prevent Misuse of Limited Language Skills and Ad-hoc Interpretation**



**Medical Student and Faculty Attitudes Toward Translanguaging with Spanish-Speaking Patients**



**Concurrent Validity of the PHQ-9 in English and Spanish**



**Estimating the Impact of Limited English Language Proficiency on Mental Health Services for Spanish Speakers in the United States**

# FROM OUR JOURNAL (CONT.)

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# JNHMA

Journal of the  
National Hispanic  
Medical Association



Medication Concordance of  
Low-Income, Hispanic Patients  
at a Volunteer Clinic



Perceptions of Accent  
Modification Programs:  
Assimilation or Racism?



The Association of Patient-  
Provider Language  
Concordance with  
Healthcare Comprehension  
Among Mexican-origin  
Latino/as in Oregon



A Virtual Pilot of a  
Multispecialty Group Mentoring  
Program for Underrepresented  
in Medicine (URiM) Trainees  
and Faculty

# WEBINARS

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE & THE FUTURE OF THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

[CLICK HERE](#) 



**Ashanda Saint Jean, MD**  
*Moderator*

Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Health Alliance Hospitals of the Hudson Valley



**Winston Wong, MD, MS, FAAFP**

Chair and Acting CEO  
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians; Alliance of Multicultural Physicians



**Pilar Ortega, MD, MGM**

Vice President, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education



**Francisco Moreno, MD**

Associate Vice President at the University of Arizona Health Science, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



[CLICK HERE](#) 

## Hispanic Heritage Month Roundtable Webinar

— A Roundtable for Upcoming Latino Physicians —

# Increasing Physicians and Medical Education

Join us in this important discussion on the need for workforce diversity.



**Juanita Mora, MD**  
CEO/Physician, Chicago Allergy Center  
National Medical Spokesperson, American Lung Association



**José R. Cucalón Calderón, MD**  
Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine  
Chair, NHMA NV Chapter



**Geraldine Luna, MD, MPH, MBAC**  
Medical Director, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access Bureau, Chicago Department of Public Health



**Michael Galvez, MD, FACS**  
Director of Pediatric Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery, Valley Children's Hospital

# MORE EXTERNAL RESOURCES



[Providing Equitable Care for Patients With Non-English Language Preference in Telemedicine: Training on Working With Interpreters in Telehealth](#)

[Anti-Racist Transformation in Medical Education](#)

[Lost in Translation: An OSCE-Based Workshop for Helping Learners Navigate a Limited English Proficiency Patient Encounter](#)

[Use the Teach-Back Method](#)

[The Patient Explanatory Mode](#)

[Roadmap for Trauma-Informed Medical Education: Introducing an Essential Competency Set](#)

[Cultural Competency Deployment Refresher](#)

[Practicing Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility in the Care of Diverse Patients](#)

[Racial and Ethnic Differences in Patient Perceptions of Bias and Cultural Competence in Health Care](#)

[Cultural Competency in Health Care: Emerging Frameworks and Practical Approaches](#)

[A Practical Guide for Implementing the Digital Healthcare Equity Framework](#)

[Language Barriers and Health Care Disparities: A Review of the Literature](#)

# GLOSSARY

## DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

**GREETING THE PATIENT**

**GETTING TO KNOW THE PATIENT**

**BUILDING RAPPORT/ FIRST STEPS**

*PEDIATRIC (PARENTS/GUARDIAN)*

**PATIENT SCREENING**

*PATIENT WITH PAIN*

*GENERAL SYMPTOMS*

*PATIENT WITH WOUND*

**PREGNANCY SCREENING**

**APPOINTMENT NEXT STEPS**

*TESTS/ LABS*

*OTHER*

## DENTAL

**DENTAL (A-Z)**

*COMMON DENTAL APPOINTMENT PHRASES*

## MEDICINES

**COMMON MEDICINES (A-Z)**

*MEDICINE INSTRUCTIONS TO PATIENT*

## VOCABULARY

**COMMON SYMPTOMS**

**COMMON DISEASES/ ILLNESSES**

**COMMON INJURIES**

**MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

**SEXUAL HEALTH**

**WOMEN'S HEALTH**

**HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

**BODY PARTS\***

## REGIONALISMS

# DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

## ENGLISH - SPANISH

### GREETING THE PATIENT

Hi, I'm Doctor\* (YOUR NAME), nice to meet you

- Nurse = enfermero / enfermera (-o for men, -a for women)
- Paramedic = paramédico
- PA\* = asociado médico
- NP\* = enfermero practicante / enfermera practicante

What brings you in today?

