



Newsletter

March 2023

We love seeing all the trees starting to bud, the first blossom on the trees and we're starting to feel positive about the lighter days.

Why not spend sometime outside today? Being outdoors can help in many ways, it can

- * improve your mood.
- * reduce feelings of stress or anger.
- * help you take time out and feel more relaxed.
- * improve your physical health.
- * improve your confidence and self-esteem.
- * help you be more active.
- * help you meet and get to know new people.
- * connect you to your local community.

Spending time in nature has been found to help with mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. For example, research into ecotherapy (a type of formal treatment which involves doing activities outside in nature) has shown it can help with mild to moderate depression. This might be due to combining regular physical activity and social contact with being outside in nature.



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Being outside in natural light can be helpful if you experience seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of depression that affects people during particular seasons or times of year. And people tell us that getting into nature has helped them with many other types of mental health problems.

If you can, step outside today - happy first day of spring!

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, 1-31st March

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month focuses on the symptoms of ovarian cancer, how to spot if symptoms are developing, and what you can do to find out more if you're concerned. Some symptoms may include: persistent stomach pain, persistent bloating, difficulty eating or needing to wee more often than usual. If you're concerned that you may be experiencing any of these symptoms, please make an appointment with your GP.

<https://ovarian.org.uk/ovarian-cancer/ovarian-cancer-symptoms/>

There are ways in which you can lower your risk of getting ovarian cancer. These include quitting smoking, staying a healthy weight, or losing weight if you're overweight, and speaking to a GP if you're already aware that ovarian cancer runs in your family. These measures may not prevent the development of ovarian cancer, but they can help to lessen the factors that may cause its development. For more advice, you can see the NHS website, or speak to a GP. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ovarian-cancer/causes/>

Haemophilia Awareness Month, 1-31st March

Every March, awareness is brought to people with inherited blood diseases, letting patients and families with haemophilia and other blood diseases share their lives, stories, struggles and successes. You can get involved and show support by donating, or joining in with the challenges set throughout the month.

<https://www.hemophilia.org/give/join-us/bleeding-disorders-awareness-month>

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer, unfortunately, affects large numbers of women and some men. There are ways to try to identify breast cancer early on, and one way of doing this might be by spotting the symptoms. The symptoms of breast cancer can include: a new lump in your armpit, a change in the shape, size



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or feel of your breast, skin changes in the breast and nipple, and fluid leaking from the nipple in someone who isn't pregnant or breastfeeding. More usually, these symptoms can be caused by something else, but if you spot them, it's important that you get them checked as soon as possible, so do please make an appointment with your GP.

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/breast-cancer/symptoms>

Breast cancer in men can occur, usually in men over 60, but it can happen to anyone. Some unknown symptoms of breast cancer in men can include: feeling tired all the time, aching bones, shortness of breath, feeling sick, and jaundice. These symptoms often go alongside the more typical breast cancer symptoms. If you're concerned about any symptoms, it's important to make an appointment with your GP, to be on the safe side.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer-in-men/symptoms/>

There are many 'Race for Life' events taking place, which range from 3k to 10k, also including races for children. Race for Life can be a great way to raise money for cancer research, and to raise awareness on behalf of people you might know who have been affected by cancer. <https://raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org>

Prostate Cancer

It has been found that 1 in 8 men will develop prostate cancer. You might be at a higher risk if you're black, or if your dad or brother have had it. Symptoms can include: difficulty urinating, feeling that your bladder hasn't emptied properly, needing to urinate more often than usual, or a sudden urge to go to the toilet. If you're worried that any of these symptoms apply to you, then you should book an appointment with your GP.

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information/about-prostate-cancer/prostate-cancer-symptoms>

If you're already suffering from prostate cancer, there are many organisations that can help. Resources such as 'Cancer Chat' can help you to speak to other people in your situation, and speak to someone else who understands how you're feeling. If you and your family are worrying about other issues such as money, childcare or changes to your house, there are ways in which you can be helped. You can also find support groups for prostate cancer near you.

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/prostate-cancer/practical-emotional-support/coping>

Healthy Diet in Children

Providing a healthy diet for your children is a key factor for healthy development. You should aim to



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encourage your child to eat 5 fruits or vegetables per day. You should also make sure they're getting enough iron, protein and calcium. The consumption of any sugary foods should happen alongside meals, rather than as a separate snack, to help maintain a healthy diet. Another way to aid a healthy diet is by providing a daily vitamin, especially for younger children. For more advice on how to provide your children with a healthy lifestyle, you can have a look at the BDA website.

