

Learning by Ear
Health Episode 6 – Vermin

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Intro:

Hello and welcome to Learning by Ear's series on health. It's time to join Manuel, Steve, Jimmy, Simo and Hassan at their hostel again to see what they are up to. Remember -- they are living at the hostel because they had to come to the city to do their A-levels here as there aren't any secondary schools in their home villages. So what are they up to do today? Well, nothing much really because Jimmy is sick as a dog. And we're going to find out why. At the end, we'll tell you how you can keep bugs at bay because our friend's feeling ill is all to do with bugs...

Music

Scene 1: Hassan and Jimmy at the hostel in the mid-morning.

SFX: An insect buzzes in the pit latrine -- Hassan's radio can be heard in the distance, playing Usher's music

1.Hassan: **(Off mic)** Oh Jimmy, you look like a dying man. What is the problem? Close the window, will you -- the stench in the toilet is getting really bad.

3.Jimmy: **(On mic)** Sorry man - my stomach hurts badly.

4.Hassan: **(Off mic)** Do you have diarrhea?

5.Jimmy: **(On mic)** Sort of a mix of stomach chaos,**(groans in pain)** I will just camp here in the latrine. .

6.Hassan : **(Off mic)** Goodness, this is like the sixth time in just three hours, you are going to suffocate in that stinking hole.

7.Jimmy: **(On mic)** **(in pain)** it really hurts Hassan. Let me come and just lay my stomach on the bed, I can't even stand upright.

8.Hassan: **(Off mic)** You should go to the health centre!

- 9.Jimmy: **(On mic)** No money, ouchiii... toilet first.
- 10.SFX: **Iron sheet door being opened and closed ,(sfx an old iron sheet door being closed with difficulty)**
- 11.Jimmy: **(On mic)** Damn door -- I'm gonna hit you hard **(in pain, struggling to fight the iron sheet door)**
- 12.SFX: **Iron door falls off the toilet. Jimmy groans in pain**
13. Hassan: **(Off mic) (Laughs)** I told you one day that door would cause someone permanent shame -- imagine if it had fallen after you had just pulled down your trousers!
- 14.Jimmy: **(off mic)** Damn, it's cut me...
- 15.Hassan: **(shouting to someone in the distance)**What is the matter Jimmy?
- 16.Jimmy: **(off mic and in pain)** The stupid door cut my hand...
- 17.Hassan: Come over here and we will clean your hand with salt...
- 18.Jimmy: **(getting closer)** What a day...everything is cursed.
- 19.Hassan: I really think you should go to the health centre.
- 20.Jimmy: **(on mic).** Can you lend me some money? Steve has not paid me back yet.
- 21.Hassan: I am sorry I can't -- I only have enough to take me back home after school ends. And if I can't go home, I can't fetch the fees for next term from my parents.
- 22.Jimmy: That's fine I will have refunded it by then.
- 23.Hassan: Alright, here, take this and go see the doctor.

End of scene 1

Scene 2: The nurse and Jimmy at the health clinic (mid-morning)

SFX: Not very busy, some babies are crying, some patients are coughing and sneezing, a mix of different voices, door opens and a male voice calls out

1.Nurse(male): Next

2. SFX: Shoes walking on a floor, then pulling the chair to sit

3.Nurse: What's your name ? Have you come about that wound I can see? What can I do for you?

4.Jimmy: My name is Jimmy and I'm here for a number of complications.

5.Nurse: Such as?

6.Jimmy: I have to keep visiting the latrine.

7.Nurse: How long have you had this problem? How long have you had a running stomach?

8.Jimmy: This is the third day.

9.Nurse: Have you had any medication yet?

10.Jimmy: No, I stayed at the hostel because I did not have enough money to come for treatment until a friend lent me some.

11.Nurse: Well, you should always take any sign of illness very seriously -- if you are not careful you could easily lose your life. Two days of diarrhea without treatment is too much -- you can get dehydrated.

12.Jimmy: Actually, I am feeling really bad right now. May I visit your toilet?

13.Nurse: Go ahead if you cannot wait.

14.Jimmy: Ooooh, thank God it has calmed down – let's proceed, nurse.

- 15.Nurse: Alright, what type of food have you eaten in the past few days?
- 16.Jimmy: Beans and potatoes.
- 17.Nurse: That's greasy stuff -- wasn't it too much?
- 18.Jimmy: No, I really had a craving for it and my mom always told me you can eat everything your body longs for when you are sick. And anyway I didn't have much of a choice. It's a question of money too, you know. Life in the city is very expensive for me and my friends.
- 19.Nurse: I see. Did you cook the food yourself or did you eat in a restaurant?
- 20.Jimmy: Actually we always cook ourselves.
- 21.Nurse: Do you usually eat your food fresh?
- 22.Jimmy: The first day it's fresh and warm but afterwards we just eat it cold or sometimes we warm it up -- we eat the same food until it's finished.
- 23.Nurse: Right! And how do you store your food? Do you have an oven or a fridge to keep the remains in?
- 24.Jimmy: **(laughs)** Nurse don't make fun of me! How could we own a fridge when we don't have any power -- the landlady cut it off because of non-payment.
- 25.Nurse: So how do you keep your food then? Do you cover it? Are there any rats or mice or other small creatures running around your home?
- 26.Jimmy: We just keep the food under the bed. Yes, we have a lot of mice and cockroaches. And some rats too but not very many...
- 27.Nurse: Right -- I am afraid you might have eaten some contaminated food, Jimmy!
28. Jimmy: But we always try to warm the food before we eat it...

