



Western Health
and Social Care Trust

Looking After Yourself at Home

Click on this icon
throughout the
booklet to find
more information





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The Covid-19 pandemic has been a challenging time especially for those of us who have been spending more time at home, whether shielding, self-isolating or working from home. It has become even more important to look after our overall health and wellbeing.

Looking after our health is important for two reasons:

It can help us to stay healthy

If we do have a health concern, it can help us to manage it better.

This booklet provides ideas and information on practical and helpful ways we can support our health and wellbeing at home. Further help and support information can be found at the end of each section. The health topics covered in this booklet are:

- **Keeping Active**
- **Healthy Eating**
- **Cutting Down on Alcohol**
- **Support in Stopping Smoking**
- **Nurturing our Personal Resilience**
- **Money Advice**



Keeping Active

This section provides tips for keeping active while at home. Any form of physical activity is often referred to as a 'wonder drug'. Being active on a regular basis can help us feel good and prevent and manage some health conditions.

Most of us do not get enough physical activity. Even though we can be busy and on our feet a lot, most of us do not do enough activity to benefit our health.

When at home and if feeling well enough, we can take part in light exercise within our home or garden. Exercising makes us feel good both mentally and physically. Gardening or housework count as physical activity. Maybe try an online exercise video.



For more information on exercise click on the icon on the left or there are a number of videos available free on YouTube for all ages and different levels of ability.



Tips for Action

Ask what am I able to do?

Spending too much time sitting down is bad for our health. The evidence shows that breaking up sitting time and moving more can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease

Aim to be active every day. Try the target of 2½ hours activity a week or about 20 minutes a day which can be spread out during the day. All activity adds up

Start slow and build activity up gradually

Be aware of how our body feels and do not push it too far. Physical activity is not meant to be painful

It is important to stretch our muscles before and after activity

Regular activities should begin to take less time or take less out of ourselves

Try a number of activities before choosing what we like best

FOLLOW THE MOST UP-TO-DATE COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND.



Walking

Walking is the easiest and cheapest form of physical activity especially during Covid-19 restrictions. Age should be no barrier, we just need to take it at our pace and build it up gradually.

A step counter (pedometer) is a great way to motivate ourselves.

Depending on your health aim to walk, even a little, inside or outside your home every day.

Further Help and Support on Keeping Active

Contact the **Health Improvement, Equality and Involvement Department, WHSCT** on **028 7186 5127** during office hours.

For more information on keeping active click on the icon to the right.



For information on walking groups click on the icon to the right.



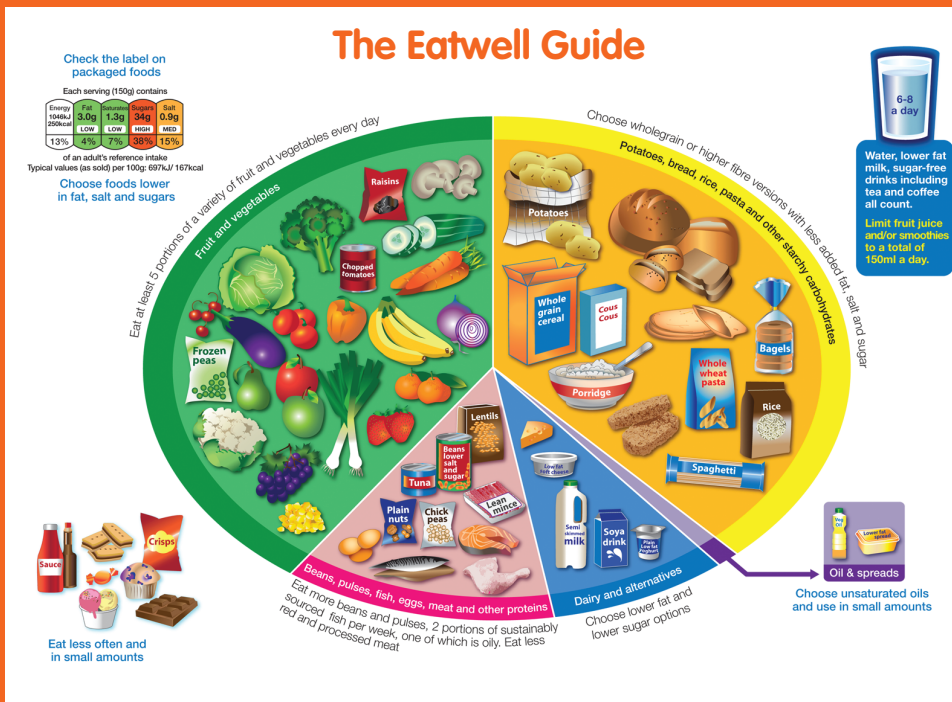
GP and Out of Hours services can always be contacted.