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/healthy-eating-for-children.html>

Child Abuse and Safeguarding

Protecting children from abuse, and making sure we can properly protect them from harm, is very important. There are many settings where safeguarding can be implemented, including schools, positions of trust, performing arts, tutors and other scenarios on a daily basis. There are many ways to find out more, to ensure that the children around you are all safe and properly cared

for. <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection>

STIs

If you're a young person engaging in sexual relationships, it's important to make sure you're protecting yourself from sexually transmitted infections. You can usually get protection from sexual health clinics for free, or you can ask a trusted adult if you're worried about getting protection yourself. It's also important to remember that STIs can spread through touching, not just intercourse. There are websites where you can find out more, and which can help you to identify symptoms. If you have symptoms, you should make an appointment with your GP or your sexual health clinic. As long as you're not in danger, they won't tell anyone.

<https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/se...ay-have-a-sexually-transmitted-infection-sti/>

Birth Defect Prevention

Birth defects can be caused by many factors, some of which, such as genetics, are not preventable. However, there are some things you can do to reduce the likelihood of a birth defect if you're pregnant. These can include: maintaining a healthy diet, avoiding tobacco or alcohol, staying away from pesticides, and supplementing your diet with Folic Acid. To find out more information about how to prevent birth defects, see below: [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/birth-defects)

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Hearing Problems and Loss

Hearing loss happens due to the signals from your ear to your brain not working properly. Hearing loss can occur naturally from aging, or it can be caused by a blockage or damage to your eardrum.



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Hearing loss isn't preventable, but ensuring that you don't listen to prolonged loud noise, and do use ear protection when at a concert or in a noisy work environment, may help. If you have concerns about hearing loss, you should speak to your GP.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/ears-nose-and-throat/hearing-loss>

Cost of Living Crisis – Energy Bills

If you're one of the thousands of people using a pre-pay meter for your energy, you may not have received all the help you're entitled to with your energy bills. Around 380,000 vouchers were unclaimed in October and November, and the total scheme is worth around £400 per household, so if you're not sure whether you've received yours, it's worth checking. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-64541204>

Eating Disorders Awareness Week, 1st-7th March

This year's Eating Disorders Awareness Week focuses on the fact that men can suffer from eating disorders too. It has been found that 1 in 4 people who suffer from an eating disorder are men. This year really focuses on men sharing their stories about eating disorders and speaking to others about their experiences. You can help by donating, sharing your story, or just taking the time to read someone else's. The more that men with eating disorders are heard, the sooner the stereotype will be broken. If you're concerned about yourself or someone else, you can reach out for professional advice, or to find out more about Eating Disorders Awareness Week, you can see the BEAT website. <https://edaw.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>

If you or someone you know is struggling with eating, it can be difficult to know if it's just a lack of time or appetite, or if there's something more serious going on. It's important to recognise that eating problems don't always mean that someone has to be underweight, or look visibly unwell. Eating disorders and relationships with food are not a physical appearance, they are behaviours. If you or someone you know is struggling with their relationship with food, or you want to find out more, there are many people that can help. <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/eating-problems/about-eating-problems/>

Reaching out can be difficult, but there are helplines that you can call if you need to speak to someone about the problems you're having with your relationship with food. <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/get-help-for-myself/i-need-support-now/helplines/>

Overseas NHS Workers Day, 3rd March



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Overseas NHS Workers Day takes place on 3rd March this year. Overseas NHS Workers Day aims to appreciate the efforts that overseas workers made during the COVID-19 pandemic, and have continued to make on a daily basis within the NHS. There are a few ways in which you can celebrate Overseas NHS Workers Day; these can include: wearing green and blue, thanking someone in person, or holding a moment of silence. <https://www.dauk.org/overseas-nhs-workers-day-2023/>

International Women's Day, 8th March

International Women's Day focuses on ensuring equality for women all over the world. You can get involved by posting an "embrace equality" photo, or sharing other people's photos. This year's International Women's Day also focuses on women in agriculture in partnership with John Deere. To find out more, you can see the 'International Women's Day' website: <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Influencers>

No Smoking Day, 8th March

No Smoking Day is an annual awareness day in the UK which aims to help smokers who are quitting smoking. This year's theme is that stopping smoking will help your overall brain health. It has been shown that smoking has a direct link to the development of Alzheimer's, and only 18% of smokers are aware of this risk. 'Today is the day' is providing a toolkit to help smokers begin to see the effects of smoking, and to help them with their first steps to stopping smoking. <https://www.todayistheday.co.uk>

Smoking can cause issues in many parts of the body, not just the lungs. Some of these include: the mouth, the throat, the voice box, the bladder, the bowel, etc. The effects of smoking can be devastating, and ultimately fatal. Understanding the risks is important, and help can be found easily. You can book an appointment with your GP, or call the NHS helpline. <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/lifestyle/what-are-the-health-risks-of-smoking/>

E-cigarettes are commonly used among the younger population, but are you aware of the risks? Vapes and E-cigarettes have been found to cause reduced development in the adolescent brain, due to nicotine changing how the nerves in the brain work. Using vapes can also greatly impact your mental health, and can cause nicotine dependence. Even if you think you're using a 0% nicotine vape, it's unlikely that you actually are, as many nicotine-free vapes have been found to still contain nicotine. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html