29. Nurse: That is not enough -- flies, mice and cockroaches are carriers of parasites. When you, as a human being, come into contact with these creatures, the parasites can turn out to be quite deadly.....

30. Jimmy: So does that mean that I'm going to die?

31. Nurse: Of course not -- I have to do some checks and I'll give you some medication. Now I have to check your stools...

32. Jimmy: Yes, OK nurse.

33. Nurse: As I said, after the examination, I will give you some medication but you must also try and get rid of the mice and all your other small unwanted housemates by keeping your home clean.

34. Jimmy: The problem is that my roommates might not agree....

35. Nurse: Jimmy, no matter what your friends do or say, you *have* to do as I say, so listen carefully! You not only need to get rid of the mice but also of all other parasite carriers such as cockroaches, bedbugs, lice and so on. Do you understand what I'm saying? It's really crucial.

Jimmy But how, nurse? I'm too weak to do anything at the moment.

Nurse You need to tell your friends to clean the hostel inside and out, to tidy your room, to wash your bedding and even if you're weak you should take regular baths (**laughing**) I know it's difficult for you boys but you should not ignore my advice.

36. Jimmy: It all sounds so exhausting!

37. Nurse: Hey, Jimmy listen -- you have to make an effort if you want to get healthy again and, most of all, stay healthy! If you keep living with all those vermin, you are going to fall sick again and again. And don't forget -- you also need to take in lots of fluids such as juice, clean drinking water and soup to help you regain your strength. I will also give you some medication for your wound but remember you have to keep that clean as well!

38.Jimmy: Just a minute nurse, I am really dying. (*Sfx shaking chair and steps on the floor running, trying to open the door*)..Where is the toilet?

39.Nurse. Oh young man, that is a store for drugs -- the toilet is on your left.

End of scene 2

Scene 3: Hassan, Jimmy, Manuel and Steve at the hostel, late morning (11:00 am).

SFX: insects buzz, radio can be heard in the distance, *Sounds of birds, cricket*

1.Hassan: How did it go Jimmy?

2.Jimmy: It's those rats...

3.Manuel: I told you guys -- we are all going to perish soon because of contamination.

4.Hassan: Manuel, just let Jimmy say whatever he has to tell us!

5.Jimmy: Manuel is actually right -- everything he has always said is true -- we basically need to overhaul this place -- beginning with ourselves and then our surroundings...

6.Steve: Is this all because of a few rats? Come on guys, get serious. Manuel's toxic socks will do the job.

7.Manuel: It is not just about rats, Steve, I have always told you - it is about changing our lifestyle.

8. Steve: Preach it, Manuel. In the name of Jimmy's health and ours, we are going to get rid of those vermin.

9. Jimmy, Hassan, Steve (laughing) Amen.

Did you know? Vermin

Vermin is a term applied to various animal species regarded as pests or nuisances – especially to those associated with disease. Africa's generally warm and humid climate causes vermin to thrive. Vermin can infect humans with a number of serious and fatal diseases if they are not kept under control.

The vermin

The smallest vermin include worms, amoebas and other insects that are often invisible to the human eye. Lice, flees and mites are larger but they are still difficult to detect. Bigger vermin such as rats and mice are the easiest to avoid.

The diseases

It's not size that matters. Small vermin can create huge problems. They can spread diseases such as typhus, relapsing fever, the plague or rabies. All these diseases are deadly if they are not treated at an early stage. Tiny worms can enter the body due to lack of hygiene. Once in the body, they infest the organs, such as the liver, the lungs and the stomach. Symptoms include severe stomach cramps and loss of blood. Worm infestation is very common among children. Equally tiny amoebas can cause liver failure and death. Rats can transmit disease through urine, droppings and saliva.

The prevention

The most common vermin are often found in households. Lice or flees might settle on dirty bedclothes or towels. That's why it's important to wash clothes and bedclothes as often as possible. You should not share clothes and sheets without washing them first. Avoid untreated water and food to avoid worms. Raw fruit and vegetables and undercooked meat can be very dangerous as worms can thrive in them. Rats are attracted to rotting food and therefore it is crucial to dispose of this properly. Worms might be on the ground too and can enter the body if somebody is barefoot. Wear closed shoes if possible. There are also worms living in lakes and rivers -- don't swim in stagnant waters. Dogs and cats can spread rabies. If you are bitten by a dog or a cat, make sure you wash the wound with soap and water and contact a doctor as soon as possible.

Outro:

And that's all for today's Learning by Ear's series on health, written by Hope Azeda. Thanks for listening and remember to go online to [www.dw-world .de/lbe](http://www.dw-world.de/lbe) if you want to listen to the shows again or tell your friends all about them! Good bye for now and don't forget to tune in next time!