

A dose of Health & Wellbeing

Your bitesize guide to a healthier lifestyle,
from your school nursing team

March 2024

Happy Easter!

Welcome to our Easter edition of your newsletter from your school nursing team at Berkshire Healthcare.

Read on for lots of information on how to keep yourself healthy.

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Sleep

Sleep is vital to your overall wellbeing. Yet, with hectic schedules, academic pressures, and digital distractions, we know many of you struggle to get the quality sleep you need. Having good sleep habits is essential to support your physical health, brain function, and emotional wellbeing. Here are some ways to enjoy more restful nights.

Try and stick to a regular sleep routine, even on weekends. Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day helps regulate the body's internal clock, making it easier to fall asleep and wake up naturally.

Do some calming activities before bed, this can signal to the body that it's time to wind down. Set up a relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading a book, taking a warm bath, or practicing gentle yoga or meditation. Avoid stimulating activities like using electronic devices or playing video games close to bedtime.

Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet, and cool. Get rid of any distractions that may make sleep more hard, like electronic devices or excessive clutter.

The blue light emitted by electronic devices can disrupt the production of melatonin, the hormone responsible for regulating sleep-wake cycles. Switch off screens at least an hour before bedtime to help your brain move into sleep mode naturally.

Caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea, or energy drinks can interfere with sleep patterns and make it hard to fall asleep. Try to avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening.

Regular physical activity can help you get better sleep by helping you use up energy and reduce stress. But avoid vigorous exercise close to bedtime, as it can make it harder to fall asleep.

Stress can impact your ability to sleep well. Practise mindfulness, journaling, or talking to a trusted adult.

For more advice visit: [Home - Teen Sleep Hub](#) where you can also download a free eBook.

[Sleep Video -youtube](#)



Getting active



Being active is not only important for your physical health but also for your mental well-being. Why not try these free physical activity ideas?

Get outdoors:

Explore the great outdoors by going for hikes, walks, or bike rides in local parks or nature reserves, connect with nature and de-stress.

Give yourself a fitness challenge:

Create fitness challenges or circuits you can complete either on your own or in a small group. Try to include bodyweight exercises like squats, lunges, push-ups, and burpees, as well as cardio activities like jumping jacks or high knees. Set yourself goals and track your progress to keep yourself motivated and engaged.

Yoga and stretching:

There are huge benefits to yoga and stretching for improving flexibility, strength, and relaxation. There are plenty of free yoga tutorials and resources available online you can follow along with at home. Experiment with different poses and sequences, see what a difference regular practice makes to your flexibility & strength.



Sport In Mind

[Sport in Mind](#) run a [Youth Programme](#) offering sessions for young people to help you feel empowered to find your voice, understand your feelings, and make the vital connection between sport and positive mental health.

Visit: [Youth Community Sessions | Sport in Mind](#)

They also offer an NCS accredited volunteer programme for students aged 16-17 where you can use your voice to create positive change in the community. This programme is not just about sports; it's about personal growth, mental wellbeing, and preparing for your future. [Know a student who might be interested? Pass it on!](#)

They also have [breathing cards](#) and [journals](#) which are packed with exciting activities, challenges and information to empower children and young people to make positive ongoing changes to their physical health and open discussions about mental health and wellbeing. [Why not send one to a friend?](#)

Exam stress

Exam season can be a stressful time, and we know you want to do your best. But it's important not to let stress get on top of you so you can look after yourself as well.

- Find a way to revise that works for you, maybe that be in silence, with music on etc.
- Take regular breaks
- Exercise to make sure you stay energised, get out into fresh air.
- Stay hydrated - aim for 6-8 cups of water during the day (see our tips later in the newsletter).
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Make sure you get enough sleep.
- Do some activities to unwind every day.

If you find yourself really nervous or worried, reach out to a teacher as they will be able to support you, or point you in the right direction.

For more support with exam stress check out the following websites:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/exam-self-care/>

[Exam Stress | How To Deal with Exam Stress | YoungMinds](#)

[The Pressure To Do Well & Be Better In Examinations | The Mix](#)

[Exam Stress | Feelings | Health for Teens](#)

[Information for 11-18 year olds – Exam stress – Mind](#)

[Conquerins stress: https://youtu.be/-RZ86OB9hw4](https://youtu.be/-RZ86OB9hw4)



Mental wellbeing support

Life can be tough, and if you are struggling and need someone to talk to, there is an app called Tellmi which you can try.

