

VOCABULARY BUILDER · IELTS

Health

23 high-band words to read, understand,
and actually use – from B2 to C2.

B2

C1

C2

How to use this pack

A word you can only recognise is not yet a word you own. This pack is built to move each term from “I’ve seen it” to “I can use it under exam pressure.” Work through it in order.

1 Test yourself first

Go straight to the **Before** page and write what you think each word means. Don’t look ahead — this is your baseline.

2 Study the word bank

Read each entry: the definition, the example sentence, the collocations and the word family. The example is the most important part — it shows the word alive in context.

3 Do the tasks

Gap-fill, matching, word formation, a full IELTS-style reading, and speaking & writing practice. Use a pencil so you can redo them.

4 Test yourself again

Return to the **After** page and write the meanings from memory. Compare with your baseline — that gap is your progress.

HOW TO READ AN ENTRY

noun / verb / adjective

part of speech

B2 · C1 · C2

CEFR difficulty level

/ˈsɪmbəl/

pronunciation (IPA)

e.g.

example sentence in context

↔

opposite / contrast

What do you already know?

BEFORE

Before you read a single definition, write what you think each word means — even a rough guess or a synonym. Tick how sure you are. This is your honest starting point; you'll come back at the end to measure how far you've moved.

#	WORD	SURE? know · unsure · new	WHAT I THINK IT MEANS
1	wellbeing	☐ ☐ ☐	
2	nutrition	☐ ☐ ☐	
3	obesity	☐ ☐ ☐	
4	sedentary	☐ ☐ ☐	
5	preventive	☐ ☐ ☐	
6	epidemic	☐ ☐ ☐	
7	immunity	☐ ☐ ☐	
8	diagnosis	☐ ☐ ☐	
9	chronic	☐ ☐ ☐	
10	contagious	☐ ☐ ☐	
11	hygiene	☐ ☐ ☐	
12	therapy	☐ ☐ ☐	
13	life expectancy	☐ ☐ ☐	
14	malnutrition	☐ ☐ ☐	
15	vaccination	☐ ☐ ☐	
16	outbreak	☐ ☐ ☐	
17	symptom	☐ ☐ ☐	
18	deteriorate	☐ ☐ ☐	
19	alleviate	☐ ☐ ☐	
20	sanitation	☐ ☐ ☐	
21	longevity	☐ ☐ ☐	
22	prescription	☐ ☐ ☐	
23	mental health	☐ ☐ ☐	

The word bank

Twenty-three words, chosen for how often they earn marks in IELTS Writing Task 2 and Speaking Part 3. Read the example sentence aloud – that is where the meaning sticks.

1 wellbeing /'welbi:ɪŋ/

noun

B2

The state of being comfortable, healthy and happy.

e.g. Regular exercise improves both physical and mental **wellbeing**.

COLLOCATIONS

physical / emotional wellbeing • a sense of wellbeing

WORD FAMILY

well (adj) • also spelt well-being

2 nutrition /nju'triʃn/

noun

B2

The process of getting the food necessary for health and growth; the study of this.

e.g. Good **nutrition** in early childhood affects health for the rest of a person's life.

COLLOCATIONS

good / poor nutrition • nutrition advice

WORD FAMILY

nutritious (adj), nutritional (adj), nutrient (n)

3 obesity /əʊ'bi:səti/

noun

C1

The medical condition of being very overweight in a way that is harmful to health.

e.g. Rising rates of childhood **obesity** have alarmed health officials.

COLLOCATIONS

childhood obesity • tackle / combat obesity

WORD FAMILY

obese (adj)

IELTS A key public-health term for "lifestyle and diet" essays.

4 sedentary /'sedntri/

adjective

C1

Involving a lot of sitting and little physical activity.

e.g. A **sedentary** lifestyle is linked to a wide range of health problems.

COLLOCATIONS

a sedentary lifestyle / job

WORD FAMILY

—

IELTS

Perfect for essays on modern lifestyles — the opposite of “active”.

5 preventive /pri'ventiv/

adjective

C1

Intended to stop illness or problems before they happen. (also: preventative)

e.g. **Preventive** measures such as screening can catch diseases early.

