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## Newsletter

### September 2023

#### **Know your numbers (blood pressure): 4th-10th September**

“Know Your Numbers!” Week is all about getting your free blood-pressure check, and making sure your numbers are within the normal range. The ideal blood pressure is 120/80. Over 6,000,000 people in the UK have high blood pressure and do not realise it, which leads to strokes and heart attacks that could have been prevented. Knowing what your blood pressure is can mean you’re able to make the right choices and look after your body properly.

Some people with high blood pressure may experience symptoms, which can be a tell-tale sign that you need to get your blood pressure checked. Some examples of symptoms are: blurred vision, nosebleeds, shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness and headaches. You can start to lower your blood pressure by eating less salt and more fruit and veg, losing weight, drinking less alcohol and being more active.

<https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/know-your-numbers/>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/risk-factors/high-blood-pressure/symptoms-and-treatment>

#### **Hot weather advice for elderly people**

Staying cool in the heat is very important to protect your health. If you’re outside, it’s important to stay out of direct sunlight and have plenty of water with you. Wearing lightweight clothing can also help you to stay cool, and regularly applying sunscreen is important, even if it doesn’t seem sunny. Staying cool inside is also important. You can do this by closing the blinds or curtains and having a cool bath or shower. Also, you may possibly want to move any medication to the fridge when it’s really hot.

It’s important to make sure you’re staying hydrated during the summer. Keeping a full water bottle with you and drinking even if you aren’t thirsty are the best ways to stay hydrated. It’s important to know the signs of dehydration and what to do if you start to notice them. <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/informatio...down and windows,fridge when it's really hot.>

[https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalasse...s/ageukil1\\_staying\\_cool\\_in\\_a\\_heatwave\\_inf.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalasse...s/ageukil1_staying_cool_in_a_heatwave_inf.pdf)

#### **World Suicide Prevention Day: 10th September**

World Suicide Prevention Day takes place every year on 10th September and encourages us to talk to other people and take action if you’re concerned that someone could be seriously struggling with their mental health. You can find some ways that might help you to bring up the conversation with the person you’re worried about on the Samaritans website. You can also discover what kinds of social-media content may be



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harmful, and how to prevent sharing anything that may be harmful to someone's mental health.

<https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/world-suicide-prevention-day/>

### **World Sepsis Day: 13th September**

Sepsis can be fatal, and it's important to know the signs and symptoms. In adults and older children, the symptoms can be concerning. Symptoms can include: confusion and slurred speech, blue or grey blotchy skin, a rash that doesn't fade when you roll a glass over it, and irregular breathing or shortness of breath. The symptoms can be signs of the fatal reaction and it's important to call either 999 or 111 if you have any suspicions of sepsis.

World Sepsis Day raises awareness of sepsis, and encourages many challenges and events to take place in support of World Sepsis Day. There are many social-media challenges that you can support if you can't hold or attend an event yourself, or there are suggestions on the types of events you could organise and how to get started.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis/>

<https://www.worldsepsisday.org/wsd2023>

### **World Patient Safety Day: 17th September**

World Patient Safety Day helps to promote safety for all patients, and aims to help with eliminating any part of the healthcare system that might cause harm to patients. This campaign focuses on patient safety being a priority all around the world, and aims to help governments to understand ways in which they can make their healthcare systems safer. To find out more, you can see the link below.

<https://www.iapo.org.uk/world-patient-safety-day>

### **National Eye Health Week: 18th-24th September**

National Eye Health Week promotes the importance of good eye health and regular eye tests; you can take part in the eye health questionnaire, the eye health calculator, listen to the Vision Matters podcast, or find out more about how to properly look after your eyes. Over 2,000,000 people in the UK suffer with sight loss severe enough to impact their daily lives. It is important to regularly check on your eye health, especially as you get older, to ensure that you catch any problems as early as possible.

<https://www.visionmatters.org.uk/>

### **National Fitness Day: 20th September**

National Fitness Day helps to highlight the importance of fitness across the UK, and leading a healthy



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lifestyle that includes regular exercise. National Fitness Day aims to be the start of a regular fitness journey, not just a one-day event. To get involved, you can buy a NFD T-shirt to wear whilst exercising or to post on social media. National Fitness Day is about each person doing what they can to stay fit, and what fitness means to you. To find out more, please see the website below.

<https://www.nationalfitnessday.com/#national-fitness-day-more>

### **Organ Donation Week: 18th-24th September**

This year's Organ Donation Week focuses on children and young people for the first time. This year concentrates on how lonely it can feel living with an illness. From September, children in secondary schools will be offered lessons on organ donation, and there will be promotion for the decision for young drivers to be registered as organ donors.

