

# A guide to **health & well-being** for 12+

**NHS**

**Livewell**  
Southwest

Supporting people to be Safe, Well and at Home



# Introduction

This guide will help to point you in the right direction towards a healthier, less stressful and more rewarding lifestyle. It tells you where you can get help and information and gives you clear and sensible ideas on what to do if you feel you need that extra bit of help.

As a young person it is important to start following a healthy lifestyle now in order to avoid any problems when you are older. Healthy habits are easier to get used to as a young person, and they can improve the rest of your life. You will also look and feel better, right now!

This guide also contains useful websites, agency advice and information about various key issues. So take a browse and read the sections which are of interest to you.

“Now I need to be more  
**responsible** for my  
**own health** and **well-being**  
it is useful to **know** where I can  
**get** good **information**  
and **support**.”





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# Guide to services

We have a wide range of professionals and other services who are there to help and support you.



## Self care

Now you are becoming more responsible for your own health and well-being there are lots of things you can do at home to help. Many minor illnesses and injuries can be treated at home using over the counter medicines from your local pharmacist and getting plenty of rest. If you are still worried call NHS 111.

## NHS 111

If you think you need help urgently during the day or night you should call NHS 111 before you go to any other health service. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is free to call, including from a mobile. You will be directed straight away to the local service that can help you best. Call NHS 111:

- When you need help fast but it's not life threatening.
- When you think you need to go to A&E or another NHS urgent care service.
- When it's outside of your GP's surgery hours.
- When you do not know who to call for medical help.
- If you do not have a local GP to call.



## Teachers

Teachers and tutors can be great people to talk to. If they cannot help they will be able to point you in the right direction.

## School nurse

The School Nursing Team and school staff will help support your health and development.

They provide confidential advice and support on issues such as sexual health, emotional health, physical health and long-term condition management.

## Dentist

It is really important that you visit your dentist twice a year and take care of your teeth and mouth daily. If you've just started college, university or you've moved away from home, it's a good idea to register with a local dental practice.

## Youth Service

Youth Service is an excellent informal education, social and personal development service. They offer free support, counselling, activities, advice, sexual health products and much more to all young people between the ages of 13-19 years old and 13-25 years old for those with special needs. The service also supports young carers from age 8. Youth workers have the skills, knowledge and significant experience to work in schools and other educational establishments.

## Pharmacist

Your local pharmacist can provide advice on most common health issues. They can suggest and dispense medicines and other health products. There are often pharmacists in supermarkets and many are open late.

Visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) where you can find the service locator that will help you find the pharmacy nearest to you.

You can see your local pharmacist for a confidential consultation for a wide range of ailments including coughs, colds, sore throats, pain and temperature and lots more. Any medicine dispensed is free if you do not pay for your prescriptions.

## Sexual health services

Contraception and sexual health clinics offer confidential advice, all methods of contraception including free condoms, pregnancy testing, advice on unplanned pregnancy, chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing and treatment. All are free of charge.

## Young People's Drug & Alcohol Service

The service offers counselling and advice to young people who think they may have a drug problem or are worried about someone else.

## GP (Doctor)

If you've just started college, university or you've moved away from home, it's a good idea to register with a local GP practice. This means you don't need to go back home if you need medical help.

You will need to register with a GP - to find a GP in your area, use the NHS Choices, Find Services System at: [www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories](http://www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories)

Your GP can advise, give medicines and information and point you in the right direction if you need other specialist services. Everything said between a GP and a patient is confidential and a private matter between yourself and your GP.

You will need to make an appointment. After 6.30pm weekdays, at weekends and public holidays most services are covered by a GP out-of-hours service. Check with your local surgery.

## Confidentiality

Here are some facts about confidentiality when going to see your GP/practice nurse:

Young people have the same right to confidentiality as adults. This means that when you visit your GP (or another healthcare professional) they are not allowed to share what you talk about. So basically, they can't tell your parents/carers unless you give permission. The only time your GP will break this confidentiality is if you or someone else may be at risk of serious harm or abuse. In this instance, they would usually talk through with you the action they would need to take.

There may be times when your GP suggests that it might be helpful for you to discuss your problem with your parents/carers or that they phone and talk to them. They may be suggesting this because they think it would be helpful for you. However, if you are over 16 and you really don't want your parents/carers to know then you don't have to tell them and you can request that the GP does the same. If you are under 16 and the GP is worried that you don't fully understand the treatment you need, they have the right to contact your parents without your consent but would try and talk this through with you first.

The GP can't share information about your health with other professionals outside of the NHS without your permission (e.g. a social worker or teacher). However, if your GP refers you to another health professional within the NHS, they may ask you if they can share your notes with that person via their shared computer system. You can say no to this and the other health professional will not be able to see all of your notes.

## How to get the most out of your GP appointment

We know that some young people don't feel comfortable going to their GP, especially about their emotional well-being. We therefore hope that the following information will help you find the support you need.

You can see your GP about a range of issues including:

- Physical health.
- Emotional well-being/mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, self-harm etc.
- Sexual health.
- Drug and alcohol issues.

## Your rights!

We know that sometimes, going to see a GP can be stressful and at times a frustrating experience. We've pulled together a list of your rights which will hopefully help you get the most out of your appointment.

## Did you know?

- You can ask for a double appointment (20 mins) if you need it (if you have lots to talk about).
- You can bring someone with you to your appointment.
- You have a choice about which GP you see. You can request a male or female and can ask to see the same GP each time.
- If you have a bad experience with a particular GP you have a right to ask for a different GP next time. If there is only one GP in your practice you have a right to move to a different practice.
- You don't have to have students & trainees in the room with you. You should always be asked.
- You will get more from your appointment if you are able to be honest with your GP and it might help to plan out what you want to say.

- If you are suffering with depression, anxiety etc, your GP should talk through options with you and not just offer medication. Counselling should be offered too.

## Want more help?

**[www.docready.org](http://www.docready.org)**

This is a really useful website which has also been designed by young people for young people. Doc Ready helps you get ready for your GP visit and in particular, if you are going to discuss your emotional well-being. It has lots more information about your rights and confidentiality.

## How to make a complaint


If you're not happy with the service you have received and you want to make a complaint, all GP practices should have a complaints box or procedure.







If you are ill or injured, choose from the following services:

Concern	Service	What to do?
Grazed knee Sore throat Coughs and colds	Self care	You can treat minor illnesses and injuries at home by using the recommended medicines and making sure you get plenty of rest <a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a> .
Unsure Confused Need help	 <b>NHS 111</b> For 24 hour health advice and information.	Call NHS 111 when it is less urgent than 999 Telephone: 111 <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/111">www.nhs.uk/111</a>
Mild diarrhoea Mild skin irritations (including spots/rash) Mild fever	<b>Pharmacist</b> For advice on common illnesses, injuries and medication.	To find your local pharmacy and its contact details visit: <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/chemist">www.nhs.uk/chemist</a>
High temperature Head injuries not involving loss of consciousness Persistent cough Worsening health conditions (inside GP hours) Minor bumps, cuts and possible fractures Dehydrated Headache Abdominal pain	<b>GP</b> For the treatment of illnesses and injuries that will not go away.	Use NHS 111 out-of-hours service
Severe pain Worsening health conditions Choking Loss of consciousness Fitting/convulsions Broken bones	<b>Urgent Care</b> When you need healthcare in a hurry 24 hours a day.  <b>A&amp;E or 999</b> For serious and life-threatening emergencies.	<b>A&amp;E</b>

**NHS 111** is free to call from any landline or contract mobile phone. Pay-as-you-go mobile phones require 1 pence credit to make a call.