Tellmi is a safe anonymous app where you can talk about absolutely anything, from anxiety to autism, self-harm to self-esteem. Sharing can really help you feel better. There are moderators checking everything to keep you safe and in-house counsellors on hand if you need extra support.

[Tellmi: Better Mental Health on the App Store](#)

Resilience

Resilience is all about how well we adapt during difficult times. It's the inner strength that allows us to persevere through tough times, learn from our failures, and emerge stronger on the other side. Think of it as a muscle that grows stronger with each challenge we overcome.

Everyone has different struggles in life. From friendships, relationships, exams, family connections, discrimination, to physical or emotional health concerns, stress and anxiety... the list goes on.

We are constantly developing our resilience and while this can be difficult there are things you can do to make it a little easier.

- **Develop a support network.** Surround yourself with positive influences – friends, family members, teachers, or mentors – who uplift and encourage you during tough times.
- **Practice self-care.** Take care of your physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing through activities like exercise, meditation, journaling, or hobbies that bring you joy.
- **Set realistic goals.** Break down your goals into manageable steps and celebrate your progress along the way. Every little step counts.
- **Learn from failure.** Instead of dwelling on your mistakes, reflect on what you've learned from them and how you can apply that in the future.
- **Stay flexible.** Life is unpredictable: embrace change and your ability to adapt.

It's not about avoiding challenges but how you respond to them that matters most.

[How to Build Mental Resilience | The Children's Society \(childrensociety.org.uk\)](https://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

[What is Mental Health? | Symptoms of Mental Health Problems | YoungMinds](#)

If you are going through a tough time, talk to someone you trust. Your parent or carer, a teacher or your school nurse.



Hay fever (allergic rhinitis)

We're getting into hay fever season again. Hay fever is an allergic reaction where the body's immune system reacts to allergens that are in the air. Contact with an allergen causes the body to respond by releasing a chemical called histamine which is what causes symptoms such as:

- Itchy eyes
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Runny nose

There are two types of hay fever

Seasonal	Perennial
Symptoms usually occur between March and September	Symptoms all year round
When pollen counts are high	Related to household allergens
Pollen from trees, plants, weeds or all 3	Pets, dust, mould spores

It is helpful to know which type causes your symptoms as this will help you manage the symptoms better.

Try to:

- Wear wrap-around sunglasses to prevent pollen from entering the eyes.
- Use a petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) around nostrils to stop pollen from going up your nose.
- Keep windows and doors shut to keep pollen out.
- Shower at the end of every day to remove pollen from your hair and body.
- Stay indoors when you can.
- Make sure your home is hoovered regularly and dusted with a damp cloth.
- Add pollen filters for the car air vents.
- Avoid drying clothes outside as pollen can be blown onto them.
- Stay away from cigarette smoke as this can make symptoms worse.
- Avoid cut grass, especially playing on it.
- Avoid having fresh flowers in the home.

[Hay Fever | Allergy UK | National Charity](#)

[Hay fever - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Constipation

Could you be constipated? Many young people are constipated but it can be hard to notice it.

You may be constipated if:

- You have done less than 3 poos in the last week
- Your poo is large and hard
- Your poo looks like "rabbit droppings" or little pellets
- You are straining or in pain when you poo
- You have some bleeding during or after having a poo, because your poo is large and hard
- You have a poor appetite or stomach pain that improves after you poo.

