

# A dose of Health & Wellbeing

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

March 2025

## Happy Easter!

Read on for lots of information on how to keep yourself healthy, from your school nursing team at Berkshire Healthcare.



## What do you think of our newsletter?

Do you find this newsletter helpful? What would you like to hear about?

[Let us know here](#)

Thank you!

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## Exam stress

Exam season can be a stressful time. We know you want to do your best, but it is important not to let stress get on top of you so look after yourself as well.

- Find a way revise that works for you, may 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
- 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)

[What happens to your teenage brain at exam time?](#)



## Mental wellbeing support

If you are struggling and need someone to talk to, or may be feeling the pressure of upcoming exams, or simply needing help setting new goals or wanting someone to talk to, you are not alone.

Sharing can really help you feel better. Tellmi is a safe anonymous app where you can talk about absolutely anything, from anxiety to autism, self-harm to self-esteem. It offers free, confidential, text-based support to help you navigate these challenges and focus on finding a positive way forward.

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

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# 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)

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# The importance of iron during the teenage years

As a teenager there is a big increase in iron requirements for your body. Even more so if you are a girl as you will lose iron when you have your period. About 50% of teenage girls do not get enough iron in their diet.

Iron makes red blood cells which carry oxygen around the body. A lack of iron can lead to iron deficiency anaemia.

## **Common symptoms of iron deficiency anaemia:**

Tiredness, a lack of energy, shortness of breath, heart palpitations, poor appetite, frequent infections, paler than usual skin.

## **Less common symptoms:**

Hearing issues such as ringing, buzzing, hissing sounds. Food tastes strange, sore tongue, cold hands & feet, hair losses, nail changes, restless leg syndrome, feeling itchy, wanting to eat things that are not food such as paper, or ice.

See your GP if you have these symptoms.

## **Good sources of iron:**

- Red meat
- Liver
- Wholegrains such as wholemeal bread
- Iron fortified breakfast cereals
- Dark green vegetables such as spinach, kale, watercress
- Beans: kidney beans, chickpeas
- Dried fruits: apricots, raisins, figs
- Nuts: cashews, pine nuts, hazelnut, peanuts
- Seeds: sesame, pumpkin

Eating foods that are high in vitamin C like citrus fruits (eg oranges) helps the body absorb iron from food. Tannins, phytates and calcium in drinks/foods like tea, coffee, milk and bran can make it hard for the body to absorb iron so try to avoid these drinks at mealtimes.

## **More information**

[Vitamins and minerals - Iron - NHS](#)

[Nutrition for teenagers - British Nutrition Foundation](#)

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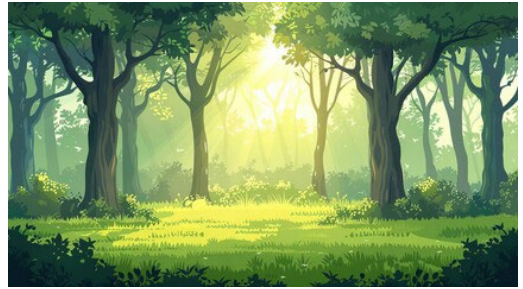
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# Forest bathing

In Japan there is a practice known as Shinrin-Yoku which translates to 'Forest Bathing'. It is the term given to quietly relaxing in nature which can be incredibly beneficial for our emotional, physical, social and mental health. It has been gaining attention since the 1980s when it started being used to counteract the demands of the modern-day stresses.

Research has proven that by using our senses and connecting with nature can:

1. Lower stress levels
2. Boost immunity
3. Fight disease
4. Lower blood pressure
5. Improve mood levels
6. Increased creativity
7. Aid in the recovery process from illness
8. Reduce feelings of anger, sadness and anxiety
9. Improves focus, concentration and memory



The main principles are to walk slowly and silently. The recommended time is two hours however, research has shown that just 10 minutes a day can be beneficial for you.

It is thought that there are three stages of a forest mind (attention, awareness and answers). Translated this simply means the process of simple activities which allows us to relax, engage with nature leading to a greater awareness and true understanding of life.

- Take your time and allow yourself to immerse yourself in the experience.
- Resist the temptation to use electronic devices.
- Focus on your breathing and the quality of breaths involved.
- Pick a quiet time of day when you are sure there will not be lots of noise or activity.
- Engage your senses – what can you see, smell or hear?
- Take a blanket, a book and allow your mind to free itself!
- Think about your safety.
- Learn about what is on your doorstep. Learn the different types of birds or tree identification.