If you are concerned or need advice, choose from the following services:

Concern	Service	What to do?
If you: Need advice on contraception Think you may have an STI Think you may be pregnant	<b>Sexual health services</b>	<b>Local sexual health or GUM clinic</b> <b>Your GP</b> If you are aged 16-24 you can request a free chlamydia testing kit
If you are: Feeling low or depressed Worried Self-harming Feeling suicidal	<b>Mental health services</b> <b>Voluntary services</b> <b>Childline 0800 111</b>	<b>GP</b> <b>NHS 111</b> <b>Samaritans</b>
If you are: Worried about personal safety Worried about domestic violence A victim of crime	<b>999 emergency services</b> <b>Local Safeguarding Board</b>	<b>Call 999 in an emergency</b> <b>Domestic violence helpline 24 hour 0808 2000 247</b>

# Know the basics



## Being prepared & knowing the signs

As you get older you need to start taking some responsibility for your health, well-being and safety. Physical health is not just about the health of your body but helping your body to work at its full potential which includes exercise and nutrition, knowing your body and how it works, and how to look after it.

Depression, anxiety and conduct disorder are common in young people. These are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives. Your emotional well-being is just as important as your physical health. It is important to speak up if you are feeling unwell or you are unhappy about something which is happening.

You will face choices that will affect your health now and in the future around smoking, alcohol or having sex.

- Take responsibility for your health, well-being and safety.
- Find out what to do if you are unwell or injured.
- Smoking or taking drugs puts your health in danger.
- It is not safe to have unprotected sex, find out more and do not be forced into doing anything you do not want to.
- Be aware of digital safety.
- Speak to an adult you trust if you are unhappy about something in your life.

Learn how to spot the signs of serious illness and how to cope if an accident happens. If you know the basics and you are prepared, you will find it easier to cope.

Keep a small supply of useful medicines at home. Make sure you always follow instructions carefully and check use by dates. Read the label carefully.

## Paracetamol & ibuprofen

Fever in itself is just a sign of your body fighting an infection. Consider using either sugar-free paracetamol or ibuprofen if you have a temperature of over 38°C, as these can help to reduce fever and pain.

Treat with either paracetamol OR ibuprofen in the first instance. It can take up to an hour for either of them to work. Paracetamol and ibuprofen should NOT be taken together at the same time. Children under 16 should not use aspirin.

## Health tips

1. **Register** with a local GP, dentist and optician.
2. **Get Condoms** (and contraception if required) - even if you don't plan to be sexually active it's good to be prepared. Find out more from your local sexual health clinic. Their service is confidential and discreet.
3. **Sleep and eat.** Getting enough sleep and eating well will mean you have a better chance of staying healthy.
4. Make taking showers, brushing your teeth, cleaning and drying your clothes and using deodorant a part of your **personal hygiene routine**.

Make sure you have all your health details - either your Red Book or Health Passport - as you may need this in the future. If you don't have them check with your parent/carer and they can help you get this information.

Source: [www.nhs.uk/Livewell](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell)







**Around 80%** of teenagers get some form of **acne** and there are **many myths** about what causes it.

# Common illnesses & conditions

## Coughs & colds

There are some good things about catching a few coughs and colds - it helps build-up your natural defences and fight off viruses.

Most bugs will run their course without doing any real harm because they are viruses which get better on their own. However, there are things you can do at home to help:

- Drink lots of fluids.
- Try paracetamol or ibuprofen - always check the label for the correct information (children under 16 should not take aspirin).
- Keep away from smoke.
- Remember that coughing is the body's way of keeping the lungs clear.

## Diarrhoea & being sick

Gastroenteritis, otherwise known as a stomach bug or food poisoning, is something you are likely to get at some point. Most cases resolve themselves within a few days, without the need for medical treatment.

“Ensure you drink plenty of water so that you don't become dehydrated.”

Be extra careful with hand hygiene (use soap and water and dry hands well with a clean towel).

If the gastroenteritis lasts for more than three or four days, get advice from a health professional, such as your GP or pharmacist.

## Headaches & migraines

### Headaches

Headaches are quite common and most headaches are not due to a serious health problem. They can be brought on by skipping meals, not getting enough sleep, using computers, video games or other machines for a long time without breaks and occasionally from playing sport which can make you dehydrated. They can be avoided by making sure you get enough food, drink and sleep.

Taking some time out for yourself can help avoid stress-related headaches.

“Most headaches can be treated at home with paracetamol or ibuprofen.”

Always check the label for the correct dosage.

### Migraines

Migraines are the most common cause of frequent headaches in young people. They often come on suddenly and as well as a headache, you may feel sick, have tummy ache, or have changes to your vision. You may want to avoid bright lights and loud noises as the pain often gets better after a sleep. Migraines are not usually serious, but can interfere with life, so talk to your GP if you are having frequent headaches or if they are associated with other symptoms such as dizziness, vomiting and fever.

## Acne

Around 80% of teenagers get some form of acne and there are many myths about what causes it. Acne consists of spots and painful bumps on the skin. It's most noticeable on the face, but can also appear on the back, shoulders and buttocks. Severe acne can cause scarring, so it is important to get treated.

“Acne is mostly due to the way skin reacts to hormonal changes.”

Cases of teenage acne are thought to be triggered by increased levels of a hormone called testosterone that occurs during puberty.

Treatments are available from your pharmacy but if there is no improvement, you should visit your GP who can assess how bad your acne is and discuss the options with you. If acne is severe, your GP can refer you to a dermatologist (an expert in treating skin conditions). Treatments can take between two to three months to work but, once they do, the results are usually effective.

## Glandular fever

Glandular fever is a type of viral infection that mostly affects young adults. Common symptoms include:

- A high temperature (fever).
- A severely sore throat.
- Swollen glands in the neck.
- Fatigue (extreme tiredness).

While the symptoms of glandular fever can be very unpleasant, most of them should pass within two to three weeks. Feeling very tired can occasionally last several months.

### When to seek medical advice

You should contact your GP or tell someone if you suspect that you have glandular fever. Your GP can provide advice and support to help you control your symptoms and reduce the risk of passing on the infection.

You should go to your local accident and emergency (A&E) department or dial 999 for an ambulance if you have glandular fever and you:

- Develop a rasping breath or have any breathing difficulties.
- Find swallowing fluids difficult.
- Develop intense abdominal pain.

These symptoms can be a sign of a complication of glandular fever that may need to be treated in hospital.

### What causes glandular fever?

Glandular fever is caused by a virus found in the saliva of infected people and can be spread through:

- Kissing - glandular fever is often referred to as the 'kissing disease'.
- Exposure to coughs and sneezes.
- Sharing eating and drinking utensils, such as cups, cans, glasses and unwashed cutlery.

The virus may be found in the saliva for several months after the symptoms pass, and some people may continue to have the virus in their saliva on and off for years.

