

Physical Activity

Keeping active is vital for our physical and mental health. Exercise helps us to feel fit, relaxed and surprisingly gives us more energy! The health benefits are impressive, and you don't have to run marathons to feel the effects. Regular exercise can reduce your risk of major illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, cancer and type 2 diabetes.

Adults should try to be active every day and aim to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity over a week, through a variety of activities. Why not:

- Walk briskly
- Use the stairs instead of the lift
- Get off the bus early, or park the car further out and walk the rest of the way
- Carry the shopping
- Get stuck into some gardening or car washing



Skin Health

Spending time in the sun without taking precautions can be at increased risk of skin cancer. Even if you are outside for just a short amount of time, try to:

- Spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm
- Apply sunscreen regularly - use at least factor 30
- Cover up - wear loose clothing, a hat and sunglasses

Most adults don't apply enough sunscreen. If sunscreen is applied too thinly, the amount of protection it gives is reduced. As a rough guide, you should aim to use around:

- 2 teaspoons if you're just covering your head, arms and neck
- 2 tablespoons if you're covering your entire body while wearing a swimming costume



Remember - it's not safe to use sunbeds to get a tan as it increases your risk of skin cancer. Use fake tan from a bottle for a similar effect but without the risks.

Alcohol

The less you drink, the lower the risk is to your health. It is recommended that men and women do not drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis. It's best to spread your units evenly over at least 3 days - try not to 'save up' your units. Remember to have regular alcohol-free days too.

Pregnant women and those planning pregnancy should not drink alcohol.

How many units are in my drink?

- 1 pint of beer/lager/cider - 2.2 units
- 175ml glass of wine - 2.2 units
- 250ml glass of wine - 3.1 units
- 25ml measure of spirits - 1 unit

Reducing alcohol intake

- Alternate alcoholic drinks with water or soft drinks
- Drink more slowly, and drink with food or eat before going out
- Avoid 'topping up' your drink as you'll lose track of the units



Mental Health

Everyone feels stressed from time to time, but you don't have to put up with it if these feelings persist. In England, around one in five women has a common mental health problem such as anxiety, depression or self-harm. It's ok to open up and ask for help.



Perhaps you're feeling like life is hard to cope with, or feel irritable, short-tempered or anxious. Maybe you are even finding it hard to concentrate or are excessively tired.

We know it can be daunting, but most people find that talking to their GP is really beneficial as they can offer you the support you need.

Resources

Why not set yourself up for success by visiting our website? We've got loads more health resources available for free on many common health topics.

www.maryhowtrust.org/news/2022/health-resources



Change a little...gain a lot!

The simplest of changes can make a hugely positive impact on your health now and in the future.

For more than 30 years, the Mary How Trust has been offering life-saving health screenings to men and women over 18 in local community and beyond.

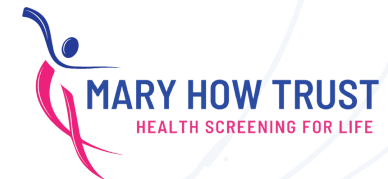
As well as screening for several cancers, we look for the early signs of many other life-threatening illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and aortic aneurysm. We're here to listen to your health concerns too, and offer lifestyle guidance to help you stay well.

We are entirely donor supported, and instead of charging a fixed fee for our health screenings, we ask for a donation that's based on ability to pay. We encourage clients to give generously for their screening, but never turn anyone away if they're unable to donate the full cost to us.

Our heartfelt wish is to help people stay well through prevention and early detection of serious illness.

Do you or someone you know need a check-up on their health?
Request a health screening via our website today.

Healthy



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Breast Awareness

Being breast aware is all about getting to know what your normal is. Do you know how your breasts usually look and feel during all the different times of your monthly cycle? Knowing your breasts means it is easier to spot any changes.

There is no right or wrong way to check your breasts; just make sure you do it regularly.

LOOK in the mirror for:

- Flattening, puckering or dimpling of the skin
- changes in breast size or shape
- rashes or redness
- unusual appearance of the nipple including discharge

FEEL breasts and armpits (up to the collarbone) for:

- new lumps
- new swelling, thickening or bumpy areas

Most changes are not a concern, but should always be checked by your GP.

It's really important to attend a free breast screening every three years if you are aged 50+. After 70, you are not automatically invited for breast screening but you can request an appointment.



