

WARE'S LANGUAGE NOTES

Docteur, Docteur.....

Despite the cold over Christmas, the muggy January has meant the bugs have all had a wonderful winter so far, and I hardly know anyone who hasn't succumbed to a cold (*un rhume*), a cough (*une toux*), or an upset stomach (*une gastro*).

The French tend to use the Pharmacie as their first port of call. Chemists are generally more geared up to deal with minor ailments here than some of their counterparts in the UK. *Est-ce que vous avez quelque chose contre un rhume, une toux, la grippe, un mal de gorge, un mal de tête?* (Have you got anything for a cold, a cough, the flu, a sore throat, a head ache?). In French, they say *Contre* (meaning against) where we say *For*. More logical perhaps – or just more optimistic? Be ready for the question *Vous avez de la fièvre?*, (Have you got a temperature?) The chemist will normally sort you out, but he may suggest you see the doctor, and if your ailment persists, it is wise to do so.

You probably know that once you have a Carte Vitale, you need to choose a doctor to be your Médecin Traitant or GP. This is only very recent here and in the old days when you were ill you could go from doctor to doctor until you found one that gave you the diagnosis you wanted, or would agree to send you to a specialist, and then even go from specialist to specialist to find one that would give you the treatment you wanted, and you would still be reimbursed by the system and your Mutuelle. Under the new rules, your GP is in charge of your treatment and if you go elsewhere or if you go direct to a specialist, you may be charged extra and you will not be reimbursed as much.

So what do you say to the doctor? *Bonjour, docteur, j'ai mal au ventre* (stomach ache) *J'ai une toux affreuse* (dreadful cough) *Je suis très fatigué* (tired) *J'ai mal au coeur* (I feel nauseous) *J'ai vomi toute la nuit* (been sick all night) *Mon genou me fait mal* (my knee hurts) *J'ai glissé/trébuché et je me suis tordu la cheville*. (I slipped/stumbled and twisted my ankle) *Je suis tombé sur mon poignet* (I have fallen on my wrist) *J'ai mal à la poitrine* (I have chest pains) You can say *J'ai mal à la/au ...* to say that part of you hurts, aches, is sore etc.(à la is for feminine words)

And what will he say to you? *Qu'est-ce qui ne va pas?* (What's wrong) *Depuis combien de temps?* (for how long?) *Où est-ce que vous avez mal?* (Where does it hurt?) *Est-ce que ça fait mal là?* (does it hurt there?) *Enlevez votre chemise* (take off your shirt) *Allongez-vous* (lie down) *Respirez* (breathe in) *Toussez* (cough) *Vous avez des douleurs / des allergies?* (Do you have pain / allergies?) *Vous avez Je vais vous donner des antibiotiques* (I'm going to give you some antibiotics)

If you have had an accident at home, there are two alternatives. You can call an ambulance – here it's the Pompiers or SAMU who provide emergency services, You should look in your phone book under your commune for the number, usually 18 for the pompiers and 15 for SAMU. It's best to do the research beforehand! Or if you are walking wounded you can go the nearest Urgences. For accidents, they are the best places, with *Radio* (X-rays) etc on hand. The Urgences in St Junien (in St Junien hospital) have English speaking staff. By the way, if you have an X-ray, they will give it to you eventually and you should keep it carefully to show to your doctor and/or the specialist next time.

The language you'll need will be different, as you will probably be talking for someone else. *Mon mari/ma femme est tombé*. (My husband/wife has fallen over) *Mon fils, ma fille a eu un accident* (My son/daughter has had an accident) *Il/Elle s'est cassé le bras* (broken arm) *Il s'est fait mal à la tête/au dos* (He has hurt his head/back) *Il ne peut pas bouger* (He can't move) *Il a eu une crise de coeur* (He's had a heart attack) *Il y a eu un accident de circulation* (there has been a road traffic accident)

Of course, one hopes never to have to use this kind of language. But if you do, then *je vous souhaite un prompt rétablissement!* (I hope you get better soon!)