Healthy Eating

This section provide tips and advice to help us eat healthy which can make a big difference to our long term health. To help to achieve this, the Eatwell Guide (below) is the best model for good health.

The Eatwell Guide

With 5 main food groups this guide helps us to find a balance in how much from these groups we need. This balance and choosing a variety of foods will ensure we get all the nutrition we need.



Potatoes, Bread, Rice, Pasta and Other Starchy Carbohydrates

This food group should make up roughly one third of the food we eat each day. These foods are an important source of energy and fibre. Aim for more wholegrain varieties where possible.

Fruit and Vegetables

Important for vitamins, minerals and also fibre. We should eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily. Fresh, frozen, tinned and dried all count. Choosing a rainbow of colours will help you get a wide variety of nutrients.

Beans, Pulses, Fish, Eggs, Meat and Other Proteins

These foods are important for protein and iron. Aim for 2-3 servings each day. Using beans and pulses is a more sustainable and cost effective way to include protein in our diet. Aim for one portion of oil fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines) per week to make sure we get important Omega 3. Try to keep red meat and processed meats to a minimum (bacon, burgers, sausages, pies).

Dairy and Alternatives

Vital for calcium to help keep bones and teeth strong, aim for a couple of servings

each day. This could be 1 glass of milk, 30g of cheese and 125g pot of yogurt. Choose low fat and sugar varieties where possible. If using dairy alternatives such as soya milk, make sure it is calcium fortified and unsweetened.

Oils and Spreads

Choose unsaturated oils and spreads such as olive or rapeseed oils instead of butter or lard. Use only in small amounts.

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar such as sweets, crisps, biscuits and fizzy drinks should be kept to a minimum. These foods are high in calories but offer little nutrition.

Aim for 6-8 glasses of fluid per day. Water, low fat milk, tea and coffee all count.

Cut Down on Salt

Cutting down can help to reduce blood pressure along with making our diet healthier overall.

Try tasting food before adding salt. Make use of herbs and spices when cooking to add extra flavour.

Current guidelines are that adults should not have any more than 6g of salt per day. The majority of this will already be in the food we buy.



Checking the label

Using food labels can also help us make healthier choices.

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy 1046kJ 250kcal	Fat 3.0g LOW	Saturates 3.0g LOW	Sugars 34g HIGH	Salt 0.9g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adults reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/167Kcal

This front of pack labelling will tell us if a food is high (red), medium (amber) or low (green) in fat, sugar and salt. Aim for as many 'greens' as possible. These are a healthier option.

For more information on healthy eating click on the icon to the right.



Do I Think I Need to Lose Weight?

Being a healthy weight is an important part of protecting our health.



A man needs about 2,500 calories a day



A woman needs about 2,000 calories a day

Any concerns about weight, please contact your GP.

One of the simplest ways to find out if we are a healthy weight is to take the tape test.

Storing fat around our middle increases our risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. Measuring our waist will show if we are at higher risk.

Measure half way between the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hips (usually about tummy button level), and check against the table below.

	Low Risk	Increased Risk	High Risk
Men	37in (94cm) or less	37-40in (94-102cm)	40in (102cm) or more
Women	32in (80cm) or less	32-35in (80-88cm)	35in (88cm) or more



Further Help and Support on Healthy Eating

Contact the **Health Improvement, Equality and Involvement Department, WHSCT** on **028 7186 5127** during office hours.

For more information on the Choose to Live Better project click on the icon to the right.



GP and Out of Hours services can always be contacted.



Cutting Down on Alcohol

This section provides advice on cutting down on alcohol.

It is easy to drink more than what is recommended, particularly if we are using it to cope, have fun or relax. It is important to drink within the recommended guidelines to ensure we are not putting our health at increased risk. Excessive drinking, beyond the recommended guidelines can increase our risk of cancer, liver disease, stroke, high blood pressure and obesity. It can affect relationships with our family, partners and children and may lead to financial problems.

Alcohol can also negatively affect our health by lowering our mood and increasing anxiety.

Current guidelines state that it is safest not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol per week. If we regularly drink as much as 14 units per week, it is best to spread our drinking evenly over three or more days. If we have one or two heavy drinking episodes a week, we increase your risk of long-term illness and injury.



Explained: Low Risk Drinking Guidelines

To keep health risks from alcohol to a low level, men and women should not regularly drink more than **14 units a week**, spreading them evenly over three or more days.

What Do 14 Units Look Like?