COLLOCATIONS

preventive medicine / measures / care

WORD FAMILY

prevent (v), prevention (n)

6 epidemic /,epɪ'demɪk/

noun

C1

A situation in which a disease spreads quickly to many people at the same time.

e.g. Health authorities acted fast to stop the **epidemic** from spreading.

COLLOCATIONS

a flu epidemic • contain / halt an epidemic

WORD FAMILY

epidemic (adj) • cf. pandemic

IELTS

Also used figuratively — “an epidemic of obesity”.

7 immunity /ɪ'mjuːnəti/

noun

C1

The body's ability to resist a particular infection or disease.

e.g. Vaccines work by building **immunity** before a person is exposed to a virus.

COLLOCATIONS

build / develop immunity • natural immunity

WORD FAMILY

immune (adj), immunise (v)

8 diagnosis /ˌdaɪəg'nəʊsɪs/

noun

C1

The identification of an illness by examining its symptoms. (plural: diagnoses)

e.g. An early **diagnosis** greatly improves the chances of successful treatment.

COLLOCATIONS

an accurate / early diagnosis • make a diagnosis

WORD FAMILY

diagnose (v), diagnostic (adj)

9 chronic /'krɒnɪk/

adjective

C1

(of an illness) lasting a long time and difficult to cure.

e.g. Millions of people live with **chronic** conditions such as arthritis.

COLLOCATIONS

a chronic illness / condition / shortage

WORD FAMILY

chronically (adv) • opp. acute

IELTS It also means "long-standing" more generally — "a chronic shortage of staff".

10 contagious /kən'teɪdʒəs/

adjective

C1

(of a disease) able to be passed from one person to another by contact.

e.g. The illness is highly **contagious** in its early stages.

COLLOCATIONS

a contagious disease • highly contagious

WORD FAMILY

contagion (n) • cf. infectious

11 hygiene /'haɪdʒi:n/

noun

B2

The practice of keeping yourself and your surroundings clean to prevent illness.

e.g. Good personal **hygiene** is one of the simplest ways to avoid infection.

COLLOCATIONS

personal / food hygiene • poor hygiene

WORD FAMILY

hygienic (adj)

12 therapy /'θerəpi/

noun

B2

The treatment of a physical or mental problem, often without drugs or surgery.

e.g. Physical **therapy** helped her regain movement after the accident.

COLLOCATIONS

undergo / receive therapy • physical / speech therapy

WORD FAMILY

therapist (n), therapeutic (adj)

13 life expectancy /'laɪf ɪk,spektənsi/

noun

C1

The number of years a person is expected to live, on average.

e.g. Improved healthcare has pushed up **life expectancy** across the world.

COLLOCATIONS

average life expectancy • rising life expectancy

WORD FAMILY

—

IELTS Essential for “ageing population” essays.

14 malnutrition /,mælnju'trɪʃn/

noun

C1

Poor health caused by not having enough food, or not enough of the right food.

e.g. **Malnutrition** remains a serious problem in many developing regions.

COLLOCATIONS

suffer from malnutrition • widespread malnutrition

WORD FAMILY

malnourished (adj)

15 vaccination /,væksɪ'neɪʃn/

noun

B2

The act of giving someone a vaccine to protect them against a disease.

e.g. Widespread **vaccination** has almost eliminated several once-common diseases.

COLLOCATIONS

a vaccination programme • mass vaccination

WORD FAMILY

vaccine (n), vaccinate (v)

16 outbreak /'aʊtbreɪk/

noun

C1

The sudden start of something unpleasant, especially disease.

e.g. The **outbreak** was traced to a contaminated water supply.

COLLOCATIONS

a disease outbreak • an outbreak of (sth)

WORD FAMILY

break out (phrasal v)

17 symptom /'sɪmptəm/

noun

B2

A physical or mental sign that a person has a particular illness.

e.g. A fever is often the first **symptom** of infection.

COLLOCATIONS

mild / severe symptoms • show / develop symptoms

WORD FAMILY

symptomatic (adj)

18 deteriorate /dɪ'tɪəriəreɪt/

verb

C1

To become worse over time.

e.g. Without treatment, the patient's condition may **deteriorate** rapidly.

COLLOCATIONS

deteriorate rapidly / steadily • health deteriorates

WORD FAMILY

deterioration (n) • opp. improve

IELTS A versatile high-band verb – useful far beyond health (“the situation deteriorated”).

