

What news?

In informal greetings, when Indonesians ask 'How are you?' they say ***Apa kabar?*** If translated literally, this means 'What news?'. So, in fact, ***Apa kabar*** doesn't really ask about a person's health or well-being. Its meaning is similar to that of the English question 'How are things?'.

Another question used in greetings is ***Bagaimana?*** which literally means 'How?'

It is important to remember that these two questions are used only in informal situations by people who already know each other.

You would not use ***Apa kabar?*** or ***Bagaimana?*** when greeting people you do not know for the first time.

Just as we often shorten words in English, for example, 'Good day' becomes 'G'day'. Indonesians do the same. ***Apa kabar?*** becomes '***pa kabar?*** and ***Bagaimana?*** becomes ***Gimana?***

There are a number of things you can say in response to these greetings but, just as we also do in English, you don't need to go into specific details about headaches and other problems. A simple positive response is all that is necessary.

For example:

<i>Hai John, apa kabar?</i>	Hi John, how are you?
<i>Baik-baik saja. Yuli?</i>	I'm fine. And you?
<i>Baik juga.</i>	I'm also fine.
<i>Hai Yuli, bagaimana?</i>	Hi Yuli, how are you?
<i>Sehat. John, gimana?</i>	I'm well. How are you, John?
<i>Sehat juga.</i>	I'm well/healthy too.

Indonesians don't normally pour their hearts out to other people except to very close relatives or friends. However, one response which corresponds to 'So-So' is '***Ya, begitulah***', but it is said with a smile as if things were still quite all right.

NOTE:

The three words *Baik-baik saya* mean 'fine'.
Juga means 'also'.
Sehat means 'well' and 'being in good health'.



Exercise



1.

- a) What do you normally ask your friends when you greet them?

- b) Do you expect a specific and detailed reply when you ask how somebody is? Explain your answer.

- c) Imagine after asking a friend how they were, they replied by telling you all their physical and emotional troubles. What would your first reaction be?

- d) How do you think an Indonesian friend would feel if, after they asked you how you were, you replied by telling them about your physical and emotional problems?

- e) Why do you think an Indonesian friend might feel that way?

- f) Do you think this means that you could never talk about your true emotions and feelings with an Indonesian? Explain your answer.