Find your nearest walk here: [Forest Bathing Finder](#) |

[Your guide to forest bathing | Forestry England](#)

[Forest bathing | Mindfulness | National Trust](#)

[Forest Bathing – What, How, Where? A beginner's guide | Healing Forest](#)

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# Sleep

Here are some resources to help with some advice on how to fall asleep faster and sleep better:

[Fall asleep faster and sleep better](#)

[Teen Sleep Hub](#)

[Sleep Video –youtube](#)

[How to get a good night's sleep](#)

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# Alcohol

Drinking alcohol can be risky, as the effects it will have varies from person to person. Knowing all the facts will help you make your own decisions.

[Alcohol | Effects of Alcohol | FRANK](#)

[Talk About Alcohol](#)

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# Vaping

Vapes, e-cigarettes, & electronic cigarettes are battery powered devices which allow someone to inhale a flavoured vapour. Most contain high levels of nicotine as they were developed to help people give up smoking. Nicotine is addictive so non- smokers are advised not to use them but switching to vapes can help smokers quit.

No one yet knows exactly what the long-term effects of vaping will be especially as they vary so much in level of nicotine. Other toxic ingredients such as lead, nickel, chromium and other chemicals can be found in illicit ones.

Check out how much you know about vaping there are a lot of myths.

[Vaping Quiz](#)

[Vaping myths and the facts - Better Health – NHS](#)

[Honest information about drugs | FRANK](#)

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# Sport In Mind

If you aren't getting the government recommendation of 60 minutes of exercise per day, you can get more active with Sport in Mind.

Sport in Mind is the UK's leading mental health sports charity. They run physical activity sessions in your local area to promote mental wellbeing, improve physical health, combat isolation and empower people to move their lives forward in a positive direction.

[Find a session: Youth Community Sessions | Sport in Mind](#)

## Asthma

Although a very common medical condition it is important to make sure that if you have asthma it's properly controlled, to prevent problems and/or a severe asthma attack which could be life threatening. It is really important that:

- You have an asthma care plan in school.
- You attend your annual asthma review.
- You know what your triggers are.
- You use your inhalers as directed.
- You regularly check your inhaler technique [How to use your inhaler | Asthma + Lung UK](#)
- You recognise if your reliever inhaler is being overused (using 2 or more per year is an indicator of poorly controlled asthma) – a sign your asthma is not under control so further medical attention is required.
- Your environment is smoke free.



# Signs of cancer

There are lots of different signs & symptoms of cancer. It is always important to get anything you are worried about checked out, but especially if you have any of these symptoms that last a while and you can't explain.

[Signs of cancer | Teenage Cancer Trust](#)



## Mole changes

This could be a change in the size, shape, colour or texture of a mole. Or if it starts bleeding.



## Unexplained weight change

This could be weight loss or gain when you haven't changed your diet, how much you're exercising or any medication you're on.



## Persistent pain

This is severe pain that doesn't go away with painkillers.



## Unexplained tiredness

You might feel completely exhausted all of the time - even a good night's sleep doesn't help.



## Lumps and swellings

Lumps and swellings can be anywhere on your body.

**If you're worried speak to your GP, or scan the QR code to find out more. #CheckItOut**



[teenagecancertrust.org/signs](https://teenagecancertrust.org/signs)





# 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](#).



## 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.

Call: 0300 365 0077

Or email:

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

[eastschoolimms@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:eastschoolimms@berkshire.nhs.uk) (For schools in Bracknell).

[www.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) (MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine - NHS)

[ox.ac.uk](https://www.ox.ac.uk) (MMR Vaccine (Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine) | Vaccine Knowledge Project)

# 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)

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## 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](mailto:BracknellForest.SN@berkshire.nhs.uk)

### Reading

0118 9047320

[csnreading@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:csnreading@berkshire.nhs.uk)

### Wokingham

0118 9047330

[csnwokingham@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:csnwokingham@berkshire.nhs.uk)

### West Berkshire

0118 9047325

[csnwestberks@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:csnwestberks@berkshire.nhs.uk)

## Visit our website

[cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/school-nursing](https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/school-nursing)

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