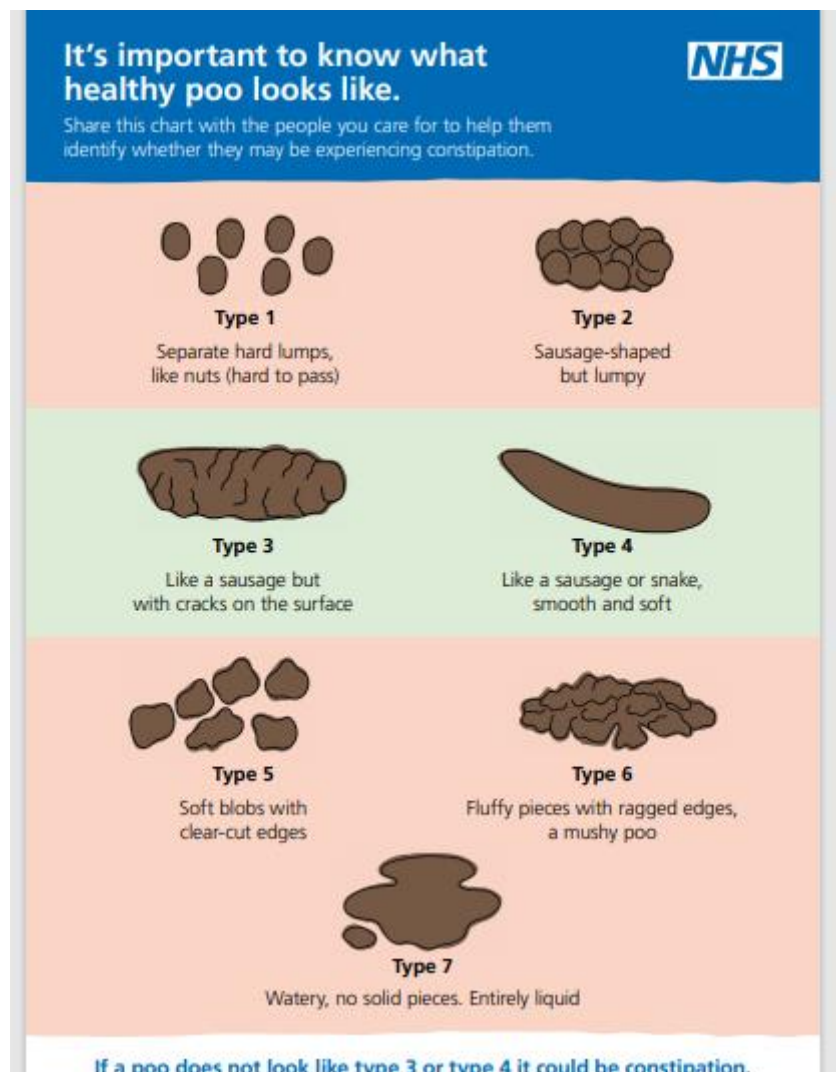
Possible causes

- Not eating enough high-fibre foods like fruit and veg
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Feeling pressured or not giving enough time to sitting on the toilet
- Feeling worried or anxious about something – such as exams, moving house, relationships

[How to get more fibre into your diet - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

For further information & management advice visit:

[Constipation - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)



[Bristol Stool Chart \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk)

Drinking water

Drinking fresh water is one of the best things we can do for our health.

You need between 6-8 glasses of fluid a day to keep hydrated. Dehydration can lead to fatigue and decreased concentration, making it harder to focus in class or during activities. By drinking enough water, you'll feel more energised. Our brains are made up of about 75% water, so drinking water helps maintain proper brain function, improves memory, attention, and problem-solving skills.

Staying hydrated also helps you stay well, sleep better, fight illnesses, prevents constipation, supports healthy skin, and reduces the risk of headaches and muscle cramps, especially during physical activities like sports or exercise.

Daily fluid intake in ml, by age and gender:

Age	Girl	Boy
4 - 8 years	1,000 - 1,400ml	1,000 - 1,400ml
9 - 13 years	1,200 - 2,100ml	1,400 - 2,300ml
14 - 18 years	1,400 - 2,500ml	2,100 - 3,200ml

Drinking water regularly helps flush out toxins from your body, keeping your kidneys healthy. Symptoms of dehydration include thirst, dark-coloured wee, dizziness, and confusion.

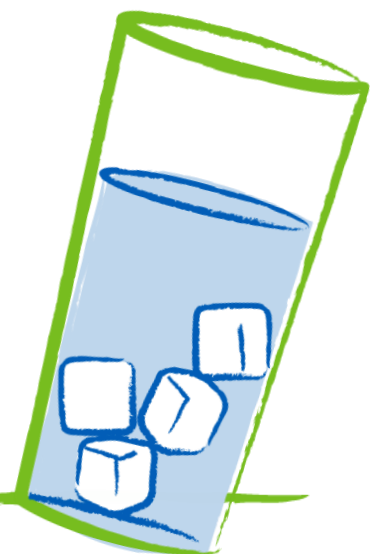
There is a lot of hidden sugar and additives in other drinks such as milkshakes, fruit juice and energy drinks. These can contribute to an unhealthy weight and tooth decay.

Here are some ways to drink more healthy fluids:

- Add slices of fruit or cucumber to a bottle of water.
- Take frequent sips during the day.
- Always have a bottle of water by your side.
- Increase the amount you drink if you've been exercising.
- Look for 'hidden sugar' on drink labels.
- Dilute squash or cordial.
- If you do drink squash or cordial, make sure it's sugar-free.

[Water, drinks and hydration - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Think about the environment, tap water is great: there's no need to buy water in bottles or cans!



