



HOW TO STAY HAPPY & HEALTHY AT HOME

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak means life has changed for us all. We have all had to adjust to new ways of living and working.

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

The pandemic makes the importance of health and wellbeing clear.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking or taking drugs, and try not to drink too much alcohol.

This newsletter will give you information about staying healthy and looking after yourself and your loved ones during the pandemic.

Please remember to follow the latest [official guidance on social distancing](#) to keep everyone safe.



LOOK AFTER YOUR SLEEP

We all have evenings when we find it hard to fall asleep or we wake up in the night. You may also find this is happening more often during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Good quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel, mentally and physically, so it's important to get enough.

Get into a daily routine

It is likely your normal routine has been disrupted. But having a regular sleeping pattern is really important for good sleep.

It may be harder to do right now, but if you can wake up, wind down and go to bed around the same time each day, it will really help. If possible, avoid napping too.

Remember, your sleep routine starts before you actually get into bed, so build in time every evening to wind down – and try to switch off from your tech.

Things like reading, gentle stretches or meditation are a good way to unwind, and

keeping chargers for your devices out of the bedroom can help you avoid absent-minded scrolling.

Manage your worries

There are things you can do in your day to help manage your worries like talking to someone you trust and switching off from the news.

If you often lie awake worrying, set aside time before bed to make a to-do list for the next day – this can be a good way to put your mind at rest.

Prepare your body for sleep

Our physical health and how we look after our body can have a big effect on our sleep. It can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that can end up making your sleep worse, especially at times like these.

Having caffeine, alcohol, nicotine or a big meal too close to bedtime can stop you falling asleep and prevent deep sleep. Try to avoid them before bed and see if things improve.

Regular exercise is also great for sleep. Just remember to avoid anything too vigorous right before bedtime if you find it affects your sleep, and make sure follow [the latest official guidance on social distancing](#).

Create a restful environment

It's generally easier to drop off when it's cool, dark and quiet – but the right sleep environment is personal, so try different things and see what works for you.

Wearing earplugs, putting your phone on silent and face down (or out of the room entirely); keeping clocks out of view and making sure the room is well ventilated can all make a big difference.

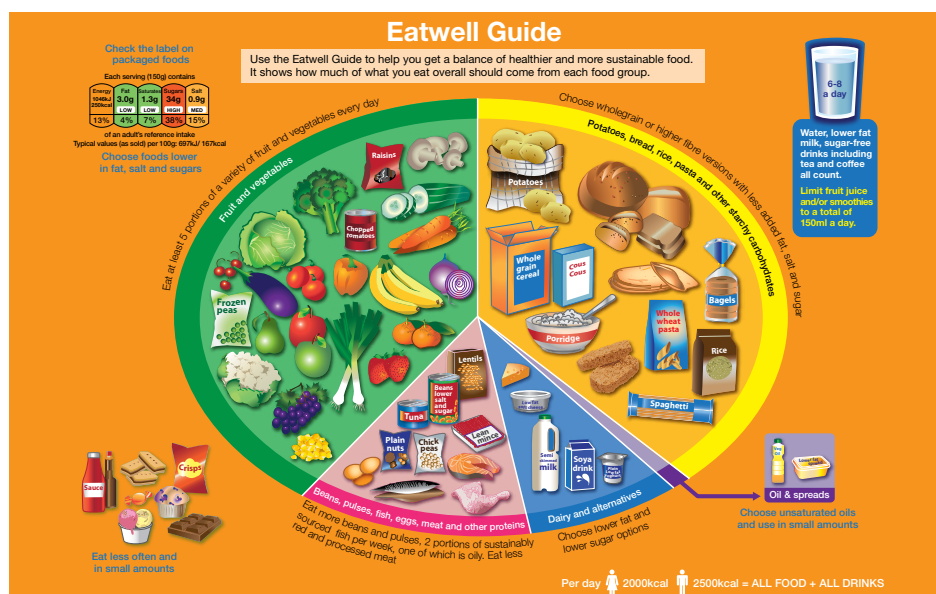
Confront sleepiness

If you are lying awake unable to sleep, do not try to force it. If you are tired and enjoying the feeling of resting, then sleep may naturally take over. But if not, get up and do something relaxing for a bit, like reading a book or listening to quiet music, and go back to bed when you feel sleepier.

NHS SLEEP

[NHS Tips to beat sleep problems](#)





EAT HEALTHILY

Eating healthy meals will strengthen your immune system and boost your mood.

Where possible try to prepare meals that include; a variety of vegetables (fresh, canned or frozen); starchy foods such as potatoes, rice or pasta; and protein such as beans, fish, eggs or meat.

Stay hydrated by drinking 6 to 8 glasses of water daily.

Between meals, eat healthy snacks such as yoghurt, fruit slices, chopped vegetables with hummus, plain crackers, plain popcorn and rice cakes.

Limit sugary snacks, which can cause tooth decay, poor concentration and weight gain.

For more information go to [NHS Eatwell Guide](#)

Change4Life has loads of [healthier snack ideas](#). If you have children you can make them together.

For inspiration visit www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes.

BBC Good Food has an abundance of healthy recipes for all tastes, dietary requirements and cultural preferences. Check out [BBC Good Food](#).

ALCOHOL

Are you worried about your own or a loved one's alcohol use during lockdown? Why not visit New Beginnings' Alcohol Test website [Alcohol checker](#)

It contains lots of health information and advice about alcohol use.

You can also take our alcohol test, which will help you understand the impact of your drinking and signpost you to further support from our free and confidential service if you need it.

The Alcohol Test is best viewed and completed using the latest versions of Chrome, Safari, Firefox or Opera.

Alternatively get in touch with our expert team directly on [0300 303 4611](tel:03003034611) or info.brent@wdp.org.uk.