If you have had glandular fever, take steps to avoid infecting others while you are ill, such as not kissing. There's no need to avoid all contact with others as the chances of passing on the infection are generally low.



# More serious conditions

## Diabetes

There are 2 types of diabetes (types 1 and 2). We talk mostly about type 1 diabetes as this is the type which happens to children and young people. You can't catch diabetes, it isn't a bug, you 'develop' it. Type 1 diabetes happens when the body does not produce enough insulin. This means that glucose produced in the breakdown of food (digestion) stays in the blood.

If you are diagnosed, (your GP or a health professional has confirmed you have it), you may feel overwhelmed, angry, and worried about the future. You will now need insulin injections, or insulin using an insulin pump. A Diabetes Care Team will help and support you, you are not alone.

**“It's perfectly normal to have difficult feelings when you are diagnosed with diabetes.”**

However, the condition doesn't have to take away your freedom, or end your usual family life, it just means you have to carefully manage your condition as part of daily life.

## Early days

On diagnosis at the hospital, your specialist diabetes team will help and support you to manage your diabetes. Children and young people are cared for by a specialist diabetes team at the hospital. This team has:

- A consultant paediatrician who specialises in diabetes.
- Children and young person's specialist diabetes nurses.
- A dietician who is trained in the needs of children and young people.
- A psychologist with a speciality in children and young people.

Soon you'll be confident enough to take the first steps towards managing your diabetes. You will be in regular touch with your diabetes care team. The team keep in touch via clinics, some of which are in the evening as well as email and telephone. The specialist nurses can visit you at home and at school.

## Signs and symptoms

Contact your GP urgently if you notice the signs below. If you cannot get an appointment the same day please attend a Walk-In Centre or A&E and explain your symptoms.

- Feeling very thirsty and having a dry mouth.
- Going to the toilet frequently, particularly at night.
- Feeling very tired and drowsy.
- Weight loss.
- Signs that you could be seriously unwell - all of the above plus vomiting, abdominal pain and difficulty breathing.

## Meningitis & Septicaemia

Meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia (blood poisoning) are serious diseases that can affect anyone at any time. Fortunately, most young people in the UK have already had the MenC vaccine, but if you haven't or can't remember, getting vaccinated is a good way to protect yourself. But remember, vaccines can't prevent all forms of meningitis and septicaemia.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

Many of the early signs - vomiting, fever, aches, general tiredness and headaches - are also signs of less serious illnesses like colds and flu or even a hangover but someone with meningitis or septicaemia will become seriously ill in a matter of hours. Contact your GP or call NHS 111 before things could get more serious.

**“Symptoms can appear in any order and not everyone gets all of the symptoms.”**

The main signs and symptoms of meningitis include: fever, very bad headache, vomiting, stiff neck, dislike of bright lights, rash, confusion, delirium, severe sleepiness, losing consciousness, seizures.

## How is meningitis spread?

The bacteria that cause these diseases are spread by coughing, sneezing and intimate kissing. It can also be spread by sharing drinks. Outbreaks tend to occur where people live or work closely together, such as university halls of residence.

## The glass test

Press the side of a glass firmly against the rash so you can see if it fades under pressure. If it doesn't fade call 999 or go to A&E immediately.

If you are feeling very ill, get help anyway, even if the rash fades or doesn't appear at all. It can be harder to see a rash on darker skin.

Students and young people will be offered a new Meningitis C vaccine. The Men ACWY vaccine is given by a single injection into the upper arm and protects against four different causes of meningitis and septicaemia. If you are going to college or university for the first time, contact your GP.

## Asthma

As you grow and develop as a young adult new opportunities and challenges come up every day. But what if you also have a lifelong condition, such as asthma, and are stepping out into the world for the first time on your own?

If you are travelling, staying with friends or moving out make sure you are prepared.

From friends, family, partner, people at school or college there will always be certain people that you may feel awkward or nervous talking to you about your asthma. It's your choice about who you choose to tell.

Feelings of stress or anxiety can be a trigger for your asthma. Study can be stressful especially around exam time. If you find it brings on your asthma speak to your GP/practice

nurse and the welfare officer at your school, college or university to see what they can do to support you.

**“Everybody with asthma is different, and everybody deals with asthma differently.”**

For most people, asthma shouldn't stop you enjoying everything in life, including relationships.

Taking your medications as directed will help prevent long-term health problems. Always carry your relevant inhaler.

## Things you may be asked

Have a think about the sorts of things people might ask you. For example:

- What are your asthma symptoms? Everyone has different symptoms. For example, not everyone wheezes when they have an asthma attack.
- What are your asthma triggers?
- What are your asthma medicines and where do you keep them?
- What should I do when you have an asthma attack? You might like to give them an asthma attack card to keep.
- What does it feel like to have asthma? Not everyone relates to hard facts so you could make it personal to you. Then you may find that people understand a lot better.

## Do you have an asthma action plan?

If you use an asthma management plan you are four times less likely to have an attack that requires emergency hospital treatment. Fill this in with your GP/practice nurse. It will help you to know what medicine to take and when, how to recognise when your asthma symptoms change and what to do when this happens.







If you do feel that you are **overweight**, **talk** to an **adult** you can **trust**.



# A positive body image

## Getting the balance right

Turn on the TV, browse social media sites or flick through a magazine and chances are you'll see pictures of perfect looking celebrities staring back. This might affect your body image and could make you feel bad about yourself or that you should try to change the way you are.

Many young people who are perfectly normal and healthy feel that they don't look 'right' because they are comparing themselves to role models such as pop stars, models or other celebrities who are often seen as skinny. This can lead to an unhealthy body image. If you do feel that you are overweight, talk to an adult you can trust and try to find out more about healthy eating and exercise.

**“It's a good idea to eat well and stay a healthy weight but some young people, can take dieting too far and develop an eating disorder.”**

The two main types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa which is when you starve yourself and bulimia nervosa which is when you make yourself sick after you eat or take laxatives. They are both very bad for you.

Make sure you talk to an adult or friend you trust to get the help you need.

### Could this be you?

#### If you have an eating disorder:

- It's hard to cope with an eating disorder alone - talk to someone you trust.
- If you are worried ask your parent or carer to make an appointment for you with your GP.
- Remember that the sooner you get some help, the easier it will be for you to beat your problem.

#### If a friend has an eating disorder:

- Tell them that you're worried and that you're there for them.
- Get them to see their GP.
- Set a good example and show your friend how important it is to have a healthy diet.

#### Facts about eating disorders:

1. Eating disorders can be beaten.
2. An eating disorder is serious.
3. An eating disorder is not a dieting craze.
4. An eating disorder is not attention seeking.
5. An eating disorder is an illness.

**“Boys as well as girls can have eating disorders.”**

#### Look out for:

##### Signs of Anorexia include:

- Eating less and less.
- Losing a lot of weight very quickly.
- Growing more body hair (usually girls).

##### Signs of Bulimia include:

- Eating too much in one go.
- Going to the toilet after eating to be sick.
- Sore throat and mouth infections.

#### Skinny & fat shaming

We usually hear about body shaming being directed at women with curves. But that's not always the case - skinny shaming can be just as damaging.

This may be a simple comment like 'when did you last have a good meal?' from a friend or perhaps more damaging messages from strangers via facebook and twitter.