How can I help you?

I'll be in charge of your care today

Hola, soy el/la Doctor(a)\* \_\_\_\_, mucho gusto

- Nurse = enfermero / enfermera (-o for men, -a for women)
- Paramedic = paramédico
- PA\* = asociado médico
- NP\* = enfermero practicante / enfermera practicante

¿Por qué ha venido hoy?

¿En que le puedo ayudar?

Voy a estar encargado de su cuidado el día de hoy

### GETTING TO KNOW THE PATIENT

What is your name?

What type of work do you do?

Who came with you today?

When was your last visit?

Are there any cultural, religious or ethnic concerns that could affect the care for you today?

¿Cuál es su nombre?

¿En que trabaja?

¿Quién vino con usted el día de hoy?

¿Cuándo fue su última visita?

¿Hay algún motivo cultural, religioso o étnico que pudiera afectar su cuidado el día de hoy?

### BUILDING RAPPORT / FIRST STEPS

I'm going to take of your blood pressure

I'm going to take of your temperature

Please stand on the scale

Lie down on the examination table please

I am here to check your vital signs: the temperature, the blood pressure, and the pulse

I am going to help you put on the examination gown

What medications do you take?

Do you have any chronic illness?

Do you have diabetes?

Do you have any medication allergies?  
(YES) What was the reaction?

Do you have any habit such as: smoking, drinking alcohol, or using psychotropic drugs?

Have you had any heart problems?

Does anyone in the family have cancer, hypertension, diabetes, or asthma?

Open your mouth, stick out the tongue, and say "aah"

Voy a tomar su presión sanguínea

Voy a tomar su temperatura

Por favor párese en la balanza

Acuéstese en la camilla por favor

Vengo a revisar sus signos vitales: temperatura, la presión arterial, y el pulso

Le voy a ayudar a ponerse la bata de examen

¿Qué medicamentos toma?

¿Tiene alguna enfermedad crónica?

¿Tiene diabetes?

¿Tiene alergia a algún medicamento?  
(SI) ¿Cuál es/fue la reacción?

¿Tiene algún hábito como: fumar, beber alcohol, o usar drogas psicotrópicas?

¿Ha tenido problemas en el corazón?

¿Alguien en la familia tiene o ha tenido: cáncer, hipertensión, diabetes, o asma?

Abra la boca, saque la lengua, y diga "aah"

## ENGLISH - SPANISH

## PEDIATRIC (PARENT/GUARDIAN)

Have there been changes in the child's health in the past year?

Is the child taking any medication?

Does the child have any medication allergies? (YES) What was the reaction?

Are your child's immunizations up to date?

Are there any cultural, religious or ethnic concerns that could affect the care of your child today?

How old is the child?

¿En el último año ha habido algún problema con la salud de su hijo?

¿Esta su hijo tomando algún medicamento?

¿Su hijo tiene alergia a algún medicamento? (SI) ¿Cual es/fue la reacción?

¿Están al día las vacunas de su hijo?

¿Hay algún motivo cultural, religioso o étnico que pudiese afectar el cuidado de su hijo el día de hoy?

¿Cuántos años tiene el niño?

## PATIENT SCREENING

## PATIENT WITH PAIN

Do you have any pain?

For how long have you had pain? Is it acute or chronic?

Where does it hurt?

How is the pain: pulsatile, continuous, sharp, colicky, with pressure, intermittent?

Have you taken or done anything to solve this problem?

Do you have difficulty breathing?

Do you have chest pain or do you feel tired after some effort?

¿Tiene algún dolor?

¿Desde cuándo tiene dolor? ¿Es agudo o crónico?

¿Dónde le duele?

¿Cómo es el dolor: pulsátil, continuo, lacerante, cólico, opresivo, intermitente?

¿Ha tomado o hecho algo para solucionar este problema?

¿Siente dificultad para respirar?

¿Siente dificultad para respirar? ¿Le da dolor en el pecho o se siente cansado después de algún esfuerzo?

## GENERAL SYMPTOMS

Have you had fever, vomit and/or diarrhea?

How long have you had fever?

How many times have you vomited?

When did the diarrhea begin?

Have you had vision problems?

Have you felt dizzy?

Has your head hurt you recently?

Have you had appetite loss?

¿Ha tenido fiebre, vómito y/o diarrea?

¿Hace cuánto tiene fiebre?

¿Cuántas veces ha vomitado?

¿Cuándo empezó la diarrea?