Are you up to date with your immunisations?

We are starting to see local outbreaks of some nasty illnesses and diseases such as measles.

Vaccines are free, they prevent you becoming ill from infectious diseases and have helped to save millions of lives globally.

You can check your red book (PCHR) or speak to your GP to check whether you have received all your immunisations. If you were vaccinated outside of the UK, you'll need to provide evidence to your GP practice so that they can check whether you need further vaccinations.

To find out more visit the [NHS Vaccinations website](#) and the [Berkshire Healthcare website](#).

And measles is on the increase

Measles is a highly infectious disease that can lead to serious problems like pneumonia, meningitis, and even long-term disability or death.

Symptoms include a high fever, sore red watery eyes and a blotchy red-brown rash. It's easy to catch by close contact with others such as in school.

Check with your GP that you are up to date with 2 doses. If you have missed a dose immunisation team can help you to complete a consent form and book an appointment in one of their clinics or you can make an appointment with your GP.

Please email:

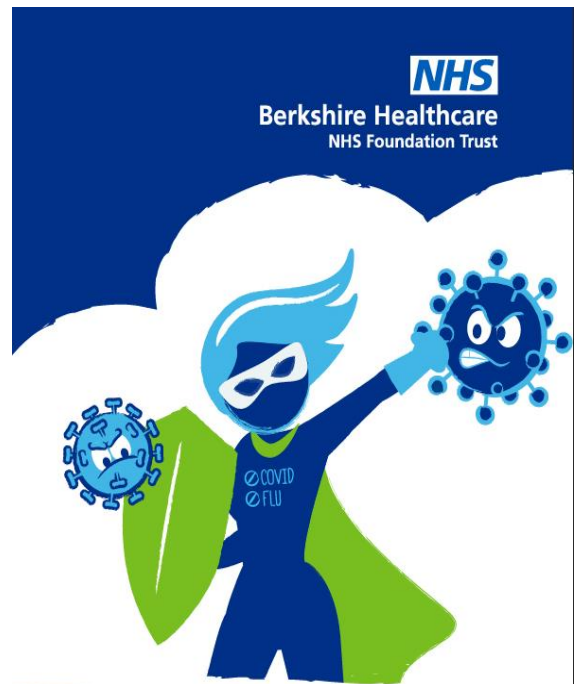
westschoolimms@berkshire.nhs.uk (For schools in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham).

eastschoolimms@berkshire.nhs.uk (For schools in Bracknell).

Or call: 0300 365 0077

www.nhs.uk (www.nhs.uk)

www.ox.ac.uk (ox.ac.uk)



Spots

It's natural and normal to have spots when going through puberty. This is because of the change in hormones in your body.

- Try and avoid popping and squeezing spots, as this can make them worse and may cause scarring.
- Wash the affected area with mild soap and water twice a day.
- Even though exercise can't cure teenage spots it can help boost your mood and self-esteem.
- Make sure you wash after any physical activity as sweat can cause irritation and spots.
- Always remove makeup before bed.

Worried you may have acne?

Acne is blackheads and whiteheads and pus-filled spots (pustules).

[Acne - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Acne – British Skin Foundation](#)

If you are worried about your spots, you can contact your GP for more advice.

[What Causes Spots? | How To Stop Getting Spots | The Mix](#)

Know where to go if you need medical advice



Minor cuts and grazes
Bruises and minor sprains
Coughs and colds

Self Care

Stock your
medicine cabinet



Minor illnesses
Headache
Stomach upsets
Bites and stings

Pharmacy



Feeling unwell?
Unsure?
Anxious?
Need help?

NHS 111



Persistent symptoms
Chronic pain
Long term conditions

GP Advice

Out of Hours call 111



Choking
Chest pain
Blacking out
Serious blood loss

A&E or 999

Emergencies only



If you have a child aged 5-19 you can contact a member of the school nursing team by text message for confidential, anonymous help and advice.

We can offer advice and support on many topics like:

- Sleep
- Low mood
- Self harm
- Body changes
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Healthy eating
- Anxiety and stress
- Drugs, alcohol and smoking

Text: 07312 263266

Open 9am - 4:30pm Mon-Fri
(excluding bank holidays)

How to contact your School Nursing team

We are available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.
There is reduced cover during school holidays

Bracknell Forest

0300 365 6000

BracknellForest.SN@berkshire.nhs.uk

Reading

0118 9047320

csnreading@berkshire.nhs.uk

Wokingham

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West Berkshire

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