World Kidney Day, 11th March



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World Kidney Day is aimed at making people aware of how important our kidneys are and reducing the frequency of kidney disease. Chronic kidney disease affects 1 in 10 people around the world, and, in the most serious cases, can cause patients to require lifelong care and medication. World Kidney Day takes place all over the globe, with many countries getting involved and raising awareness. You can get involved by donating or by participating in the social media challenges that the 'World Kidney Day' website has set. <https://www.worldkidneyday.org>

There are ways in which you can aim to prevent kidney disease. Some of these include: exercising regularly, monitoring alcohol consumption, maintaining a healthy weight, being careful when taking painkillers, or using the NHS kidney risk calculator. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-disease/prevention/>

Young Carers Action Day, 15th March

This year's Young Carers Action Day focuses on making time for young carers. The Carers Trust is aiming to bring in new implementations, such as breaks at school and more financial and counselling support. Young Carers Action Day also aims to encourage young carers to reach out and ask for help when they need it.

<https://carers.org/young-carers-action-day-2023/young-carers-action-day-2023-1>

If you're a young carer who needs help, there are many people who are ready to listen and support you.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-for-carers/help-for-young-carers/>

Swallow Awareness Day, 15th March

Swallow Awareness Day takes place as part of Nutrition and Hydration week. It focuses on people living with conditions that affect their ability to swallow, causing difficulty with eating and drinking on a daily basis. <https://www.rcslt.org/events/swallowing-awareness-day-2023/#section>

Nutrition and Hydration Week, 13-19th March

Nutrition and Hydration Week is an annual week that aims to highlight, promote and celebrate improvements in hydration and nutrition locally and on a wider scale. There's a global tea party on the Wednesday, which takes place over social media. There's also a continued focus on nutrition and hydration in places such as schools, health and social care settings, and the hospitality industry. <https://nutritionandhydrationweek.co.uk>



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Healthcare Science Week, 13th-19th March

Healthcare Science Week focuses on the many careers in the healthcare research sector of the NHS. Healthcare Science Week allows Trusts to tell their local community and other healthcare professionals about the ways in which science and technology are vital in modern technology for patient care and medical techniques. Trusts might have displays in a public-facing area, or present slideshows in schools or colleges to educate the wider community. You can also participate on a smaller level by posting the #HCSWeek23. There are other ways to get involved too! <https://nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/healthcare...cience-to-the-public/healthcare-science-week/>

World Sleep Day, 17th March

World Sleep Day focuses on the importance of sleeping properly for good physical and mental health. This year is focusing on the fact that sleep is a necessity for a healthy lifestyle, although it's not usually mentioned as a key factor in advice for healthy living. To get involved, you can share a post on social media using the #WorldSleepDay. <https://worldsleepday.org>

World Oral Health Day, 20th March

World Oral Health Day aims to raise awareness about good oral health, and aims to educate everyone and provide them with the skills to implement good oral health. Oral health problems can occur all around the world, and can be easily prevented if they're caught in the early stages, preventing it from developing into something more serious. The FDI encourages everyone to get involved and spread awareness about oral health. <https://www.worldoralhealthday.org/about>

Gum disease can be very common, but it's important to see a dentist if you notice symptoms. Symptoms can include: bleeding gums, and swollen and sore gums. It can also lead to: bad breath, shrinking gums and loss of teeth. It's important to maintain regular dental appointments, and to get in touch with your dentist if you notice any issues. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gum-disease/>

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 21st March

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination will take place on 21st March. This day focuses on being united against racism, and spreading kindness, and promotes the idea that equality should be expected. You can get involved by posting on social media, promoting equality and having educational discussions with the local community. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day>



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Epilepsy Awareness, 26th March

Purple Day aims to raise awareness for people living with epilepsy. Epilepsy affects a significant number of people, whether they're sufferers or know someone who's suffering. This day encourages people to wear purple to show their support for people living with epilepsy. <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/involved/fundraising/purple-day>

International Trans Day of Visibility, 31st March

The International Trans Day of Visibility aims to shed light on the struggles that transgender and non-binary people face on a daily basis. This year focuses on the 'I am enough' campaign. It aims to show acceptance of individuals' identities without needing to surgically make changes, and to promote self-declaration of gender identity and the visibility of non-binary identities. The campaign is split into two sections: 'I am enough' and 'You are enough', so everyone can get involved and spread awareness. You can also make a donation, or simply just raise awareness locally by speaking to the community. <https://lgbt.foundation/rainbowbuddies>

If you're a young person who's part of the LGBTQ+ community and need some help or advice, there are many places you can go. Websites such as 'The Proud Trust' have resources such as a webchat, and they can help with advice ranging from staying safe, to faith and religion. They can also help to put you in touch with people in similar situations to you, or you can read stories from other people's experiences. <https://www.theproudtrust.org/young-people/>