¿Ha tenido problemas con la vista?

¿Se ha sentido mareado?

¿Le ha dolido la cabeza últimamente?

¿Ha tenido pérdida de apetito?

## PATIENT WITH WOUND

Was the wound caused by an object: cutting, stabbing (as a puncture), or blunt (dull)?

How much time has the wound been open?

La herida la recibió con un objeto: ¿cortante, punzante, o romo?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado abierta la herida?

## PREGNANCY SCREENING

Is this your first pregnancy?

Have you had any problems with this pregnancy?

How many times have you delivered?

Have they been natural (vaginal) or c-sections?

Have you had abortions or miscarriage?

- How many abortions have you had?
- Were they planned or spontaneous?

¿Es su primer embarazo?

¿Ha tenido problemas con este embarazo?

¿Cuántos partos ha tenido?

¿Fueron partos naturales (vaginales) o cesáreas?

¿Ha tenido algún aborto o pérdida espontánea?

- ¿Cuántos abortos ha tenido?
- ¿Fueron planeados o espontáneos?



## ENGLISH - SPANISH

## APPOINTMENT NEXT STEPS

Your next appointment is \_\_\_\_ (DATE)

Su proxima cita es \_\_\_\_

## TESTS/ LABS

We need a \_\_\_\_ test:  
blood / urine / spinal fluid / stool test

Go to the laboratory with this order

Necesitamos una prueba de \_\_\_\_:  
sangre / orina / líquido de la médula espinal / heces

Vaya al laboratorio con esta orden

## OTHER

We will stabilize the fracture with a plaster cast  
immobilization

Return in \_\_\_\_ days to remove the stitches from the wound

It is necessary to sign a consent for treatment

Estabilizaremos la fractura con una inmovilización de yeso

Regrese en \_\_\_\_ días para retirar los puntos de sutura de la  
herida

Es necesario firmar un consentimiento para el tratamiento

## DENTAL

## A-Z

<b>B</b>	<b>Braces</b>	Brackets/ Frenillos/ Correctores
<b>C</b>	<b>Cavity Cheek</b>	Caries Mejillas
<b>D</b>	<b>Dental Crown Denture</b>	Corona Dental Dentadura
<b>F</b>	<b>Floss Fluoride</b>	Seda Dental Flúor
<b>G</b>	<b>Gingival Swelling Gums</b>	Inflamación de las encías Encías
<b>M</b>	<b>Mouth Mouthwash</b>	Boca Enjuague bucal

<b>S</b>	<b>Saliva Salivary Glands</b>	Saliva Glándulas Salivares
<b>T</b>	<b>Teeth</b> • <b>Front Teeth</b> • <b>Back teeth</b>	Diente • Dientes Frontales • Muelas
	<b>Throat Tongue Tonsils Tooth Drilling Tooth Implant Toothbrush Toothpaste</b>	Garganta Lengua Amígdalas Perforación dental Implante dental Cepillo de dientes Crema dental/ Pasta dental

## COMMON DENTAL APPOINTMENT PHRASES

How many times do you brush your teeth?

Open / Close your mouth

Stick out your tongue

The tooth needs to be extracted because it can't be fixed  
due to an infection

You will feel pressure on your tooth

You will feel pressure on your tooth

Some bleeding following tooth extraction is to be expected

Have you had any problem with previous dental work?

¿Cuántas veces se cepilla los dientes?

Abra / Cierre la boca

Saque la lengua

Hay que sacar el diente porque no es posible restaurarlo  
debido a una infección

Va a sentir presión en el diente

Va a sentir presión en el diente

Después de la extracción puede haber un poco de sangrado

¿Ha tenido problemas con trabajos dentales anteriores?

## ENGLISH - SPANISH

**Have you been to the dentist before?**

**Where does it hurt?**

**How long has it hurt?**

**Do you have sensitivity to hot/cold things?**

**Do you use dental floss?**

**Do your gums bleed?**

**You have plaque/calculus on your teeth**

¿Ha ido al dentista/ odontólogo anteriormente?

¿Dónde le duele?

¿Hace cuánto le duele?

¿Tiene sensibilidad a cosas calientes/frías?

¿Le sangran las encías?

