

Types of Doctors

Grades: Third–Fifth Grade

Materials: *Women in Medicine*, “Types of Doctors” handout, Doctor Cards and Patient Cards (cut)

Subject: Medical specializations

Skills: information recall, partner work, learning new vocabulary

National Health Education Standards:

3.2.5 Discuss reasons for going to a health appointment.

3.5.4 Document interactive health literacy by talking with a health professional about health information to be a proactive, well-informed patient.

4.2.1 Identify how effective interpersonal communication can benefit personal health and well-being.

BACKGROUND

There are many types of careers in medicine, and new medical fields and specialties are emerging all the time.

Doctors are just one type of healthcare professional, but they can choose to study or specialize in many different areas. After reading *Women in Medicine*, your students should have a better understanding of how many amazing things doctors can do.

This activity will allow students to explore the possibilities within the medical field, recognize options for caring for their own health, and imagine which medical specialty they might be interested in pursuing!



ACTIVITY

1. After reading *Women in Medicine* out loud to your students, ask them about the featured women. How are they alike? How are they different? What are they doing to help people?
2. Tell your students that there are many different kinds of healthcare professionals who do different things to help people. Distribute the handout “Types of Doctors” and go over the vocabulary words with your students. Allow plenty of time to introduce these difficult words, answering any questions along the way, and providing pictures and examples for each kind of doctor whenever possible.
3. Divide the class in half, into two large groups. One group will be the doctors in the first round and the patients in the second round. The other half will be patients in the first round and doctors in the second round.
4. Give each student in the doctor group a Doctor Card. Give each student in the patient group a Patient Card.

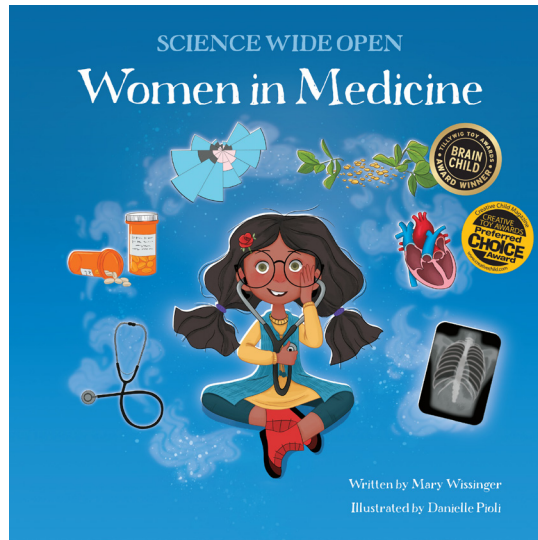
Types of Doctors continued

5. Tell the “doctors” to spread out around the room and find a seat at a table. There should be an empty chair next to them or across from them.
6. Explain that each “patient” will move around the classroom, visiting different “doctors.” The patients should visit the doctor they need in order to help them with the problem described on their card. The doctors should help their patients according to their specialty, which is decided by the vocabulary word on the Doctor Card.
7. If the students are confused about what a doctor/patient interaction should look like, model a conversation for them. The patient should introduce themselves, the doctor should ask them what’s wrong, the patient should describe their problem, and the doctor should try to help by answering questions, recommending next steps (like a test, exam, or surgery), or prescribing something like a medication.
8. Allow the students in the patient group to walk around, find their doctors, and have a conversation about their problem. Once every student has had a chance to talk with a doctor, the two doctor and patient groups can switch.
9. You may redistribute the doctor and patient cards and play as many rounds of this activity as you like, pausing to help students remember the vocabulary words on the doctor cards whenever necessary.

DISCUSSION

What did you learn from this activity? What was it like to pretend to be a doctor? What was it like to pretend to be a patient? Which doctor/patient conversation was the most positive for you, and why? If you could be any kind of doctor, which kind would you be, and why?