Since 2020, all adults have been given the 'opt out' decision on organ donation, but you can register your preference so that your family are aware of your wishes. To find out more about organ donation and to support Organ Donation Week, please see the link below.

<https://www.blood.co.uk/news-and-campaigns/the-donor/latest-stories/it-s-organ-donation-week/>

<https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/uk-laws/organ-donation-law-in-england/>

### **Migraine Awareness Week: 24th-30th September**

Migraines can be difficult to live with, so knowing how to help with the symptoms might be useful. You can try to sleep or lie down in a dark room, avoid things that trigger your migraines, drink plenty of water, try to stay within a healthy weight range, try to manage your stress, and more. To find out other ways to help your migraines, or what to do if you think you have migraine symptoms, you can visit the NHS website.

This year's Migraine Awareness Week is about providing better care for the 1 in 7 adults and 1 in 10 children who suffer with migraines. It aims to stop migraines being considered as 'just a headache', and focuses more on the impacts that living with a migraine can actually have on a person's life. You can help by joining in on social media, fundraising and getting involved in your local community.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/migraine/>

<https://migrainetrust.org/news/migraine-awareness-week-2023/>

### **World's biggest coffee morning: 29th September**

The official coffee morning for Macmillan Cancer Support is on 29th September; however, you can host a coffee morning on any day throughout the year. The money raised from the Macmillan Coffee Mornings goes towards the life-saving cancer work that's done by Macmillan. It goes towards funding nurses, answering calls on the support line and giving financial support to patients and families.



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If you're hosting a coffee morning for Macmillan Cancer Support, you can be sent a free coffee morning kit, which includes balloons, a tablecloth and bunting, or the lighter kit which uses less paper and no plastic. <https://coffee.macmillan.org.uk/>

<https://coffee.macmillan.org.uk/about/coffee-morning-fundraising-kits/>

### **Blood Cancer Awareness Month**

September is Blood Cancer Awareness Month and the focus this year is talking about the symptoms of lymphoma, and how you can get involved in supporting lymphoma awareness. There are people available for you to call; you can discuss with them your experience of lymphoma, stories of people who have suffered with lymphoma, and a number that you can text to donate.

<https://lymphoma-action.org.uk/lets-talk-lymphoma-september>

### **Bone marrow donation**

Bone marrow is the spongy tissue found within your bones. This is where blood stem cells are, which produce blood cells that carry oxygen and white blood cells to fight infection. Some diseases, such as leukaemia, can prevent stem cells from producing blood cells. Sometimes, the best way to help treat such diseases is by replacing the bone marrow with healthy bone marrow. You can find out more about being on the bone marrow registry by clicking the link below.

<https://www.bbmr.co.uk/>

### **Flu vaccination**

Influenza will shortly be circulating; if you're eligible for a flu vaccination, please make an appointment with us to have yours early in the season. If you're eligible for a free flu vaccination, please get in contact with us.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/>

### **Cardiovascular disease**

Cardiovascular disease refers to any conditions affecting the heart or blood vessels. The four main types are: coronary heart disease, strokes and TIAs, peripheral arterial disease, and aortic disease. If you're over the age of 40, you'll be invited for a health check every five years, which will include checking your individual CVD risk. Things that can increase your CVD risk are smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, being overweight or being very inactive. To find out more about the causes of CVD and how you can help to lower your chances of suffering, you can visit the NHS website.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cardiovascular-disease/>



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## Brain aneurysm

A brain aneurysm is caused by a bulge in a blood vessel, which is caused by a weakness in the blood vessel wall. Blood passing through this weak area then causes a bulge, and these can cause some serious problems if they rupture. Symptoms of a brain aneurysm include a sudden headache, vomiting, a stiff neck and pain caused by light sensitivity. If you think someone has a brain aneurysm, it's important to call 999 immediately.

Preventing brain aneurysms is crucial, and knowing what causes them could help to save your life. It's important to avoid habits such as smoking, eating a high-fat diet, not controlling your blood pressure, or being overweight. Try to manage these risk factors as much as possible to reduce your likelihood of suffering a brain aneurysm.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/brain-aneurysm/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/brain-aneurysm/prevention/>

## Vitamin D supplements

Vitamin D is very important as it helps to regulate calcium and phosphate in the body, which are used for bones, teeth and muscles. You can get vitamin D from oily fish, red meat, liver, egg yolks and fortified foods such as breakfast cereals. You can also take a vitamin D supplement, particularly in the winter months to ensure you're getting enough vitamin D. You can get these from most health stores.