It's up to all of us to stop the well known stereotype of a thing called skinny shaming. Skinny shaming and fat shaming are not separate, opposing issues - they are the same issue. We are all equal and all bodies are beautiful. Accept yourself for YOU and others for who they are and you will be truly beautiful.







Go to your **GP**  
or **Sexual Health**  
**Clinic** to find out about  
different **types** of  
**contraception**.

# Sex & sexual health

## It's not worth the risk

**“If you are sexually active, it is important that you use contraception which both partners have agreed to in order to avoid pregnancy.”**

Most contraception is 99% reliable. You can get pregnant or get a sexually transmitted infection (STI) even if it is the first time you have sex so use a condom to prevent STIs. Use a LARC (long-acting reversible contraception) like an implant to prevent pregnancy.

Becoming a teenage parent can be challenging so it is a good idea to think and plan contraception, so you are prepared. It is also unpleasant and painful to have an STI.

There is a C-card scheme and you will need to register for a card which you can use to get free condoms as well as advice and help. It is a confidential service for all young people which offers condoms even if you are 15 or under and you have discussed your needs with our sexual health professionals and they agree.

## What to do

**“If you have had unprotected sex, emergency contraception can stop you getting pregnant as long as you take it within 120 hours.”**

Ask your GP, pharmacist or sexual health clinic for advice.

If you've had unprotected sex and your period is late, take a pregnancy test at your GP, pharmacist or sexual health clinic.

Go to your GP or sexual health clinic to find out about different types of contraception. Talk to your parent/carer about what to do. If you feel you can't there are lots of places to get help and advice.

## Under pressure

- Don't have sex because your boyfriend or girlfriend wants you to but you're not sure. It's completely up to you.
- Remember it's against the law to have sex if you're under 16.
- Don't let your judgement be affected by drugs or alcohol. You may be drunk and agree or do something you would not normally do. Try to plan ahead and think what you would do if you get into a difficult situation. Be prepared with a condom.

## Chlamydia is a real risk

Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed STI.

**“Most people who are infected have no symptoms, so they do not know they have it.”**

If left untreated, it can cause complications including infertility. Condoms can protect against chlamydia.



ask for larc  
Long Acting Reversible Contraception





When I fell **pregnant**, I thought that was the **end** of my **education** but my school gave me **lots** of **support**.



# Teenage pregnancy

## Support is available

Finding out you're pregnant or your girlfriend is pregnant can be a big surprise if you haven't planned it.

You might feel scared about telling anyone, or worried about the future. It's a good idea to tell someone close to you. If you don't feel ready to talk to your parents yet, confide in a friend.

Dads too might not feel ready to be a father just yet. Having a baby means big changes in your life but it can be really exciting, too.

Taking good care of yourself will help you and your baby stay healthy and it's important to see your GP as soon as possible. Make sure you go to your appointments.

**“Smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs are all bad for you and your baby and can have permanent effects on you both.”**

If you're still at school, you can get help to continue your education. There's also help to find you a job if you're old enough to leave school. Just because you are a parent doesn't mean your education has to end. Find out about your entitlements and benefits.

## If you're pregnant

Don't hide it. The sooner you tell someone, the better. That way you can plan what's going to happen in the future.

**“If you think your girlfriend is pregnant, encourage them to talk about how they're feeling. They'll need a lot of support.”**

If you're pregnant but not sure what you're going to do, contact your local family planning clinic to discuss your options.

You can still get a good education if you become a parent. There's lots of help out there for you.

## See your GP, they will:

- Ask the date of your last period so you know how far along your pregnancy is.
- Encourage you to start taking vitamins to make sure you and your baby are healthy - ask about your free folic acid and vitamin D prescription.
- Help organise an appointment with a midwife who will support you during your pregnancy.







Treat people the way  
you would **like** to be  
**treated** and **listen**  
to what they're **saying**.



# Relationships

## Talk about it

**“I try to treat people I cross paths with in the same way I would like to be treated.”**

You can have all sorts of different relationships that can be fulfilling and rewarding, for example with friends, parents, families, neighbours and teachers. However, relationships aren't always easy and you might have problems sometimes. Just remember to keep talking to each other. Talking and communicating helps in many ways.

Friends are very important to young people. They are good for mental health, well-being and self-confidence. It's hard when you argue, and you can feel confused and upset. It's better to have a few friends who want the best for you than lots of friends who try and make you do things you don't want to do.

Many young people think that having a boyfriend or girlfriend is the most important relationship - but don't feel you have to just because your friends are, or do anything you're not ready for.

**“Similarly you may feel put under pressure to be in a relationship which may even include a forced marriage.”**

## Signs include

- Becoming unhappy or withdrawn.
- Missing school.
- You should not be made to do anything you don't want to do or encouraged to take part in things which make you scared.

## Talking helps

- To have good relationships with people, you need to talk about how you're feeling.
- Treat people the way you'd like to be treated and listen to what they're saying.
- If you're having problems with your parents or carer, talk to someone outside the family who you trust, like a friend or teacher.

## Grooming & exploitation

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.

Sometimes people are not who we think, or want us to think they are. Paedophile networks groom young people, by making them believe they are their friends. They have sophisticated tactics. They befriend young people, giving them gifts, money, drugs and alcohol and use violence and intimidation to control them, subjecting them to abuse.

Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. They are not your friends and you must speak out as soon as you can, before things get any worse.

Sometimes young people can be radicalised into changing their beliefs and groomed by extremists to commit crimes and get involved in terrorist activity.

## Sexting

Sexting is the sending and receiving of naked pictures, 'underwear shots', sexual or 'dirty pics' or rude text messages or videos. This can be via mobile phones, social networks, emails or social apps.

Most mobile phones and tablets have built in cameras and most are linked up to email and social network accounts.

**“Police have warned of the dangers sexting can have including loss of control and leaving young people at the risk of being exploited by paedophiles and sexual predators.”**

Many young people feel under pressure to send nude or sexual photos of themselves, or let others

take photos because their boyfriend or girlfriend said “if you loved me you would do this” reassuring them that no one else would see this picture. Photos like these are often not respected and can be posted as revenge or shown around carelessly to anyone else. Once someone hits send, they have ultimately lost control of that picture and where it may end up. Each action online leaves a digital footprint and everything anyone does online is out there in cyberspace even if you think something has been deleted.

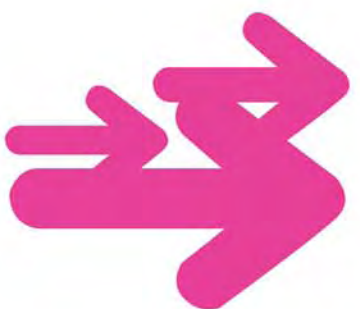
**“You do not have to feel forced into doing anything you are not comfortable with.”**

Talk to someone you trust if you feel pressured. Any incidents of bullying are unacceptable no matter where they are and should not be tolerated. Do not dismiss sexist language or behaviour as funny.

Some people feel a need to gain attention and notoriety from the sexting which can often be a result of insecurity or a lack of confidence.

## Is sexting legal?

The law is quite clear on sexting. It is illegal to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if you're the person in the picture. If you are under the age of 18, the law sees you as a child. Therefore, if you have any indecent images or videos of somebody who is under 18 you would technically be in possession of an indecent image of a child - even if you are the same age.







