Illness: feeling under the weather

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each precise term with its definition.

1 incubation period ____	**a** the time between infection and the appearance of symptoms
2 relapse ____	**b** the return of illness after apparent recovery
3 underlying condition ____	**c** a pre-existing health problem that can affect the course of another illness
4 malaise ____	**d** a general feeling of discomfort or unease without specific symptoms
5 asymptomatic ____	**e** showing no symptoms despite having an infection or condition
6 debilitating ____	**f** severely weakening in effect
7 self-limiting ____	**g** a condition that resolves naturally without treatment
8 chronic ____	**h** persistent and long-lasting
9 acute onset ____	**i** the sudden, rapid appearance of symptoms
10 exacerbate ____	**j** to make a condition or symptom worse

2 Choose the word with the most suitable connotation.

1 For the time between infection and symptoms: incubation period / recovery time.

2 For the return of illness after recovery: relapse / cure.

3 For a pre-existing health problem: underlying condition / new symptom.

4 For showing no symptoms despite infection: asymptomatic / severely symptomatic.

5 For severely weakening: debilitating / mild.

6 For a condition resolving naturally: self-limiting / requiring intensive treatment.

7 For the sudden, rapid appearance of symptoms: acute onset / gradual development.

8 For making a condition worse: exacerbate / alleviate.

3 Complete the illness collocations with one word.

1 an _____ period (= time before symptoms appear)

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2 suffer a _____ (= illness returning after recovery)

3 an _____ condition (= a pre-existing health problem)

4 remain _____ (= showing no symptoms)

5 a _____ illness (= severely weakening)

6 a _____ infection (= resolves naturally)

7 _____ onset (= sudden, rapid appearance)

8 _____ symptoms (= make them worse)

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4 Complete the case notes with words and phrases from the box.

acute onset | asymptomatic | chronic | debilitating | exacerbate | incubation period | malaise | relapse | self-limiting | underlying condition

Case A: The infection has an 1 _____ of roughly five days before symptoms appear.
Case B: Many carriers remain 2 _____, unknowingly spreading the illness to others.
Case C: The patient's 3 _____ complicated recovery from an otherwise minor infection.
Case D: Doctors reassured the patient that the condition was 4 _____ and would resolve without treatment.
Case E: Stress appeared to 5 _____ her symptoms, making the 6 _____ condition considerably harder to manage.
Case F: After weeks of improvement, he suffered a sudden 7 _____.
Case G: The patient reported general 8 _____ rather than any specific symptom.
Case H: The illness had a rapid, 9 _____, leaving him 10 _____ within hours.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

The hidden cost of asymptomatic spread

Epidemiologists studying infectious disease increasingly emphasise the challenge posed by asymptomatic transmission, whereby infected individuals unknowingly spread an illness during the incubation period, before any symptoms appear. This complicates public health responses considerably, since standard measures relying on symptom-based screening will systematically miss carriers who feel entirely well. Underlying conditions can further complicate outcomes, since an otherwise self-limiting illness may exacerbate a pre-existing condition, producing more severe or debilitating consequences than the infection alone would suggest. Public health researchers argue that understanding transmission dynamics fully requires accounting for both visible illness and its less visible, asymptomatic spread.

1 What challenge do epidemiologists increasingly emphasise? _____

2 What is asymptomatic transmission? _____

3 Why does this complicate public health responses considerably? _____

4 What can underlying conditions further complicate? _____

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5 What might an otherwise self-limiting illness do to a pre-existing condition? _____

6 What does understanding transmission dynamics fully require? _____

6 Rewrite each sentence using the word in capitals. Do not change the meaning.

1 He showed no symptoms despite having the infection. ASYMPTOMATIC _____

2 The condition would resolve naturally without treatment. SELF-LIMITING _____

3 Her illness returned suddenly after she had recovered. RELAPSE _____

4 The stress made her symptoms considerably worse. EXACERBATE _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 120-150 word account analysing how asymptomatic spread complicates public health responses to infectious disease, distinguishing observation from recommendation.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control connotation carefully. [ ] Avoid unsupported assumptions.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Precise terms

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

2 Connotation

1 incubation period 2 relapse 3 underlying condition 4 asymptomatic 5 debilitating 6 self-limiting 7 acute onset 8 exacerbate

3 Collocations

1 incubation 2 relapse 3 underlying 4 asymptomatic 5 debilitating 6 self-limiting 7 acute 8 exacerbate

4 Case notes

1 incubation period 2 asymptomatic 3 underlying condition 4 self-limiting 5 exacerbate
6 chronic 7 relapse 8 malaise 9 acute onset 10 debilitating

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Asymptomatic transmission.
2 Infected individuals unknowingly spreading an illness during the incubation period, before symptoms appear.
3 Because standard measures relying on symptom-based screening will systematically miss carriers who feel entirely well.
4 Outcomes.
5 Exacerbate it, producing more severe or debilitating consequences.
6 Accounting for both visible illness and its less visible, asymptomatic spread.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 He was asymptomatic. 2 The condition was self-limiting.
3 She suffered a relapse. 4 The stress exacerbated her symptoms.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check lexical precision, appropriate connotation and separation of fact from inference.