This activity was excerpted from the Teacher's Guide to
Women in Medicine / Las mujeres en la medicina

English editions:

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Types of Doctors

Allergists: treat all kinds of allergies, like food allergies or insect sting allergies.

Anesthesiologists: give patients a careful combination of medicines to make them unconscious during surgery.

Cardiologists: are experts on the heart. They can operate on the heart or help patients with heart diseases.

Dentists: are experts on the teeth. They can check their patient's teeth, or even perform surgery on teeth.

Dermatologists: are experts on the skin, hair, and nails. They help patients with skin diseases, acne, scars, or skin allergies.

Emergency Specialists: make quick life-and-death decisions for sick or injured patients in the emergency room.

Family Physicians: take care of the whole family, children, adults, and the elderly. They give shots and checkups, and monitor ongoing illnesses.

Gastroenterologists: are experts on the organs that help digest your food, like the stomach, liver, pancreas, and gallbladder. You might see them for stomach pain, diarrhea, or trouble eating.

Hematologists: are experts on the blood. They treat patients with blood diseases, like sickle cell disease.

Medical Geneticists: diagnose and treat genetic disorders, which are passed down from parents to their children.

Neurologists: are experts on the brain and nervous system. They operate on the brain and treat brain disorders.

Obstetricians (OBGYNs): are experts on women's health. They also help check on pregnant people, make sure they're healthy, and help with childbirth.

Oncologists: are experts on cancer. They help treat patients with cancer, and often work with surgeons.

Ophthalmologists: are experts on eyes. They can prescribe glasses, check patient's eyes, treat eye diseases, and perform surgery on eyes.

Pathologists: work in labs instead of with patients, trying to find out what causes different diseases.

Pediatricians: work with and treat children from the time they are born until they are young adults.

Podiatrists: are experts on ankles and feet. They help with injuries and illnesses only in the ankles and feet.

Psychiatrists: help treat patients with mental illnesses, who may feel they can't control their sadness or fear. They use medication and therapy to help patients.

Radiologists: use X-Rays and other technology, like ultrasounds, to look inside your body and diagnose diseases.

Rheumatologists: specialize in bones, muscles, and joints. They help people with back pain, weak bones, or arthritis.

Doctor Cards



Allergist

Treatments: skin testing (placing the potentially harmful allergen against the skin to see if there's a reaction), blood tests, exposing the patient to a small amount of food they might be allergic to in order to check for a reaction

Anesthesiologist

Treatments: interacting with patients to explain the anesthesia process, deciding the correct amount of anesthesia to give to patients based on their weight and condition

Cardiologist

Treatments: using X-Rays to identify the problem with the heart, inserting a balloon to open the arteries of the heart if blood flow is blocked, treating chest pain and high blood pressure with medication

Dentist

Treatments: filling in cavities, removing wisdom teeth, removing teeth that are rotted, cleaning and whitening teeth, repairing chipped teeth, performing root canals (if the tissue under or inside the tooth is infected)

Dermatologist

Treatments: prescribing face wash, lotion, and medicine for skin conditions like acne, removing loose skin, draining and removing growths on the skin, examining skin issues and sending samples of the damaged skin for testing

Emergency Specialist

Treatments: stabilizing patients by bandaging and cleaning wounds, setting broken bones, placing a chest tube if the patient cannot breathe, restarting the heart if it stops beating

Family Physician

Treatments: monitoring chronic (long-term) diseases such as diabetes, kidney disease, asthma, etc. They help their patients manage pain that comes from chronic diseases, give checkups, and diagnose new diseases

Doctor Cards continued



Gastroenterologist

Treatments: pressing on the stomach and listening for anything unusual, prescribing medicine and/or diet changes for stomach issues, removing any ulcers (sores inside the stomach) and helping to make the stomach less irritated

Hematologist

Treatments: taking blood samples to check for disease, treating blood disorders and blood cancer, transferring donated blood to a patient who lost too much blood, transplanting bone marrow for a patient who isn't producing healthy blood cells