Keep a **diary** and **save**  
all **text messages**  
as **evidence** of  
what happens.

# Bullying & peer pressure

## The real story

Bullying at school, can often be things like name calling, hitting, happy-slapping or stealing someone's things. It also includes stuff that's less visible, like sending nasty texts or spreading gossip about someone.

People get picked on for lots of reasons. Being bullied can make you dread going to school and can also make you feel depressed, lonely and even suicidal.

If you're being bullied, you're not alone. You might feel that there's no way out but there are lots of ways to get help.

**“If people are making nasty remarks about you then it may be because they are jealous.”**

Perhaps you're better looking than they are, work harder or perhaps the teachers like you better. One way of dealing with remarks is to simply ignore them each time so that you show them that it isn't having the effect of upsetting you in the way they think.

The bullies will have worked out what buttons to push to make you upset. Don't try to hide it or ignore it - tell a friend, tell a teacher and tell your parents/carers. It won't stop unless you do.

## Spotting the signs

### Signs someone's being bullied:

- They become unhappy or withdrawn.
- They start missing school.
- They've got physical injuries they don't want to talk about or try to hide.
- They pretend to be ill.

### Are you being bullied?

- It probably won't stop until you tell someone you trust.
- Act confidently to send out the message that you're not afraid.
- Stay with others - you're more likely to be picked on if you're on your own.
- Keep a diary and save all text messages as evidence.

### Is your friend being bullied?

- Take their worries seriously.
- Stick up for them.
- They might want you to be with them for support when they tell their parents, carers or teacher.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying by text, instant messaging or email messages. It can be making insulting comments about someone on the internet through a website or through social networking sites. It can also be the uploading of embarrassing videos or photographs by people you trusted on the internet or distributing them by mobile phones. This is called 'sexting'.

Do not respond to the messages, save them or take a screen shot as evidence. There are 'report abuse' facilities on many websites.

## Peer pressure

Peer pressure is when you think you should do something because other people your age say you should, or because you think everyone else is doing it too. Sometimes people do things because they want to be liked, or they worry that they'll get teased if they don't follow the crowd.

Some of the things you might feel pressure to do now or in the future:

- Wear the same clothes as your mates.
- Drink alcohol, smoke or take drugs.
- Commit a crime.
- Change your friends because your other mates don't like them.
- Skip school.
- Have a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Start having sex.

**“It's normal to want to fit in with everyone else, but in the end people will think you're a lot cooler if you learn to make your own decisions.”**

Just because people say they are doing something, doesn't mean that they are.

### Are you feeling peer pressure?

- It's hard if you're the only one saying 'no' but be brave.
- If your friends want you to do something, ask yourself how you really feel about it, and stick to what you believe in.
- If you say 'no' to something, real friends should respect your decision. If they don't, maybe you need to find new friends.
- It's better to have a few friends than lots of friends who try and make you do things you don't want to do.

### Is a friend of yours feeling peer pressure?

- If your friend doesn't want to do something either, back them up. This can really help them, and make peer pressure easier to resist.
- Help them to make their own choices - they will gain confidence.
- Don't put pressure on your friends.







Remember, it's  
**not your fault**  
and you **don't** have  
to **cope alone**.



# Difficulties at home

## You don't have to cope alone

Young people often experience tensions at home. Your relationships with the people you live with can be the source of all kinds of problems. Sometimes the situation is more serious than others, but whatever is going on, it can take up a lot of your head-space and make you feel bad.

Remember, it's not your fault and you don't have to cope alone.

**“Talk it through with someone you trust, like a parent/carer, teacher or friend, and get the help and support you need.”**

Or get in touch with one of the support organisations listed under 'Useful Contacts'. When communication breaks down you can lose perspective on what is happening. The key is to find ways to build up your resilience, so that you can cope better.

You may be experiencing abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) at home, or maybe you have a parent/carer or sibling who is taking drugs or drinking too much and you feel that things are getting out of control. It can be just as upsetting to feel caught up in problems between other family members. It is important that you keep yourself safe. Talk to someone to get some help and support.

## Domestic violence

**“Domestic violence includes threatening behaviour, violence, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional abuse.”**

It also includes forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so called honour killings. Domestic abuse is a crime and a major social problem affecting many families.

If you are worried about domestic violence, talk to someone who understands such as your school nurse or the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline 0808 2000 247.

## Living with parents

If living at home with your parents is a problem, there may be steps you can take to improve things. Find out what to do if you don't feel safe at home.

Don't feel you have to move before you're ready. But if you don't feel safe at home, or if your parents tell you to leave, get advice on what to do next. Once you are 16 years old, if your parents ask you to leave, you probably have to go.

If you're under 16, your parents have a legal responsibility to look after you and make sure you have somewhere safe to stay otherwise you can get help from social services. However, if you are not getting on with them, they may make you leave anyway.

Get advice immediately if you find yourself in this situation. Call Shelter's free housing advice helpline on 0808 800 4444 for advice on where to stay.

Think about the practicalities of leaving home and getting your own place (rent, bills, doing your own washing and cleaning and so on) as well as all the good things. If you know anyone who has recently left home, talk to them about their experiences.

## Talk to your family about wanting to leave home

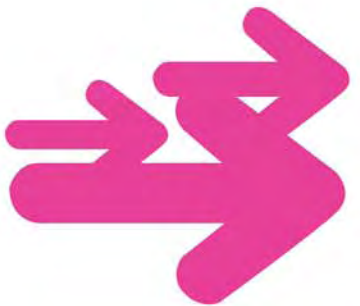
Explain your reasons to your family for wanting to leave home. They may be able to help you find a new home or help you to organise all the things you need to live on your own. They may even be able to help you with a tenancy deposit.

Visit your council's housing options centre to discuss your options.

## Running away

There are a number of reasons why you may want to leave home, but getting help while you're still at home is usually a better option than running away.

Source: Shelter.org.uk







Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a **crime** in this country.



# FGM

## You don't have to cope alone

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a crime in this country. It is also a crime to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this. Girls may be taken to their countries of origin so that FGM can be carried out during the summer holidays, allowing them time to 'heal' before they return to school. There are also worries that some girls may have FGM performed in the UK.

### What is FGM?

FGM refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or other non-medical reasons. FGM has serious implications for the sexual and reproductive health of girls and women.

The effects of FGM depend on a number of factors, including the type performed, the expertise of the practitioner, the hygiene conditions under which it is performed, the amount of resistance and the general health condition of the girl undergoing the procedure. Complications may occur in all types of FGM. Immediate complications include severe pain, shock, haemorrhage, tetanus or infection, urine retention, ulceration of the genital region and injury to adjacent tissue, wound infection, urinary infection, fever, and septicaemia. Haemorrhage and infection can be severe enough to cause death.

**“FGM procedures can also cause many psychological problems as well as problems with giving birth later in life - including the death of the baby.”**

There are no health benefits to FGM. Removing and damaging healthy and normal female genital tissue interferes with the natural functions of girls' and women's bodies.

It may be difficult to talk about the issue, but it is important to tell someone that this has happened to you, or that you think it may happen to yourself or someone you know.