19 alleviate /ə'li:vieɪt/

verb

C2

To make pain or a problem less severe.

e.g. Simple painkillers can **alleviate** most of the discomfort.

COLLOCATIONS

alleviate pain / symptoms / suffering

WORD FAMILY

alleviation (n)

IELTS A precise, high-band verb for "ease" or "reduce".

20 sanitation /ˌsæni'teɪʃn/

noun

C1

Systems for protecting public health, especially the safe removal of waste and supply of clean water.

e.g. Better **sanitation** dramatically reduces the spread of disease.

COLLOCATIONS

poor / basic sanitation • clean water and sanitation

WORD FAMILY

sanitary (adj) • opp. insanitary

IELTS Key for "health in developing countries" essays.

21 longevity /lɒn'dʒevəti/

noun

C2

Long life; the length of time something lives or lasts.

e.g. Diet and exercise are widely believed to contribute to **longevity**.

COLLOCATIONS

increased longevity • the secret of longevity

WORD FAMILY

—

22 **prescription** /prɪˈskrɪpʃn/

noun

B2

A written instruction from a doctor allowing a patient to get a particular medicine.

e.g. The antibiotics are only available on **prescription**.

COLLOCATIONS

(available) on prescription • write a prescription

WORD FAMILY

prescribe (v)

23 **mental health** /ˌmentl 'helθ/

noun

B2

A person's emotional and psychological wellbeing.

e.g. Many workplaces now offer support to protect employees' **mental health**.

COLLOCATIONS

mental health support / awareness

WORD FAMILY

—

IELTS A widely tested topic — pair it with “wellbeing” and “therapy”.

Task 1 · Gap-fill

Complete each sentence with a word from the bank. You may need to change the form (tense, ending). Each word is used once.

alleviate

chronic

contagious

deteriorate

life expectancy

malnutrition

obesity

sanitation

sedentary

symptom

therapy

vaccination

1. Office workers are warned that a _____ lifestyle can harm their health.
2. If it is left untreated, the illness can quickly _____.
3. Governments are introducing sugar taxes to combat rising _____.
4. A national _____ programme protected millions of children.
5. Gentle exercise can help to _____ back pain.
6. Patients were isolated because the disease is highly _____.
7. Clean water and proper _____ prevent many deadly infections.
8. A persistent cough can be an early _____ of the condition.
9. She has learned to manage her _____ pain with the help of specialists.
10. Better healthcare has raised average _____ around the world.
11. Aid agencies are working to reduce _____ among young children.
12. After the surgery, he needed months of physical _____.

Task 2 · Match the meaning

Write the letter of the correct definition next to each word.

1 wellbeing	☐	a the body's ability to resist disease
2 nutrition	☐	b getting the food needed for health
3 preventive	☐	c the sudden start of a disease
4 epidemic	☐	d the state of being healthy and happy
5 immunity	☐	e a doctor's written order for medicine
6 diagnosis	☐	f intended to stop illness before it happens
7 hygiene	☐	g keeping clean to prevent illness
8 outbreak	☐	h a disease that spreads quickly to many people
9 longevity	☐	i long life
10 prescription	☐	j identifying an illness from its symptoms

Task 3 · Word formation

Change the word in **CAPITALS** into the correct form to complete each sentence.

1. **HEALTH** A balanced diet is essential for a _____ body.
2. **NUTRITION** Fresh fruit is far more _____ than sugary snacks.
3. **PREVENT** _____ is better than cure, as the saying goes.
4. **DIAGNOSE** Early _____ can save lives.
5. **IMMUNE** The programme aims to _____ every child against measles.
6. **HYGIENE** Restaurants are required to keep their kitchens _____.
7. **PRESCRIBE** The doctor gave her a _____ for antibiotics.
8. **DETERIORATE** Doctors were alarmed by the sudden _____ in his condition.

Task 4 · Reading in context

Read the passage, then answer the questions. This mirrors an IELTS reading set – notice how many of your new words appear naturally.

An Ounce of Prevention

For most of human history, medicine was mainly concerned with treating illness after it appeared. Today, however, a growing share of the diseases that shorten our lives are closely linked to how we live. Conditions such as obesity, heart disease and type-2 diabetes are strongly connected to poor nutrition and a sedentary lifestyle, and, unlike an epidemic, they cannot be cured with a single medicine.

