

Newsletter **January 2023**



National Obesity Awareness Week, 8th - 14th January

Obesity is a growing problem, with 50% of the UK population expected to be obese by 2050. Obesity has long-term impacts on your health and fitness.

If you'd like to move more, to help you lose or stabilise your weight, you might consider a programme like 'Couch to 5k'. Designed for those who aren't currently doing a large amount of physical activity, it helps you to run for 30 minutes within 9 weeks.

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

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/running-and-aerobic-exercises/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/>

Paget's Disease Awareness Day, 11th January

Paget's disease is more common in the over 50s and affects bone growth. As bone is found in so much of the body, it can affect areas like hearing and the heart, as well as bones becoming more fragile and osteoarthritis.

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

STIQ Day, 14th January

Sexually Transmitted Infection Question Day is held annually on 14th January. STIQ Day encourages us to think about sexually transmitted infections and our own sexual health.

If you're worried that you may have a sexually transmitted infection (STI), you can go to a sexual health clinic. Most clinics allow you to turn up and wait so that you don't have to make an appointment, but you should check before you visit.

<http://www.stiq.co.uk/about/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/>

Samaritans Brew Monday, 15th January

Legend has it that the third Monday in January is the most difficult day of the year. The reality is that if you're finding things tough, then any day might be difficult. The Samaritans are there 24/7 to provide non-judgemental listening. We can learn a great deal from the way the Samaritans listen; it can be challenging not to provide advice, but sometimes we need to just listen and be present in order to offer support.

The Samaritans also offer a free self-help app. You can use the self-help app to track how you're feeling and to make plans for staying safe in a crisis, as well as completing activities to help you better navigate challenges.

If you're feeling low or overwhelmed, we want to hear from you. But if you're having an urgent mental health crisis, you can find your local mental health helpline or numbers to call for support on the NHS website link below:

<https://www.samaritans.org>

<https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/brew-monday/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/self-help/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/>

Cervical Cancer Awareness Week, 22nd - 28th January

Cervical cancer mostly affects women under the age of 45. Almost all cervical cancers are linked to infections with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). The NHS now offers vaccination against many types of HPV. If you're under 25 and you missed having the vaccination when you were aged 12-13, then you may be eligible for immunisation. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/hpv-human-papillomavirus-vaccine/>

Anyone who has a cervix can get cervical cancer. If you're having vaginal bleeding or discharge that's unusual for you, or pain during sex in your lower back, hips or pelvis, you should seek an appointment with a member of your GP practice team. While there are many reasons why you might have these types of symptoms, it's important to rule out some causes.

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

Anytime in January

Men's wellbeing

One in five men die before the age of 65. The Men's Health Forum aims to change the way we look

at, and think about, men's health so that we ensure we reduce the number of premature deaths.

On similar lines, Livewell Dorset has put together a fantastic resource to support men in thinking about their long-term health and wellbeing. You can find out more about how you can take care of your physical and mental health here:

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

<https://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/faq/get-active/men's-health-tips/>

Drug abuse

Whether you're a child or an adult, if you want honest and accurate advice and information about drugs, then you might want to 'Talk to Frank'.

If you've become aware that you or someone you care about has a problem with alcohol or drugs, Mind UK has a fantastic list of organisations that can help, with a range of support depending on the situation.

<https://www.talktofrank.com>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information...n/drug-and-alcohol-addiction-useful-contacts/>

New year, new challenges

Often, the new year is seen as a time to start things afresh. It's also a time of year when people make significant changes to their lives – perhaps to do with relationships or work. This BBC article highlights the challenges faced by those in relationships and considers the opportunities for counselling.

It's not just personal relationships though, if a break over the festive season has clarified for you that you're not finding things easy at work, you might want to consider talking to your employer informally to see if things can be resolved.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-64187350>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/how-to-raise-a-problem-at-work>

Walk Your Dog Month

January is 'Walk Your Dog Month'. If you're a dog owner, start the year as you mean to go on. Dogs need regular exercise, for both their bodies and minds, and ensuring your dog gets the right amount of exercise helps to make sure they aren't frustrated or destructive. Making sure they have the right amount of exercise can help you to meet your exercise goals too!