For further information on sensible drinking visit [NHS Alcohol support](#)



SMOKING

There have been mixed messages in the media regarding nicotine and Covid-19. However, it is important to remember that smoking directly harms respiratory and immune systems. Meaning as a smoker, evidence shows you are more likely to have worse symptoms than non-smokers should you contract a respiratory viral infection such as Covid-19, and are more likely to have worse outcomes.

Public Health England recommends quitting tobacco to protect yourself and your loved ones, as well as the NHS during this time of strain.

Thinking about quitting during a pandemic can be daunting; here are some tips and advice pulled together by our Stop Tobacco Specialists:

- **Use the Five Plus One Ways of Well-Being** to motivate yourself to quit and stay quit during the lockdown. For example, set DIY projects for yourself to create a new Smokefree home design and to distract yourself from cravings.
- **Seek professional help and support.** Chat to a trained advisor on the Stop Smoking London helpline ([0300 123 1044](tel:03001231044) or www.stopsmokinglondon.com), or if you are a Brent resident who is pregnant or living with someone who is pregnant, you can request free stop smoking support by contacting us on [0208 937 5490](tel:02089375490) or stoptobacco@brent.gov.uk.
- **Access free online resources.** Download the Smokefree app to receive daily messages of support, or join experts in the field every evening between 7.30-8.30 pm as part of the [#QuitforCovid](#) twitter campaign.
- **Invest in Nicotine Replacement Therapy.** NRT products such as patches and lozenges can be purchased over the counter. Evidence shows you are 4x more likely to quit using a combination of professional support and NRT.

E-Cigarettes/ Vaping

Evidence indicates that vaping is significantly less harmful than smoking. Wash hands more frequently and do not share vapes to reduce the risk of viral transmission.

Shisha/ Chewing Tobacco

Shisha and chewing tobacco still contains all the harmful chemicals found in more mainstream tobacco products such as cigarettes. Hand-to-mouth actions used in ingesting tobacco products, sharing mouthpieces and spitting in public places can also spread the virus.

A specialist service is available to help Brent residents who want to quit shisha and/or chewing tobacco. Please call us on [0208 937 5490](tel:02089375490) or email stoptobacco@brent.gov.uk.



KEEP MOVING

Even though we cannot go to the gym or the local leisure centre now, there are still lots of ways we can keep active. It's important to try to build activity into your daily routine.

The whole family can do something whether it's jogging on the spot, dancing, yoga, star jumps, and lunges or if your mobility is limited, you can do exercises whilst seated. Housework and gardening are also a good way to stay active.

Walk or cycle some or all the way rather than getting on public transport.

You can go to the park and play tennis or other sports with your family, or walk/jog, making sure to follow the [government advice on social distancing](#)

There are so many free online programmes and videos available now.

[Joe Wicks PE workout](#)

[PE sessions ideas from The Stonebridge School](#)

[Fitness Blender](#)

[Les Mills](#)

[NHS online Fitness Studio](#)

Sport England has a directory full of ideas how to stay active whilst at home. [Check it out.](#)

[Willesden Sports Centre](#), [Vale Farm Sports Centre](#) and [Bridge Park Leisure Centre](#) are currently closed. Keep an eye out for details of when they will open and what facilities will be available, and how we are making adjustments to make it safe for you to go there.

LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

During these unprecedented times, it is important to learn or remind ourselves of the importance of our mental health & wellbeing.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing are a set of five evidence based actions individuals can incorporate into their lives that are known to increase a sense of wellbeing:

Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.

In Brent we have added the action of Create as we recognise the importance of the arts in mental wellbeing. Therefore, we refer to the model as the [Five Plus One Ways to Wellbeing](#).

Combining all Five Plus One actions will provide a rounded contribution to feeling good and functioning well.



Connect – Use social media or the phone to keep in touch with friends and family

Be active – Do some workouts at home or go outside to exercise, for example a run, walk, or cycle in your local area. Remember to follow [government guidance on social distancing](#).

Take notice – Have quiet reflection time or write down your thoughts in a journal. Pay attention to your local surroundings and see what new things you can find when you go outside.

Keep learning – Take on a dance challenge with the family, learn a language, new skill or an instrument. Check out the council's [e-Library](#) to discover your perfect read.

Give – Volunteer to help a neighbour, donate to a local charity or put some household products in the food bank bin next time you go shopping.

Create – Cook or bake something new with your children or family, start and finish a puzzle, draw, take pictures, write a poem or a song.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

[Brent Council Health Advice](#)

[The NHS Health at Home pages](#)

The NHS-approved digital mental wellbeing service [Good Thinking](#)

[Every Mind Matters page on anxiety](#)

If you are struggling with your mental health and you want to speak to someone, the following organisations might be useful

[Samaritans](#) or call 116 123 (anytime)

SHOUT is a 24/7 UK crisis text service available for times when people feel they need immediate support. Text 'SHOUT' to '85258' The service is designed to help

individuals to think more clearly and to take their next steps to feeling better.

[Brent Mind](#)

BEAT Eating Disorder Charity

CRUSE Bereavement Charity

ADVANCE is an independent, client-led charity for all of those living in Brent who have experienced domestic abuse (male and female, including teenagers) and their children. Call 07398 454 898 Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm or email brent.admin@advancecharity.org.uk

24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247.

For details on how Brent council are dealing with the pandemic and what support you can receive, please visit www.brent.gov.uk/coronavirus
Need urgent support? Call our helpline for support on 020 8937 1234 open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday or email coronavirus@brent.gov.uk
[Download Brent Coronavirus Information leaflet](#)

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS
Sign up to receive the **YourBrent** e-newsletter for the latest coronavirus advice

brent.gov.uk