Medical Geneticist

Treatments: researching hereditary diseases to find cures, running tests to diagnose hereditary diseases, helping patients manage pain

Neurologist

Treatments: prescribing headache medicine, testing coordination, memory, and muscle strength, testing electrical signals in your nervous system, measuring electrical activity in the brain

Obstetrician (OBGYN)

Treatments: delivering babies, checking to make sure the baby and mother are healthy before birth, performing ultrasounds to see how the baby is developing, removing growths and performing surgery on the reproductive system

Oncologist

Treatments: performing surgery to remove cancer, providing chemotherapy (killing cancer with medicine), radiation therapy (using a beam that kills cancer cells but leaves healthy cells alone)

Ophthalmologist

Treatments: performing eye exams to check your vision, prescribing glasses, performing surgery on eyes if needed, treating eye diseases like dry eye syndrome with medication

Doctor Cards continued



Pathologist

Treatments: performing tests in a lab to help other doctors diagnose diseases, examining body tissues and cells up close using a microscope, confirming a diagnosis for other doctors

Pediatrician

Treatments: checkups for children, giving small children and babies vaccines (shots), examining children to make sure they're growing properly

Podiatrist

Treatments: removing warts and other growths on the feet and legs, setting broken foot/leg bones, making casts to hold feet and legs steady and manage pain, treating foot/leg skin diseases

Psychiatrist

Treatments: talking to patients about their mood and behavior, prescribing medicines to help improve mood, recommending therapists for patients to talk to

Radiologist

Treatments: using x-rays and other complex machines to take pictures of the inside of the body, diagnosing problems like broken bones, tracking a patient's recovery progress, prescribing a medication or treatment, or administering radiation therapy

Rheumatologist

Treatments: diagnosing diseases/problems with the joints and bones, prescribing medicines, recommending physical therapists and exercises

Patient Cards



In the beginning of spring, I can't go outside because I cough until I throw up, and my eyes get itchy and puffy.

I'm prepped and ready for surgery, but I'm scared that I will wake up during the surgery. I want to talk to the doctor who will make sure I stay unconscious.

My heart is beating really fast all the time, and it's really uncomfortable. It's also been causing a lot of pain in my chest.

There's a pounding pain in my tooth whenever I yawn, try to talk, or try to eat. My mom thinks the tooth might have rotted.

I have bright red spots on my skin, and more and more of them are appearing every day.

I have been in a serious car accident and was brought to the emergency room in an ambulance. My arm is especially injured, it's covered in cuts and might be broken.

I am going to a routine wellness checkup with my mom, who is also getting her checkup from our doctor.

I have not been able to eat all week. I'm usually not hungry, and when I do try to eat my stomach hurts a lot.

I fell off my bike and skinned my knee two months ago, and my knee keeps bleeding and won't make a scab.

My mom has a disease that makes her unable to walk. I've been wobbly on my feet lately, and my mom worries I might have her disease.

Trying to think too hard gives me a headache so bad that I have to go right to bed and lie down.

My mom is pregnant, and I'm going with her to her doctor to check on how the new baby is doing.

My grandpa has cancer, and I'm worried about him. I want to talk to a doctor that knows a lot about cancer to find out if he'll be okay.

Lately I've had a really hard time seeing anything that's too far away, and my parents think I need glasses.

My dad works in a research lab with other doctors, and he's taking me to see his friend, who specializes in finding the causes of diseases.

My little sister and I have gone to the same doctor for our checkups since we were born. Today we have another checkup together.

My ankle has been swollen for a month, and it hurts too badly to walk on it at all.

I have been so sad for the last few months that I can't get out of bed, and nothing makes me feel better. I want to see a doctor who can help me feel happier and have more energy.

I broke my finger, and the doctor wants to look closer at the bone by taking me to another doctor who does X-rays.

My bones feel weak lately, it's hard for me to exercise and I'm always worried I'll break a bone.