Not having enough vitamin D can cause rickets, which affects bone development in children. This isn't a common condition anymore, but cases are rising. The only way to prevent rickets is by making sure you have enough vitamin D, and the only way to treat this condition is to have a diet rich in vitamin D. Some families are entitled to free vitamin supplements through the Healthy Start scheme, so it's important to find out if this applies to you:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/rickets-and-osteomalacia/>

## Back-to-work blues

Back-to-work blues are a real thing! Returning to work after time off or a holiday can be hard, and it can be difficult to get back into the swing of a regular routine again. It's important to take steps to try not to overwhelm yourself while getting back to work, and there are tips and tricks that you can follow to make it easier for you:

<https://healthify.nz/hauora-wellbeing/m/mental-health-how-to-beat-the-back-to-work-blues/>



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## Travel

Making sure you have a GHIC (Global Healthcare Cover Abroad) is very important if you're going to be travelling this summer. Applying for a GHIC is free of charge and fairly easy, as long as you make sure you're using the correct websites. Having a GHIC will allow you to access medically necessary healthcare abroad, such as A&E or other emergency care. To find out whether you can apply for a GHIC, and how to do it, please explore the NHS website.

Ensuring you have travel insurance that covers you whilst you're abroad is very important. It's a good idea to check whether your travel insurance includes medical cover or not, as needing healthcare in a different country can be expensive if you have no medical cover. Make sure you use a trusted travel insurance company, and look at the details of the policy before purchasing it, to make sure it's exactly what you're expecting.

Making sure that babies and children stay hydrated and protected from the sun, to prevent heat stroke and sunburn, is vital for their health. If you have a baby, it's important to make sure they're kept out of direct sunlight and that a suncream of at least 30 SPF is used. If you have a very young baby, you may want to feed them more often than usual as they don't need water, but it's important to make sure they stay hydrated.

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/he...-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/safety/safety-in-the-sun/>

## Cholesterol

High cholesterol can be a serious issue for your overall physical health. High cholesterol can cause fully or partially blocked blood vessels, which may eventually lead to strokes or a heart attack. The main causes of high cholesterol are smoking, eating fatty foods, not exercising enough and regularly drinking alcohol. There are no symptoms of high cholesterol, and you can only find out through a blood test.

There are ways to naturally lower your cholesterol. These can include: eating more oily fish, reducing your saturated fat intake, eating fewer fatty foods, exercising more, stopping smoking or cutting down on regular drinking. These are methods that may be able to lower cholesterol before it becomes dangerous, and they can improve your overall health.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-cholesterol/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-cholesterol/how-to-lower-your-cholesterol/>



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### **Ovarian cancer**

Your risk of developing ovarian cancer increases once you reach the age of 65. You may have an increased risk of ovarian cancer if you have the BRCA gene, if you have previously had breast or bowel cancer, if you have endometriosis or diabetes, if you have previously had radiotherapy, if you started your period or menopause late, and other factors. To find out how you can reduce your risk of ovarian cancer, please see the link below.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ovarian-cancer/causes/>

### **Prostate health**

Prostate problems are common in men over the age of 50. Symptoms of problems with your prostate are: difficulty starting or stopping urinating, a weak flow of urine, feeling like you're not able to properly empty your bladder, needing to pee more often than normal or waking up several times in the night needing to pee. If you're concerned that you're suffering from any of these problems, you should contact your GP practice as soon as possible.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-problems/>

### **NSPCC Let's Talk PANTS**

Let's Talk PANTS is designed to help keep your child safe from sexual abuse. You can bring up PANTS in many different ways; you can read the new PANTS book with your children, sing along to the pantosaurus song when going swimming or at bath time, or just after school on the walk home or in the car. There are many ways to talk about PANTS with your children, and there are a wide range of videos and resources to help you get started having the conversation with your children. To find out more about ways to speak to your children about PANTS, and what it really means, you can see the link to the NSPCC website below.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule/>

### **Alzheimer's disease**

Alzheimer's disease affects many patients and families across the UK. It's important to be aware of the early symptoms of Alzheimer's, so that you can get the correct care for yourself or family members who may show symptoms. Symptoms can include: forgetting events or conversations, getting lost in familiar places or on a familiar journey, forgetting appointments or specific dates and becoming increasingly disorganised. If you're worried that you or someone you care about may be suffering with these symptoms, please do get in touch as soon as possible.

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about...tia/alzheimers-disease-symptoms#content-start>