Va a sentir presión en el diente

Tiene placa /cálculos (sarro) en los dientes

## MEDICINES

## A-Z

<b>A</b>	<b>Acetaminophen</b> <b>Antacid</b> <b>Antidepressant</b> <b>Antibiotic</b> <b>Anti-inflammatory</b> <b>Antihistamine</b> <b>Aspirin</b>	Acetaminofén Antiácido Antidepresivo Antibiótico Antiinflamatorio Antihistamínico Aspirina
<b>B</b>	<b>Balm</b>	Pomada / Balsamo
<b>C</b>	<b>Cold Relief Medicine</b> <b>Cough syrup</b>	Antigripal Jarabe de tos
<b>E</b>	<b>Eye Drops</b>	Gotas para los ojos
<b>I</b>	<b>Ibuprofen</b> <b>Injection</b> <b>Intravenous</b> <b>Insulin</b>	Ibuprofeno Inyección intravenoso Insulina

<b>L</b>	<b>Laxative</b>	Laxante
<b>M</b>	<b>Medicine</b>	Medicina/ Remedio
<b>N</b>	<b>Narcotic</b>	Narcótico
<b>P</b>	<b>Painkiller</b> <b>Penicillin</b> <b>Pill</b>	Analgésico Penicilina Pastilla
<b>S</b>	<b>Sleeping pills</b> <b>Syrup</b>	Somnífero Jarabe
<b>V</b>	<b>Vitamins</b>	Vitaminas

## MEDICINE INSTRUCTIONS TO PATIENT

**Take the pill on an empty stomach**

**Take the capsule on an empty stomach**

**Do you want the medicine in liquid or in tablets?**

**Take the tablets with food**

**Apply the ointment on the affected area every 24 hours and cover it with a sterile gauze**

**Do not drink alcohol while taking this medication**

**Take this medicine:**

- \_\_\_ times a day
- every \_\_\_ hours
- dissolved in water
- when you get up in the morning
- before you go to bed
- before each meal
- with each meal
- after each meal
- every other day

Tome la pastilla con el estómago vacío

Tome la cápsula en ayunas

¿Quiere la medicina en líquido o en tabletas?

Tome la medicina con la comida

Aplice la pomada en la zona afectada cada 24 horas y cúbralo con una gasa estéril

No beba alcohol mientras esté tomando esta medicina

Tome esta medicina:

- \_\_\_ veces al día
- cada \_\_\_ horas
- disuelta en agua
- al levantarse por la mañana
- antes de acostarse
- antes de cada comida
- con cada comida
- después de cada comida
- un día sí, un día no

**ENGLISH - SPANISH**

**Do not take this medication on an empty stomach**

**This medication might cause drowsiness**

No tome esta medicina con el estómago vacío

Este medicamento puede causar somnolencia / sueño

**VOCABULARY**

**COMMON SYMPTOMS (A-Z)**

<b>A</b>	<b>Abdominal Pain</b> <b>Arthritis</b>	Dolor abdominal Artritis
<b>B</b>	<b>Blisters</b>	Ampollas
<b>C</b>	<b>Chest Pain</b> <b>Chills</b> <b>Congestion</b> <b>Cough</b> <b>Cyst</b>	Dolor en el Pecho Escalofríos Congestión Tos Quiste
<b>D</b>	<b>Diarrhea</b>	Diarrea/ Soltura de estómago
<b>E</b>	<b>Eye irritation</b>	Irritación en los ojos
<b>F</b>	<b>Fainting</b> <b>Fatigue</b> <b>Fever</b>	Desmayo Fatiga Fiebre
<b>H</b>	<b>Headache</b> <b>High Pressure</b> <b>Hyperglycemia</b> <b>Hypoglycemia</b>	Dolor de cabeza Hipertensión Arterial Hiperglicemia Hipoglucemia
<b>I</b>	<b>Itchiness</b>	Picazón

<b>L</b>	<b>Loss of appetite</b> <b>Low pressure</b>	Pérdida de apetito Hipotensión Arterial
<b>S</b>	<b>Seizure</b> <b>Shortness of Breath</b> <b>Skin Rashes</b> <b>Sore throat</b> <b>Skin Rashes</b> <b>Stomach pain/ ache</b> <b>Stroke</b> <b>Swelling</b>	Convulsion Dificultad para respirar Erupciones Cutáneas Dolor de garganta Erupciones Cutáneas Dolor de estómago Accidente cerebral Inflamación / Hinchazón
<b>T</b>	<b>Tachycardia</b> <b>Tingling</b>	Taquicardia Hormigueo
<b>V</b>	<b>Vomit/ throw up</b>	Vomito / vomitar
<b>M</b>	<b>Migraine</b> <b>Muscular Pain</b>	Migraña Dolor Muscular
<b>N</b>	<b>Nausea</b>	Nausea
<b>P</b>	<b>Phlem</b>	Flemas
<b>R</b>	<b>Reflux</b>	Reflujo