**6 Pints of
Beer a Week**



Based on
567ml
4% ABV

OR

**6 Medium Glasses
of Wine a Week**



Based on
175ml
13.5%
ABV

Further Help and Support on Cutting Down on Alcohol

For more information on alcohol and help for cutting back click on the icon to the right.



For further contacts for information and help on alcohol and drugs click on the icon to the right.



0800 254 5123 (ASCERT)

**GP and Out of Hours services can
always be contacted.**

Support in Stopping Smoking

**This section provide facts, tips
and support on how we can
stop smoking.**

If we smoke, giving up is probably the greatest single step we can take to improve our health.

Smoking increases our chance of developing a range of life threatening diseases including heart disease, lung disease, stroke and cancers.

Stopping is a good way to reduce the risk. Each cigarette contains over 4000 toxic chemicals, including some which are direct cancer-causing agents.



It is never too late to quit, the benefits of stopping smoking can be immediate such as within 48 hours.

20 minutes Blood pressure and pulse return to normal

8 hours Nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood reduce by half and oxygen levels return to normal

24 hours Carbon monoxide and nicotine will be cleared from the body

48 hours Ability to taste and smell is improved

72 hours Breathing becomes easier

2-12 weeks Circulation within the body improves as well as lung function so we may notice a decrease in wheeze, coughing and breathing problems

1 year Risk of heart attack is half that of a smoker

5 years Risk of stroke is reduced to take of a non-smoker in most cases

10 years Risk of lung cancer falls to half that of a smoker.

15 years Risk of having a heart attack falls to that of a non-smoker

Do you Know how Much it Really Costs to Smoke?

Average price of a pack of 20 cigarettes is £10.80

Cigarettes a day	24 Hours 1 Day	1 Week	1 Month (Average 30 Days in a Month)	1 Year	5 Years
5	£2.70	£18.90	£81	£985.50	£4,927.50
10	£5.40	£37.80	£162	£1,971	£9,855
20	£10.80	£75.60	£324	£3,942	£19,710
30	£16.20	£113.40	£486	£5,913	£29,565
40	£21.60	£151.20	£648	£7,884	£39,420

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Licensed NRT really does work. They come in a variety of forms such as chewing gum, patches, sprays, inhalator, oral strips, lozenges and tablets. They have all been scientifically tested and results show they double your chances of stopping. Evidence shows smokers who avail of



Stop Smoking Specialist Services quadruple their chances of successfully quitting. NRT may be free when enrolling in one of the specialist programmes.

NRT works by getting nicotine into our system to cope with nicotine withdrawal cravings without the other harmful, toxic chemicals. It is the nicotine that is addictive, so while we progress through our quit attempt, we can still get nicotine by using NRT without the increased risk of cancer or heart disease that comes with smoking cigarettes. Remember NRT is not a magic cure, it is not meant to feel the same as smoking, it is meant to help us stop smoking. Once we are comfortable not smoking we can cut down NRT gradually if necessary to eventually stop completely.

Other medications are available such as bupropion (Zyban) and varenicline (Champix). Speak to your GP or Smoking Cessation Specialist Nurse about these prescription only drugs.

Smoking Cessation

Smoking Cessation support and information on NRT and other smoking cessation support products are available through your GP, pharmacies and your local Smoking Cessation Service. Please check that your local pharmacy is still offering smoking cessation services during Covid-19 pandemic prior to your visit.

Further Help and Support on Stopping Smoking



For more information on stopping smoking click on the icon to the left.

Specialist Smoking Cessation Support Team
Helpline number **0800 9179 388**

Face to face drop in community clinics have been suspended at present due to Covid-19 until further notice, however we offer telephone consultations in place of this. For more information please call the above helpline.

GP and Out of Hours services can always be contacted.



Nurturing our Personal Resilience

This section provides tips for building personal wellbeing – things that we can do for ourselves and sources of help, advice and support when we need that little bit extra.

It is really important to look after and prioritise your mental health at this time and recognise that feelings of stress and being overwhelmed are completely normal in this unusual time.

Remember that managing our emotional wellbeing is as important as looking after our physical health and that it's OK not to be OK. Talk to family, friends and colleagues about how we feel. Try not to bottle our emotions up. If things get too much, seek help. Speak to your GP, or your manager if it is work-related, or have a look in the Help and Support section for other sources of help available.

Simple lifestyle changes like looking after ourselves and having people to talk to can help. Click on the icon to the left to visit the Covid Wellbeing NI website for more information and to access a range of self-help guides.