<https://vetspecialists.co.uk/blog-post/walk-your-dog-month-january-2022/>

Veganuary

The excesses of the festive season can leave you feeling sluggish and bloated. Veganuary is a brilliant time to consider a more vegetable-based diet, and starting with a vegan month in January can really demonstrate the wide variety of meals you can eat which don't include animal products.

No matter what type of food you prefer to eat, the Veganuary website has you covered. With over 1,000 recipes, there's a recipe for every occasion and for anyone regardless of their preferences.

There are health benefits to a well-balanced vegan diet, and you can find out more about those benefits and the things you might need to bear in mind to ensure balance is maintained in your diet:

<https://veganuary.com>

<https://veganuary.com/recipes/>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/vegan-diet-benefits#lose-excess-weight>

Parkrun

Have you considered parkrun and decided against it because you don't think you're up to running? Whether you're a runner, a jogger or a walker, parkrun welcomes you and wants to support you on your journey.

parkrun is a brilliant and supportive way to participate in a FREE event that helps get you out and about. You'll never come last at parkrun, and whether you have support needs or children, there is a parkrun for you.

<https://support.parkrun.com/hc/en-us/articles/201853881-Can-I-walk->

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

Dry January

January is an ideal time for a clean sheet. If you've had a festive season steeped in alcohol, then 31 alcohol-free days in January might be just what your body needs.

70% of people who 'go dry' for January report better sleep, and 66% report having more energy. At such a tough time of the year, most of us could use better sleep and more energy. Why not give it a try?

To support you with Dry January, you can download the Try Dry app. The Try Dry app helps you track any changes, access support and monitor your progress, all from your phone.

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/managing-your-drinking/dry-january>

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-a.../dry-january/get-involved/the-dry-january-app>

Love Your Liver Month

January is 'Love Your Liver Month'. The liver is vital for good health. The liver performs over 500 vital functions in the body; two of the most important are converting food to energy and helping to fight infections.

Three of the most common causes of liver damage are drinking alcohol, obesity and viral hepatitis. The British Liver Trust has a screening tool to help you understand the risk to your liver.

<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/love-your-liver-month/>

<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/at-risk-screener/>

Winter fuel payment

If you were born before 25th September 1957, you should be eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment. Most people will get this automatically, and will have received a letter in October or November to say they will receive the payment. If you haven't had a letter, you can check your eligibility here: <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a range of diseases that damage the optic nerve. Age, blood pressure, family history, diabetes, ethnicity and short or long-sightedness can all contribute to your risk of glaucoma. Glaucoma is often relatively symptomless to start with and as symptoms generally develop slowly, damage can occur without you being aware. Most people are recommended to have an eye test at least every two years unless they've been advised otherwise by a doctor.

<https://glaucoma.uk/about-glaucoma/what-is-glaucoma/>

<https://glaucoma.uk/about-glaucoma/signs-symptoms/>

JAM card

JAM stands for 'Just a minute'. The JAM card is designed for those with hidden disabilities and communication difficulties to enable them to discreetly inform others that they need a bit more time. <https://www.jamcard.org>

Thyroid awareness

The thyroid gland is responsible for controlling your body's hormone levels, which keep cells working normally. If the levels of thyroid hormones become too high or too low, then the way your body works will be challenged. Even symptoms like loose stools or constipation might be related.

Thyroid disorders are far more common in women than in men. The risk of developing an underactive thyroid also increases with age, so it's not unusual to have women suffering from thyroid and menopause symptoms.

<https://www.btf-thyroid.org/what-is-thyroid-disorder>

<https://www.btf-thyroid.org/thyroid-menopause>

Wash your hands

During the pandemic, the importance of hand-washing was emphasised. But it's no less important now, as good hand hygiene helps to prevent the spread of illnesses such as food poisoning and viruses like flu, COVID-19 and Norovirus.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>