**“FGM is illegal in the UK and is considered a human rights violation and a form of child abuse.”**

FGM is often performed on girls between the ages of five and eight. However FGM can be performed on babies, teenagers, and sometimes even on adult women. The age differs from community to community.

- 60,000 girls under 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK.
- 137,000 girls and women are living with the consequences of FGM in the UK.

### Psychological complications

Studies show that FGM may affect a woman psychologically for the rest of her life. Some psychological effects include:

- Anger at the person who performed FGM or arranged for FGM to be carried out.
- Emotional distress, fear and feelings of helplessness.
- Post-traumatic stress disorder - symptoms can include flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety and depression for a long time after FGM.
- Sexual phobia resulting in fear and difficulties in having sex.
- Feelings of not being a 'whole' or a 'normal' girl or woman may be felt by some girls/women because of FGM.
- A woman's sexual pleasure is greatly decreased, this can have negative effects in a marriage and in sexual relations. However, FGM does not take away sexual desire. This is because sexual relations are more than physical; feelings such as love, passion and companionship are also important for pleasure.

### How can I get help?

If you think you or another girl or woman is at risk of FGM it is important to speak up now. If there is immediate risk call the police on 999.

If the girl or woman has already been taken abroad, you should phone the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 020 7008 1500.

NSPCC have a helpline dedicated to FGM that is anonymous and open 24/7, you can call them on 0800 028 3550.

Your Local Social Services Department will be able to protect you or provide support, you can contact them through your local council [www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council](http://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council).

Your Local Police Child Protection Unit will be able to protect you or provide support, you can contact them through your local police station.

For more information on services available and one-to-one support you can call FORWARD on 0208 960 4000. We are open Monday to Friday from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm or email us at [support@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:support@forwarduk.org.uk)

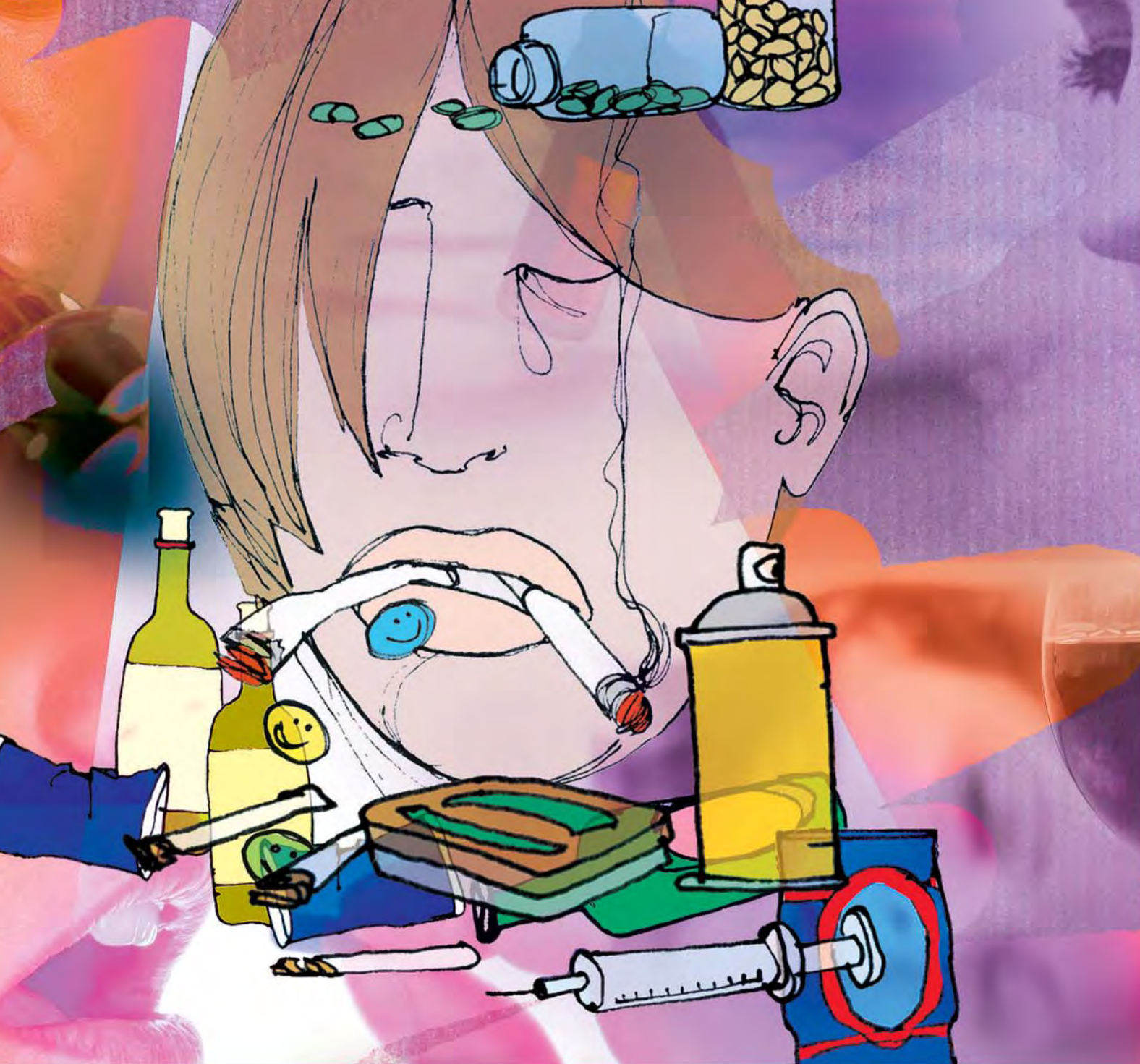
### FGM and the Law

**“In the UK the FGM Act (2003) makes it illegal to help, support or arrange for FGM to be performed on a girl either in the UK or abroad.”**

The offence can be punished by up to 14 years in prison, a fine, or both. Without engagement with affected communities to abandon FGM, laws alone will not be enough to end this practice.







There are many **risks** with any **drink** or **drug use**, so ask yourself, **is it really worth it?**

# Drugs, substances & alcohol

## It's a choice - you can say 'no'

Lots of young people want to know about drugs and alcohol - this doesn't mean you have to take them or feel like you should just because people around you might be.

There are lots of reasons why people drink or take drugs, sometimes it is because they think it's going to be fun. Drugs can seriously affect your health and the way you see the world around you - what may seem fun at first can easily start leading to serious problems which you may find difficult to try and solve without additional support. It is easy to get into drug debts, start dropping out of education or training, have arguments at home, be exploited or get involved in an accident or criminal activity. There are many risks with any drink or drug use, so ask yourself, is it really worth it?

Prescription medicines and those that are available from a pharmacist can often be misused. Extreme care should be taken when using medicines as they can have serious side effects. Even too much paracetamol can have a life-long effect on your liver! Only use them for the purposes they have been prescribed. Children under 16 should not use aspirin.

## 'Legal highs'

'Legal highs' are no longer legal under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. This means there is a blanket ban on the production, distribution, sale and supply of legal highs which are intended for human consumption.

## What does the Act mean by 'psychoactive'?

For the purposes of this Act, a substance produces a psychoactive effect in a person if, by stimulating or depressing the person's central nervous system, it affects the person's mental functioning or emotional state.