Sleep Well

A good night's sleep will help to enhancing mood, controlling stress and can even help with weight control! Create the conditions for sleep – try go to bed and get up at the same time. Having some time at the end of the day to wind down and clear our mind away from technology and screens. Make sure our room is cool and dark. Have a bath, read a book, try some creative writing or listen to some relaxing music. Visit the National Sleep Foundation website **www.sleepfoundation.org/** for more information.

Take 5 Steps for Mental Wellbeing

Take 5 is the Public Health Agency's framework for resilience. Try to build this into our daily life (taking into account current Covid-19 government guidance) and think of them as our 'five a day' for wellbeing!



Connect It is good to talk! Connect with the people around us: family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, and school or in our



local community. If this cannot be safely done face to face, pick up the phone, use a video call service or have a socially-distanced chat and a cup of tea with our neighbour over the garden fence. If we are working from home, stay in touch with the people we work with by having regular virtual coffee breaks where we can talk about more than just work!

Be active Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising, especially outdoors, supports our immune system and makes us feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that we enjoy and one that suits our level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice Stop, pause, or take a moment to look around us. What can we see, feel, hear, smell or even taste? Look for beautiful, new, unusual or extraordinary things in our everyday life and think about how that makes us feel. Making time to relax has never been more important. Try meditation or breathing exercise to calm the mind. Do something that we really enjoy like baking a cake – something where we can focus only on what



we are doing at that moment can help us to unwind. It is so helpful to keep us aware of the present moment rather than thinking of the past or into the future.



Keep learning Try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, and learn to play an instrument or how to cook our favourite food. Set a challenge we will enjoy. Learning new things will make us more confident, as well as being fun to do. For those of us working from home, it can be easy to lose track of time and miss lunch and tea breaks. Set a reminder on our phone for regular breaks where we get up and leave our screen and in between, drink plenty of water and have regular snacks of fruit and vegetables, to keep our energy levels up.



Give Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer our time or consider joining a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing ourselves and our happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around us.



Further Help and Support on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Put the Lifeline number into our mobile phone and encourage family, friends and colleagues to do the same. Lifeline is a crisis response helpline service operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If in distress or despair, call Lifeline on **0808 808 8000** and talk to an experienced counsellor in confidence.

If you are a child or young person you can talk to Childline by phoning: **0800 1111** for free, 24 hours a day or click on the icon to the right for more information about Childline.



Samaritans provides a safe space for you to talk: **116 123**

24 hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline: Free phone support, advice and signposting for men and women: **0808 802 1414**

NSPCC helpline – helping adults
protect children **0808 800 5000**

Inspire Workplace helpline
0808 800 0002



For all other local helplines for
a variety of services in Northern
Ireland, including Covid-19 helplines,
please click on the icon to the left.

**GP and Out of Hours services can
always be contacted.**



Money Advice

This section provides contact numbers for organisations who provide advice on money worries and pensions.



Do you need advice? The Independent Advice Network provides free advice and information.

Benefits

Debt & Money Advice

Business Debt

Tax Credits & HMRC Products

EU Settlement Scheme

Covid-19 Community

FREEPHONE 0800 915 4604

Text action to 81025

Email: advice@adviceni.net

For further information about Advice NI click on the icon to the right.





The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) helps people make the most of their money and pensions. We offer impartial and free information and guidance on pensions and money issues. You can contact MaPS across a range of channels with any money and pension related question or issue that you may have.

We will not tell you what you need to do or what products you should choose, but we will help you think through the implications and, when necessary, talk you through how you can access regulated financial advice and stay safe in your financial dealings.

We operate under a number of brands. Our service will never contact you out of the blue, recommend any product and it is illegal to impersonate MaPS, Pension Wise, The Pensions Advisory Service or Money Advice Service. Our role is to offer a safe place to go with any money and pensions worries that you may have. For more information click on the icon to the left.





Debt & Borrowing

Homes & Mortgages

Budgeting & Saving

Work & Benefits

Pensions & Retirement

Family & Care

Cars & Travel

Insurance

For more information about the Money Advice Service click on the icon to the right.



WhatsApp: +447701342744

Telephone Helpline: 0800 138 7777

Monday to Friday-8am to 6pm

The PENSIONS Advisory Service



For more information on the Pensions Advisory Service click on the icon to the left.

Pensions helpline: 0800 011 3797



For more information on Pension Wise click on the icon to the left.

**Appointment booking line:
0800 138 3944**



Important Contact Numbers, Websites, Email Addresses

Important Contact Numbers, Websites, Email Addresses



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The information in this directory is believed to be correct at time of going to print. Where any specific organisation or service is mentioned by name or otherwise this does not necessarily constitute or imply any endorsement or recommendation by the WH&SCT of that organisation or service.