**COMMON DISEASES/ ILLNESSES (A-Z)**

<b>A</b>	<b>Allergy</b> <b>Anemia</b> <b>Appendicitis</b>	Alergia Anemia Apendicitis
<b>B</b>	<b>Bronchitis</b>	Bronquitis
<b>C</b>	<b>Chickenpox</b> <b>Cystitis</b>	Varicela Cistitis /Infección urinaria
<b>D</b>	<b>Diabetes</b>	Diabetes
<b>E</b>	<b>Ear infection</b>	Infección de oído
<b>F</b>	<b>Food Poisoning</b>	Intoxicación alimentaria

<b>G</b>	<b>Gastroenteritis</b>	Gastroenteritis
<b>H</b>	<b>Heart Attack</b>	Infarto/ Ataque al corazón
<b>M</b>	<b>Meningitis</b>	Meningitis
<b>P</b>	<b>Pharyngitis</b> <b>Pneumonia</b>	Faringitis Neumonía
<b>R</b>	<b>Respiratory Tract Infection</b>	Infección Respiratoria
<b>S</b>	<b>Salmonella</b> <b>Sore/Pink Eye</b> <b>Swimmers Ear</b>	Salmonela Conjuntivitis Otitis Externa

ENGLISH - SPANISH

COMMON INJURIES (A-Z)

<b>B</b>	<b>Bleed</b>	Sangrar
	<b>Break a Bone</b>	Romperse un hueso
	<b>Bruise</b>	Moretón/ morado
	<b>Burn</b>	Quemadura
<b>D</b>	<b>Dislocation</b>	Dislocación
	<b>Faint / To Faint</b>	Desmayo/ Desmayarse

<b>I</b>	<b>Injury</b>	Lesión
	<b>Scrape</b>	Raspadura
<b>S</b>	<b>Sprain</b>	Torcedura
	<b>Sting</b>	Picadura
<b>T</b>	<b>Twist</b>	Torcer/ Torcedura
<b>W</b>	<b>Wound</b>	Herida

MEDICAL PROCEDURES (A-Z)

<b>B</b>	<b>Biopsy</b>	Biopsia
	<b>Blood test</b>	Análisis de Sangre
<b>C</b>	<b>Colonoscopy</b>	Colonoscopia
	<b>CT</b>	TAC
<b>E</b>	<b>Electrocardiogram</b>	Electrocardiograma
	<b>Electroencephalogram</b>	Electroencefalograma
	<b>Endoscopy</b>	Endoscopia
<b>M</b>	<b>Magnetic resonance</b>	Resonancia Magnética

<b>P</b>	<b>Physiotherapy</b>	Fisioterapia
<b>S</b>	<b>Stitches</b>	Puntos
	<b>Surgery</b>	Cirugía
<b>U</b>	<b>Ultrasound</b>	Ecografía
	<b>Urine analysis</b>	Análisis de Orina
<b>X</b>	<b>x-ray</b>	Rayos-x / Radiografías

SEXUAL HEALTH (A-Z)

<b>A</b>	<b>Abortion</b>	Aborto
<b>B</b>	<b>Birth Control Methods</b>	Métodos Anticonceptivos
	<b>Emergency Contraceptive</b>	Anticonceptivos de Emergencia
<b>F</b>	<b>Fertility</b>	Fertilidad

<b>H</b>	<b>HIV/ AIDS</b>	VIH / SIDA
	<b>Hormon Therapy</b>	Terapia Hormonal
	<b>HPV</b>	Virus del Papiloma Humano
<b>I</b>	<b>Infertility</b>	Infertilidad
<b>S</b>	<b>STI</b>	ITS (Infección Transmitida Sexualmente)
	<b>Vasectomy</b>	Vasectomía

WOMEN'S HEALTH (A-Z)

<b>A</b>	<b>Absent Period</b>	Falta/ Ausencia de menstruación
<b>B</b>	<b>Breast</b>	Seno
<b>C</b>	<b>Contraceptive Cramps</b>	Anticonceptivo Cólicos/ Cólicos Menstruales
<b>F</b>	<b>Fallopian Tubes</b>	Trompas de Falopio
	<b>Fertility</b>	Fertilidad
<b>I</b>	<b>IUD</b>	DUI (Dispositivo Uterino Hormonal)
	• <b>Hormonal IUD</b>	• IUD Hormonal
	• <b>Paraguard IUD</b>	• IUD de Cobre

