

# The POWER of Self-Care

SELF-CARE FORUM FACT SHEET No. 20

You've got the **POWER** to take control of your life

**P**

Personal Wellbeing

**O**

Out & about & Exercise

**W**

Weight Awareness

**E**

Eating & Diet

**R**

Risks & Prevention

## Personal Wellbeing



## Mental health and wellbeing

The 5 ways to personal wellbeing will help improve your mental health.

- Start with one or two things you know you can manage.
- Take small steps. Take time to find out what works for you.
- Go at your own pace. Only try what you are happy with.

For more info see this link - [5 steps to mental wellbeing](#).

## Sleep

Good sleep is vital to personal and mental wellbeing. It helps to have a routine at night. Avoid using screens, try to wind down, make your sleep area comfortable. More on the [Mind website here](#).

## Spirituality

Spirituality is a feeling of connecting with something greater than ourselves or a search for meaning in life. Explore the positives of your own beliefs on your [mental wellbeing here](#).

## Managing illness

Know how to look after yourself and loved ones during periods of illness. [The Self-Care Forum's fact sheets](#) tells you how to do this and when to seek help for many common illnesses.

## Out and about and Exercise

### EXERCISE - some is good, more is better

Exercise improves sleep, helps maintain a healthy weight, reduces the risk of many diseases, helps manage stress and improves your quality of life

#### Starting out - Exercise

You don't have to be an Olympic athlete to be fit- Start with 10 minutes of brisk walking twice a day and you are nearly there!

The NHS Active 10 App can help

#### Starting out- Counting steps

To count your daily steps, use the free apps Google Health on Android phones and Apple Health on iPhones or use a cheap pedometer

- Check your daily step count on a quiet day - it may be between 2500 to 4000 steps already
- Start by aiming for a couple of thousand steps a day extra - 10 minutes brisk walking twice a day will give you this
- Then try to achieve 7500 steps a day

**AIM FOR:**

**150**

minutes moderate intensity a week  
If you can talk but can't sing, it's moderate



**OR**

**75**

minutes vigorous intensity a week  
If you can't sing or talk, it's vigorous



Why not try the **NHS Couch to 5K App?** It takes 9 weeks.

No previous running experience is necessary

#### Build strength

on at least **2** days a week to keep muscles, bones & joints strong



#### Reduce inactive time

Break up periods of inactivity



# Weight Awareness

## Get to know your Body Mass Index (BMI)

BMI	Weight Status	Advice
<b>Below 18.5</b>	<b>Underweight</b>	Speak to your GP
<b>18.5 to 24.9</b>	<b>Healthiest weight</b>	Try and keep it there
<b>25 to 29.9</b>	<b>Overweight</b>	Try to get to a healthier weight
<b>Above 30</b>	<b>Obese</b>	See your GP for help with weight loss

BMI ranges are slightly different for people from S. Asian, Chinese, African-Caribbean and Black African backgrounds. The NHS BMI calculator takes these issues into account.

Being underweight or overweight can affect your health. If your BMI is 25 or over, just by losing weight you can lessen your risk of serious diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

- BMI takes into account your weight and height
- Be aware of your BMI, but don't judge yourself or let others judge you
- Use this information in your own way to reach the healthiest weight you feel you can.
- Start with something doable. Even a 5% weight loss can have significant benefits
- Go to the NHS website for a free BMI calculator and fill in your height and weight

## The NHS Weight Loss Plan

Will help you to:

- set weight loss goals
- use the BMI calculator to customise your plan
- plan your meals
- make healthier food choices
- get more active and burn more calories
- record your activity and progress

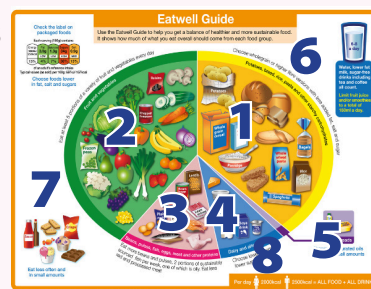
**The NHS 12 Week Weight Loss Plan is a great place to start. It's available as an app or pdf.**



# Eating and Diet

Use the [NHS Eatwell Guide](#) to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

- 1 Base meals on 1/3 starchy carbohydrates e.g. potatoes, bread, rice, pasta- wholegrain is best
- 2 At least 5 portions of fruit + vegetables each day
- 3 Eat some protein - beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat including 2 portions of fish, one oily, every week
- 4 Dairy or alternatives (such as soy drinks); choose lower fat and lower sugar options
- 5 Unsaturated oils and spreads - small amounts
- 6 Drink 6-8 glasses of fluid a day
- 7 Foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar - eat in smaller amounts and less often
- 8 Daily calories: Keep to less than: 2,000 for females, 2,500 for Males



# Risks and Prevention

## Help your heart and your health

### • Start exercising

This lessens the risks of: diabetes, heart disease, falls, depression, joint and back pain and many cancers

### • At the same time become Weight Aware

A weight that gives you a BMI of 25 or over increases your risks of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and many cancers, such as breast, bowel and oesophageal (gullet) cancer

### • Stop smoking (there is no safe level)

### • Be careful how much alcohol you drink

Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis

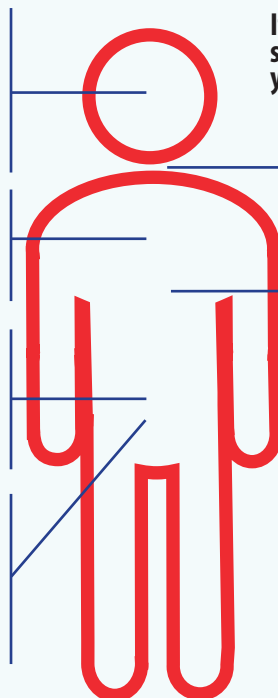
### • Check your Blood Pressure - Know your numbers!

The BHF says: "Unless your doctor says otherwise, blood pressure should be below 135/85" and lower if you have certain health conditions. More information on the [BHF website here](#).

### • Ask for an NHS health check if you are 40 to 75 yrs

## Watch for these symptoms of possible cancer

- Croaky voice, hoarseness or cough for more than 3 weeks
- Coughing up blood
- Mouth or tongue ulcers that last longer than 3 weeks
- Unusual changes to the size, shape or feel of breasts, and nipple or skin changes
- Change in bowel habits such as constipation, looser poo or pooing more often
- Blood in your poo
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding such as after sex, between periods or after the menopause
- Blood in your pee
- Problems peeing



**If you have any of these symptoms, call 111 or see your GP**

- Difficulty swallowing
- Persistent heartburn or indigestion

- Appetite loss
- Persistent bloating

### General symptoms

- Heavy night sweats
- Appetite loss
- Fatigue
- unexplained weight loss
- unexplained pain or ache
- unusual lump or swelling anywhere in your body
- new moles or changes to a mole
- sores that won't heal

Based on Cancer Research UK's [Signs and symptoms of cancer](#)

## More information.

[NHS England](#)  
[NHS Scotland](#)  
[NHS Northern Ireland](#)  
[NHS Wales](#)

## What I'd like to do and by when

Take small steps. Pick 1 or 2 things that feel achievable before moving on to other new things.