Pregnancy

All women should take care of their bodies, and this is even more vital if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy. Looking after yourself during pregnancy will help your baby develop and grow. To stay healthy you should:



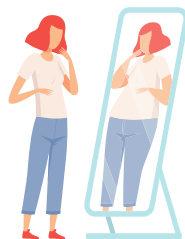
- **Quit smoking** - it's one of the best things you can do as it drastically reduces the risk of premature delivery, miscarriage, stillbirth and sudden infant death.
- **Not drink alcohol** - drinking whilst you are pregnant can cause long-term harm to your baby, with the more you drink the greater the risk.
- **Eat a healthy diet** - You don't need to go on any special diet, just make sure your meals are balanced so you get all the right vitamins and minerals such as folic acid. Remember there is no need to 'eat for two!' You should avoid some foods including liver, raw/uncooked meat, pate, unpasteurised soft cheeses, shark, swordfish and marlin. Also avoid eating raw or runny eggs, and make sure to limit your tuna and caffeine intake too.
- **Attend your antenatal care appointments**

Body Image & Self Esteem

It's easy to feel under pressure about the way we look. Remember that the fact we are all different is a great thing, and makes us unique. We all grow in different ways, and that is ok! Accepting ourselves and the way we look is a key part in feeling comfortable and confident in our own skin.

Things we can all do to boost self respect:

- **Adopt a body positive mindset** - say goodbye to your inner critic
- **Take care of yourself** such as nourishing your body with good food.
- **Try not to compare yourself with others**
- **Ensure you take time to focus on your mental health**
- **Treat yourself with the same kindness you show others**



Menstruation

PMS, or 'Pre-Menstrual Syndrome' is something most women will experience in the days or weeks before their period. Each person's symptoms can vary and can vary from month to month. It's caused by different hormonal, physical and emotional changes during your menstrual cycle. Common symptoms include:

- Mood swings
- Feeling emotional, irritable or anxious
- Tiredness, trouble sleeping or concentrating
- Craving sugary or sweet foods
- Bloating or tummy pain
- Headaches
- Skin blemishes



Things you can do to help include getting regular exercise, getting a good amount of sleep, and eating a healthy and balanced diet. You can take painkillers to ease any pain you might get.

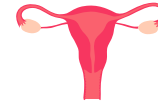
Heavy periods - you don't have to put up with them! If heavy periods or PMS is affecting your daily life, you can speak to your GP. They will advise you on possible treatments.

If your period pattern changes, mention it to your GP.

Cervical Smear Test

Regular cervical screening is one of the best ways to protect yourself from cervical cancer. It saves over a thousand lives in the UK each year. It's not a test for cancer - it's a test to help prevent it by checking the health of your cervix.

All women or people with a cervix aged 25-64 should be invited for a smear test.



You're still at risk of cervical cancer even if you've had the HPV vaccine. You are also still at risk if you have only had one sexual partner, or not had sex, for a long time as you can have HPV for a long time without knowing.

Finding abnormal cell changes early means you can be monitored and treated so that they do not get a chance to turn into cervical cancer.

Menopause

The menopause usually occurs in women when they are aged between 45 and 55. It's a natural part of ageing, in which periods start to become less frequent, and eventually stop. Sometimes they can also stop suddenly. The menopause is due to hormone levels dropping.

Most women will experience some symptoms of the menopause. These can include:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats / difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Low mood or anxiety
- Vaginal dryness / reduced sex drive
- Forgetfulness

Menopause symptoms could be eased by eating a healthy balanced diet and staying active.

Do speak to your GP if your symptoms are hard to manage. Your GP might suggest Hormone Replacement Therapy or 'HRT' treatment to relieve symptoms.



Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens your bones which makes them fragile and more likely to break. Women are more at risk of developing osteoporosis than men, and the menopause accelerates bone loss. Osteoporosis can develop if you have had an early hysterectomy or an early menopause. Try to..

- **Eat a balanced diet** rich in calcium (found in milk, cheese, sardines, baked beans and leafy green vegetables) and Vitamin D
- **Exercise regularly** to keep your bones strong. Make sure you include weight-bearing activities such as walking or playing tennis
- **Avoid smoking**
- **Drink alcohol in moderation**

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) can help protect against osteoporosis. If you feel you are at risk, speak to your GP.



Healthy Eating

Making some small, positive changes to your diet can have a big impact on your health. Try to:

- Eat at least five portions of fruit and veg per day. Why not add some fruit on top of your breakfast cereal?
- Choose higher fibre foods such as wholewheat pasta or brown rice
- **Eat more chicken, fish, beans lentils** to make sure you have a protein rich diet and reduce intake of processed foods eg burgers and pies.
- **Keep an eye on your sugar, fat and salt intake** by restricting foods high in saturated fats e.g cakes, biscuits and cheese. The traffic light system on food labels is a great way to find how high in fat, sugar and salt your food is.
- **Drink enough water** - the NHS recommends we drink 6-8 glasses of water each day.



Smoking

It's never too late to quit. Stopping smoking is one of the absolute best things you can do to improve your health. It gives your lungs the chance to repair themselves - you will also be able to breathe easier too. Some more benefits are:

- Increased life expectancy
- Improved circulation, especially hands and feet
- Reduced risk of developing cancer
- Sense of smell and taste improves
- Your hair, skin, breath and clothes no longer smell of tobacco smoke
- Physical and mental health improves

For support and advice on quitting smoking, find your local stop smoking service on the NHS website and download the free NHS Quit Smoking app.