The new law excludes alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, and medical products.

Offenders can face up to seven years in jail. The Act will also enable police to shut down 'headshops' (stores from which 'legal highs' and drugs paraphernalia can be bought) and online dealers. However, new 'legal highs' are being created all the time, meaning that it may be hard to control them. There are also fears that the sale of 'legal highs' could move to the dark web.

## Are you drinking too much?

Most young people choose not to use drugs or alcohol and it is a myth that you need to drink or use drugs to enjoy yourself. It's a good idea to make sure that you have good factual information about these substances before you decide if you are going to use them.

**“Health officials tell us that an alcohol-free childhood is the healthiest and best option.”**

They say that it is best not to drink until at least the age of 15. If you are between 15 and 17 and are going to drink alcohol, it is safer to drink only very small amounts under adult supervision. Even small amounts of alcohol can lead to a number of health problems as well as becoming a victim of crime, being vulnerable to assault and doing something you may regret later. Alcohol can affect different people in different ways, even what may seem like a very small amount can be harmful.

If you think you may be drinking too much or you or other people are worried about your drinking then seek information about cutting down.

If you feel under pressure to drink alcohol or are drinking because you have problems, try to address this by talking to an adult you trust or a sensible friend.







**Food** is burned in our bodies to create energy. If we **don't use it**, we **get fat - simple!**



# Healthy lifestyles

## Balance is the key

Being healthy is a big part of being happy. A healthy lifestyle simply means that the way you are day to day, makes you feel physically and mentally fit and well.

### What is a healthy lifestyle?

**“Balance is the key, it's about what you put into your body and also how you burn that energy off.”**

Food is burned in our bodies to create energy. If we don't use it, we get fat - simple!

If your lifestyle is not a healthy balance - for instance through not exercising, eating too much fatty and sugary foods, drinking alcohol, getting involved in drugs or by keeping worries and problems to yourself - you are more likely to become ill, have trouble concentrating at school or work or be unhappy or depressed. Being active can reduce your stress levels and can give you the time to think clearly.

Your lifestyle has a big effect on how you feel and what you get out of life, both now and in the future. So it's a good idea to find out more about how to live healthily.

**“There are many other areas of our health we need to think about like sexual health, healthy teeth, drugs, alcohol and generally looking after ourselves.”**

### What you can do

- Be responsible for your own health, only you know how you feel.
- Keep it fun! Healthy living is all about getting the balance right, enjoying yourself and being happy is a key part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Get active! See if your friends would like to go rollerblading or play football rather than watching TV.
- You don't need to join an expensive gym to get fit. Jog in the park or walk home, every bit helps!
- If you feel anxious or depressed talk to your parent or carer, GP or teacher.

## Five Ways to Well-being

### Connect...

With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, school, work, or in your local community.

### Be active...

Being active makes you feel good.

### Take notice...

Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling.

### Keep learning...

Learning new things is fun and will make you feel more confident.

### Give...

Do something nice for someone.

## Sunburn: Stay safe in the sun

It's the damage done to your skin when you're young that could lead to skin cancer developing in later life, so it's vital to get clued up now and protect yourself from the sun.

### Love the sun, respect your skin.

Avoid the pain and shame of the lobster look by following our five simple steps.

1. Cover up your skin. Throw on a long sleeved shirt or top that ideally has a collar and a sarong or long shorts to banish those burning rays.
2. Slap on the suncream. Apply generous amounts of water resistant suncream of at least SPF30 and above, to clean, dry skin before going out in the sun. Make sure you re-apply regularly throughout the day.
3. Wear a hat or cap. Whether it's a stylish fedora, a trilby or a baseball cap, all can help to keep the heat off your head, face, neck and ears.
4. Style it up with shades. Slip on those sunglasses to make sure your eyes are protected from the strong rays of the sun.
5. Chill out in the shade. When the sun's rays are strongest between 11am and 3pm, find a shady spot to avoid the burn.

### Fake it!

Use an instant tanner instead.

[www.teenagecancertrust.org](http://www.teenagecancertrust.org)

## Sunbeds

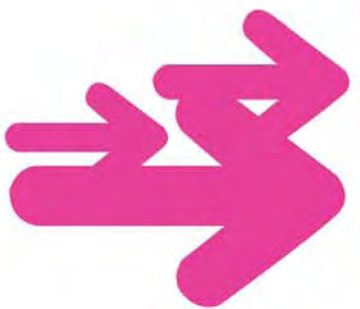
Sunbeds aren't a safe alternative to tanning outdoors. Like the sun, sunbeds give out harmful ultraviolet light which damage the DNA in our skin cells and can cause skin cancer.

Sunbeds also cause premature skin ageing, which means that your skin becomes coarse, leathery and wrinkled at a younger age. So when the tan fades, the damage remains.

People with fair skin that tends to burn are at higher risk of problems from sunbed use than those with darker skin. Young people also have delicate skin and are more likely to damage it by using sunbeds.

**“You should NEVER use a sunbed if you are under 18.”**

[www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)







The vaccine is  
**99% effective** in  
**preventing** the cervical  
abnormalities that can lead to  
cervical **cancer**.



# HPV inoculation

## Protection for up to 20 years

All girls aged 12 to 13 are offered the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccination as part of the NHS childhood vaccination programme. The vaccine protects against cervical cancer. This is a serious and potentially life threatening disease. It's usually given to girls in year eight at schools in England.

The HPV vaccine consists of two injections into the upper arm spaced at least six, and not more than 24 months apart.

**“It's a safe vaccine and there are very few girls who aren't suitable for HPV vaccination.”**

However, special precautions may need to be taken if the girl being vaccinated has certain health conditions, or has ever had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). Talk to your school nurse if you are worried.

Research has indicated that the HPV vaccine protects against cervical cancer for at least 20 years.

## How is HPV infection spread?

HPV is spread through skin contact, often during sex. Using a barrier form of contraception can reduce your risk of becoming infected. However, as condoms do not cover the entire genital area and are often put on after sexual contact has begun, a condom is no guarantee against the spread of HPV. For most people, HPV infections come and go without any symptoms. Sometimes, the virus may remain inactive for months after infection.

Although most girls don't start having sex until after they're 16 years of age, it's important to get protection early enough and the very best time is in the early teenage years.

**“The HPV vaccine does not replace the importance of safe sex or the need for regular cervical screening.”**

Discuss this with your school nurse.

## Do I have to have the vaccine?

You will have to sign a consent form before you can be vaccinated. Make sure you have thought things through, the HPV vaccine has a good safety record and will protect you against cervical cancer for many years.

**“Speak to your school nurse if you want more information, on her own, or with your parent or carer if you prefer.”**

## Is the vaccine safe?

The vaccine has undergone rigorous safety testing as part of the licensing process required in the UK and other European countries.

## How effective is the HPV vaccine?

The vaccine is 99% effective in preventing the cervical abnormalities that can lead to cervical cancer caused by HPV types 16 and 18\*.