This has led many experts to argue that prevention deserves far more attention than it currently receives. Encouraging people to eat well, exercise and avoid harmful habits, they say, would do more to improve public health – and to cut costs – than any amount of treatment. Preventive measures, from health education to regular screening, allow problems to be caught early, when they are easier and cheaper to manage.

Others caution that changing behaviour is not so simple. People are surrounded by cheap, unhealthy food and demanding jobs that leave little time for exercise. Blaming individuals, they argue, ignores the social and economic conditions that shape everyday choices. Real progress may require action from governments and employers, not just advice to patients.

What is clear is that healthcare systems cannot rely on treatment alone. As populations age and life expectancy rises, the pressure on hospitals will only grow. Helping people to stay healthy in the first place may be the most effective medicine of all.

Questions 1–5 · True / False / Not Given

TRUE = the passage says so. **FALSE** = the passage says the opposite. **NOT GIVEN** = the passage doesn't say.

- | | | |
|-------|---|------------|
| 1 | In the past, medicine focused mainly on treating illness rather than preventing it. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2 | Diseases such as type-2 diabetes can be cured with a single medicine. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3 | Some experts believe prevention could reduce healthcare costs. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 4 | The passage states how much money prevention would save each year. | T / F / NG |
| <hr/> | | |
| 5 | The writer believes advice to patients alone will solve the problem. | T / F / NG |

Questions 6–9 · Vocabulary in context

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| 6 | Find a word/phrase meaning: involving a lot of sitting and little activity | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 7 | Find a word/phrase meaning: getting the food needed for health | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 8 | Find a word/phrase meaning: intended to stop illness before it happens | _____ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 9 | Find a word/phrase meaning: a disease that spreads quickly to many people | _____ |

Task 5 · Use it yourself

Recognising a word is easy; producing it is what raises your band. Answer out loud, then in writing.

SPEAK Speaking — Part 3 style

Answer each question in 3–4 sentences. Try to use the words in **bold** accurately.

1. What can people do to improve their overall **wellbeing**?
2. Should governments do more to prevent **obesity**?
3. Is enough being done to support **mental health** in your country?
4. Do you think **preventive** healthcare is better than treatment?

WRITE Writing — Task 2 mini

Write an introduction and one body paragraph (about 80–100 words) for this prompt. Use **at least four** words from this pack.

In many countries, illnesses linked to **sedentary** lifestyles and poor **nutrition** are becoming more common. What are the causes of this, and what could be done to solve the problem?

Now, from memory

AFTER

Cover the word bank. Write each meaning from memory and tick the box only if you could also use the word in your own sentence. Compare this page with your **Before** page – every word you can now explain is a mark you’ve earned.

#	WORD	MEANING (FROM MEMORY)	CAN USE IT
1	wellbeing		☐
2	nutrition		☐
3	obesity		☐
4	sedentary		☐
5	preventive		☐
6	epidemic		☐
7	immunity		☐
8	diagnosis		☐
9	chronic		☐
10	contagious		☐
11	hygiene		☐
12	therapy		☐
13	life expectancy		☐
14	malnutrition		☐
15	vaccination		☐
16	outbreak		☐
17	symptom		☐
18	deteriorate		☐
19	alleviate		☐
20	sanitation		☐
21	longevity		☐
22	prescription		☐
23	mental health		☐

Answer key

TASK 1 · GAP-FILL

1 sedentary 2 deteriorate 3 obesity 4 vaccination 5 alleviate 6 contagious 7 sanitation 8 symptom 9 chronic
10 life expectancy 11 malnutrition 12 therapy

TASK 2 · MATCHING

1 d 2 b 3 f 4 h 5 a 6 j 7 g 8 c 9 i 10 e

TASK 3 · WORD FORMATION

1 healthy 2 nutritious 3 prevention 4 diagnosis 5 immunise 6 hygienic 7 prescription 8 deterioration

TASK 4 · TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN

1 TRUE 2 FALSE 3 TRUE 4 NOT GIVEN 5 FALSE

TASK 4 · VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

6 sedentary 7 nutrition 8 preventive 9 epidemic



Nicely done. Revisit this pack in a week and again in a month — spaced review is what turns a recognised word into an automatic one. More themed packs at prepex.ai.