<b>M</b>	<b>Mammogram</b>	Mamografía
	<b>Menopause</b>	Menopausia
	<b>Menstrual Cycle</b>	Ciclo Menstrual
<b>O</b>	<b>Ovaries</b>	Ovarios
	<b>Ovulation</b>	Ovulación
<b>P</b>	<b>Pap smear</b>	Papanicolauo
	<b>Period</b>	Periodo Menstrual/ La regla/ Menstruación
<b>P</b>	<b>PMS</b>	Síndrome Premenstrual
	<b>Pregnancy Test</b>	Prueba de Embarazo
	<b>Pregnancy</b>	Embarazo

# Regionalisms in Spanish Medical Terms

While understanding regionalisms in medical terminology is valuable, the responsibility of addressing linguistic and cultural barriers must not rest solely on individual healthcare providers. Instead, healthcare systems worldwide must prioritize structural solutions to **guarantee equitable care**. With that said, here is a list of the most common regionalisms in medical terminology that might come in handy for your practice with diverse Spanish-speaking patients.

## General Medical Terms

### Headache

Dolor de cabeza (Standard)  
Chontal (Mexico, rural areas)  
Jaqueca (Argentina, Spain)

### Cold (Common Cold)

Resfriado (General)  
Gripa (Mexico, Colombia)  
Catarro (Spain, Central America)

### Flu

Gripe (Spain, South America)  
Gripa (Mexico, Central America)

### Fever

Fiebre (Standard)  
Calentura (Mexico, Central America, Caribbean)

### Stomach Pain

Dolor de estómago (Standard)  
Empacho (Mexico, Central America, Andes—refers to indigestion)  
Retorcijón (Mexico, Guatemala — often means cramping)

### Constipation

Estreñimiento (Standard)  
Tapado (Central America, Caribbean)  
Trancado (Venezuela)

## Anatomy

### Ear

Oreja (Outer ear, general)  
Oído (Inner ear, general)  
Escucha (Slang, Caribbean)

### Abdomen/Belly

Barriga (General)  
Panza (Argentina, Mexico, informal)  
Ventre (Spain, more formal)

### Foot

Pie (Standard)  
Pata (Informal, Caribbean, some regions of Central America)

## Medical Procedures

### Injection

Inyección (Standard)  
Pinchazo (Spain)  
Jeringazo (Colloquial, Peru)

### Surgery

Cirugía (Standard)  
Operación (General, more common informally)

### Ultrasound

Ecografía (Spain, general)  
Ultrasonido (Latin America)

# Regionalisms in Spanish Medical Terms

## Illnesses and Symptoms

### Cough

Tos (Standard)  
Tos seca (Dry cough, general)  
Ahogo (Caribbean, referring to difficulty breathing)

### Diabetes

Diabetes (Standard)  
Azúcar alta (Informal, general)

### Hypertension

Hipertensión (Standard)  
Presión alta (Informal, general)

## Medication

### Painkillers

Analgésico (Standard)  
Calmante (General)  
Pastilla para el dolor (Informal, general)

### Antibiotics

Antibiótico (Standard)  
Penicilina (Colloquial, Mexico – often used as a catch-all term for antibiotics)  
Ampicilina (Peru, informal)

### Cough Syrup

Jarabe para la tos (General)  
Jarabe (Colloquial, general)

## Pregnancy & Pediatrics

### Embarazo (Standard)

Estar en cinta (Spain)  
Estar preñada (Rural, informal, Mexico, and Caribbean)

### Breastfeeding

Lactancia (Standard)  
Dar el pecho (Spain)  
Dar la teta (Argentina, informal)

### Pacifier

Chupete (Argentina, Spain, Chile)  
Bobo (Caribbean, Colombia)  
Chuponcito (Mexico, Central America)

## Mental Health

### Depression

Depresión (Standard)  
Bajón (Argentina, Spain, informal, refers to a depressive episode)

### Anxiety

Ansiedad (Standard)  
Nervios (General, informal – often used for mild anxiety)  
Estrés (Stress, general)

## Miscellaneous

### Bruising

Moretón (Mexico, Central America)  
Cardenal (Spain, Argentina)  
Magulladura (General, less common)

### Rash

Sarpullido (General)  
Ronchas (Mexico, Central America)  
Erupción cutánea (Formal, medical term)

### Dizziness

Mareo (Standard)  
Vértigo (Medical, general)  
Zozobra (Colloquial, Caribbean)

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