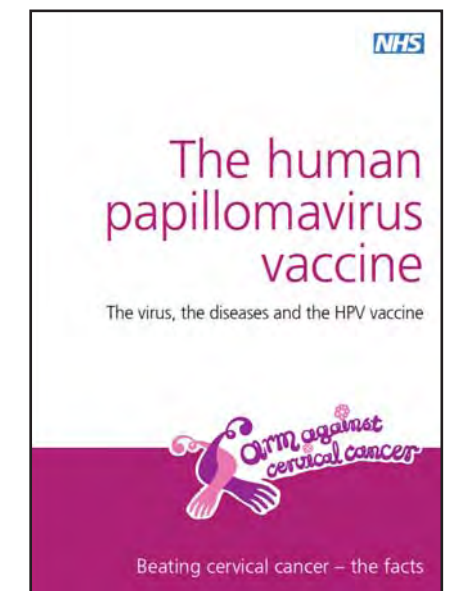
## Are there any side effects?

As with most vaccines, the most common side effect is mild to moderate swelling, redness and pain at the site where the injection is given. Other mild side effects might be slightly raised temperature, sickness and muscle aches. Very rarely, some people have an allergic reaction soon after immunisation. This reaction may be a rash or itching affecting part or all of the body. It is not a reason to stop having HPV vaccinations.

## Can girls who missed HPV vaccination still have it?

Yes, if a girl misses either of her vaccinations, for whatever reason, she can speak to her nurse or GP about making another appointment, ideally as close as possible to the original one.

Girls can have the HPV vaccination on the NHS up to the age of 18. Girls who have the HPV vaccination after the age of 15 will need three doses as the response to two doses is not so good in older girls.



\* Source: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)





Try to  
**understand why**  
you are **feeling**  
this way.

# Stressed out or feeling low

## How to cope

Depression, stress and anxiety are serious and common problems. The first step to getting help is to be able to recognise the problem. Sometimes it is easy to put ourselves under too much pressure; we can worry about how we look, about exams or about what other people think of us.

**“People are more at risk of becoming depressed if they are under a lot of stress and have no one to share their worries with.”**

Depression is commonly caused by a mixture of things rather than any one thing alone. Some people have experiences that lead to depression including family breakdown, the death or loss of a loved one, stress, abuse, bullying and physical illness. Depression can also be triggered if too many changes happen in your life too quickly.

### Depression can cause serious problems, such as:

- Difficulties getting on with friends and family.
- Loss of friends.
- Loss of confidence and difficulty making decisions.
- Inability to study, work and perform well in exams.
- Difficulty with day to day tasks.
- Eating problems, turning to food for comfort and eating or dieting excessively.
- Lying, stealing and missing school.

Simply talking to someone you trust and who you feel understands can lighten the burden. It can also make it easier to work out practical solutions to problems. For example, if you are stressed out by exams or study, you could talk to your teacher.

**“Keep as active and as occupied as possible and allow for fun and leisure time.”**

## Could this be you?

- Being self-critical, self-blaming and hating yourself.
- Feeling out of control.
- Becoming stressed about minor things.
- Becoming withdrawn, avoiding friends, family and regular activities.
- Feeling guilty or bad.
- Feeling unhappy, miserable and lonely a lot of the time.
- Finding it difficult to concentrate.
- Not looking after your personal appearance.
- Changes in sleep pattern, tiredness and lack of energy.
- Frequent minor health problems.
- Not enjoying life anymore.
- Depression increases the risk of using drugs, alcohol or solvents.
- Are you being bullied, exploited or suffering abuse?

## What to do next

- Try to understand why you are feeling this way.
- Talk to someone and don't keep it to yourself.
- You can talk to your GP in confidence if you have felt down for a long time.







If you are  
**self-harming**,  
there is **help available**  
and it is important to get the  
**support** you **need**.



# Self-harm

## Understanding and support

Self-harming is hurting yourself on purpose so you bleed, leave a scar, mark, bruise or take an overdose. The most common ways to self-harm are cutting, scratching, hair pulling and burning. Some may use drugs or alcohol as a form of self-harm. Girls are thought to be more likely to self-harm than boys, but this is because boys are more likely to punch out at walls, which isn't always recognised as self-harm.

People self-harm for different reasons. Some people feel bad because they're being bullied or abused, some may be stressed or are suffering a loss or maybe missing someone.

**“Self-harming is dangerous. It is a sign that you have an underlying problem and if it got out of hand, you could risk killing yourself accidentally. Get help as soon as possible.”**

You may feel powerless right now but once you have talked it through you can work towards understanding why you are self-harming and how to go about working through this difficult time.

## What to do

### If you are self-harming:

- You are not on your own, so don't suffer alone! Don't bottle it up, go and speak to someone you trust.
- Contact your GP.
- Keep a record of how you feel when you want to self-harm.
- Keep wounds clean or they may become infected, seek medical attention if necessary.

### If a friend is self-harming:

- Listen to them and let them talk about how they feel.
- It might help them if they know you're there for them.
- Encourage them to see their GP who will be able to get them some counselling. This will help them talk about why they self-harm.
- Visit websites and contacts for support.

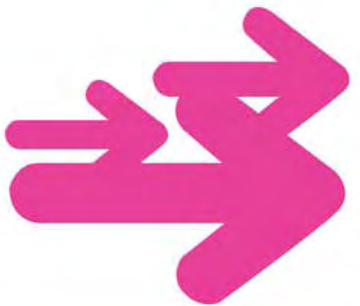
## Who can help

If you are self-harming, there is help available and it is important to get the support you need.

Many young people who self-harm do so privately and do not want to talk to other people about it, sometimes for fear of how people will react, thinking that they might not understand.

**“If you can talk to someone, this may help how you are feeling.”**

If you don't want to talk to your parents or carer, you could talk to your grandparents, another relative, friend, school nurse, youth worker or teacher or if you don't feel like you can confide in anyone, then go and talk to your GP.





# Useful contacts



## NATIONAL

**Action for Children**

Practical information for children, young people, and parents going through a family break-up.  
0300 123 2112  
[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

**Anxiety UK**

For advice on anxiety.  
08444 775 774  
[www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

**Beating Eating Disorders**

For advice and information on all types of eating disorders.  
Youthline 0345 634 7650  
[www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)

**Brook**

0808 802 1234  
[www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

**Change4Life**

For advice and information on how to live a healthy life.  
0300 123 4567  
[www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

**Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre**

0870 000 3344  
[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

**ChildLine**

Free 24-hour counselling service for children and young people. ChildLine deals with any issue which causes distress or concern. Common issues include child abuse, bullying, mental illness, parental separation or divorce, pregnancy and substance misuse.  
0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**Family Planning Association (FPA)**

[www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

**Frank**

0300 123 6600  
[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

**Lesbian, gay and bisexual**

For young people seeking advice on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.  
08000 502020  
[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)  
Terence Higgins Trust  
0808 802 1221 [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

**National Domestic Violence**

**Freephone Helpline 24-hour**  
0808 2000 247

**NHS Choices**

For health advice.  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Race Equality Foundation**

0207 428 1891  
[www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk](http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk)

**Red Cross**

Information on CPR (kiss of life)  
[www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk](http://www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk)

**Samaritans**

08457 90 90 90

**Smokefree**

Advice and information on how to quit smoking.  
[www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)

**Sunsmart**

Advice and information on keeping safe in the sun.  
[www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)

**Stop Smoking Service**

[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Smoking](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Smoking)

**YoungMinds Parent Helpline**

0808 802 5544  
[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

## LOCAL

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