

Twelve steps for staying healthy

This guide contains a lot of information and suggestions on how to give yourself the best chance of enjoying good health for as long as possible. Try to follow these 12 key steps.

1. If you smoke, get help to stop.
.....
2. Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
.....
3. Eat more fibre-rich foods and less salty and fatty food – check food labels before you buy.
.....
4. Eat fish twice a week – making sure that one portion is oily fish.
.....
5. Keep to a healthy weight.
.....
6. Stick to safe limits with alcohol – know how much you are drinking.
.....
7. Stay active – whether it’s a hobby such as gardening or playing bowls or joining an exercise class.
.....
8. Make sure that you’re getting enough sleep.
.....
9. Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly.
.....
10. Have your eyes tested every two years, or as often as your optician advises.
.....
11. Have a seasonal flu jab every year.
.....
12. Follow up invitations to attend NHS screenings for breast, cervical and bowel cancer.

**what
next?**

Find out more about NHS services to keep you healthy, including screening, in our free guide *Health services*.

Depression

Although no one feels 100 per cent happy all of the time, if you are feeling out of sorts and have any of the symptoms below for two weeks or more you may be suffering from depression.

Symptoms include:

- loss of self-confidence and feeling down
- feeling anxious
- not being able to enjoy the things you usually enjoy
- unexplained aches and pains
- avoiding people, even those you are close to.

Depression is just as significant as a physical illness and is not an inevitable part of getting older. If you have any of the symptoms above, speak to your GP and explain how you're feeling – you can then agree on what may be best for you. They may suggest talking treatments, which involve talking to someone who is specially trained to help you manage your thoughts and feelings and the effect they have on you.

Feeling anxious or low doesn't mean you're weak or less able to cope. It's only sensible to take steps to feel better – much as you would if you had a physical condition.

what next?

Depression Alliance can give you more information and details of local support groups. Call Samaritans if you need to talk to someone about how you're feeling.

In Northern Ireland, you can also contact Aware Defeat Depression, and in Scotland contact Action on Depression.

- ① In Wales, you can contact Journeys or the C.A.L.L. mental health helpline. See pages 30–35 for details.