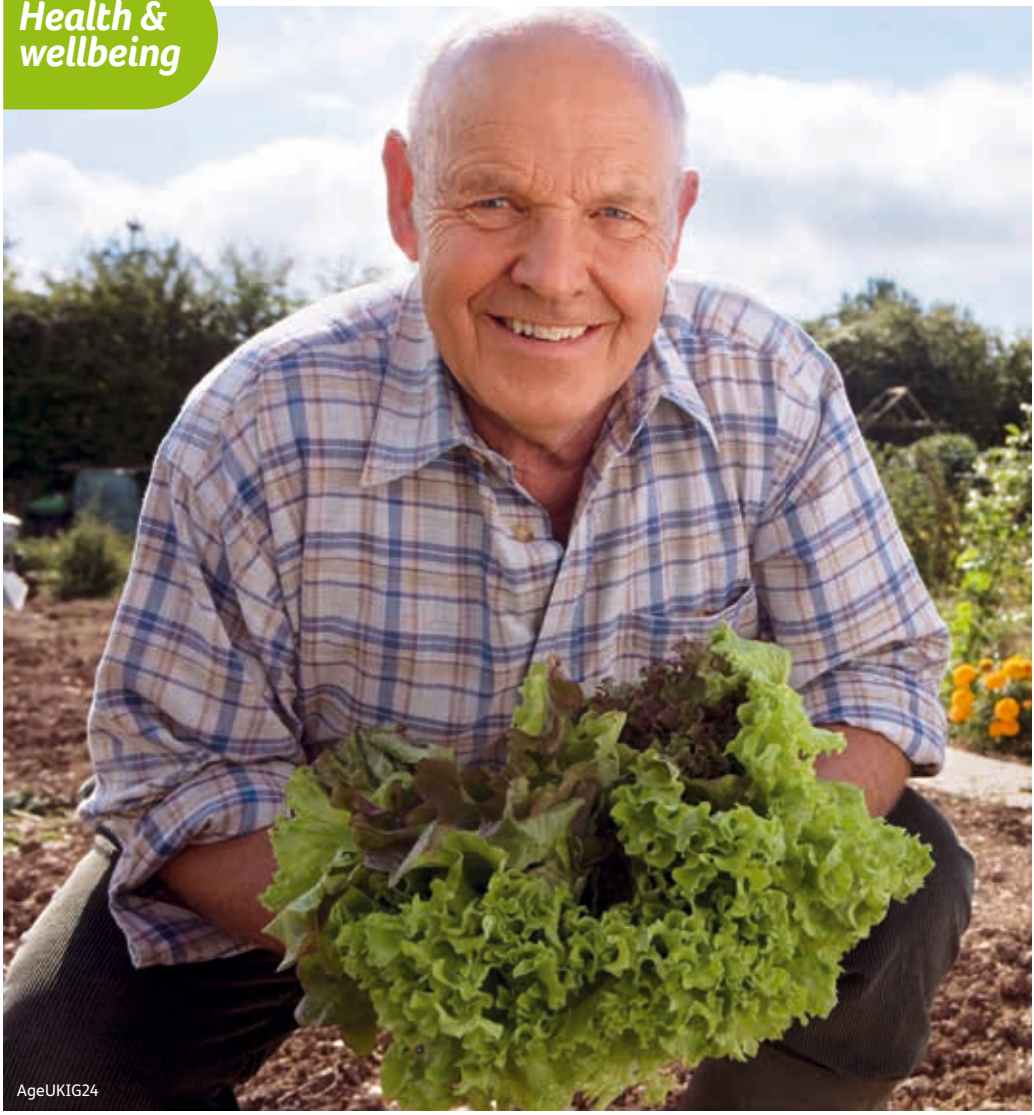
Healthy living

Maintaining a healthy body and mind

Health & wellbeing



AgeUKIG24

Information and advice you need to help you love later life.

We're Age UK and our goal is to enable older people across the UK to love later life.

We are passionate about affirming that your later years can be fulfilling years. Whether you're enjoying your later life or going through tough times, we're here to help you make the best of your life.

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Introduction

It's never too late to think about adopting a healthier lifestyle. It doesn't mean that you suddenly have to change your diet and start spending every day at the gym. Just a few small changes can make a big difference – making you feel better, giving you more energy and helping you to sleep more soundly.

Research shows that having a positive attitude to life in general, and to getting older, can help you enjoy better health too. Choosing activities that give you an opportunity to meet people or play an active role in your local community can also help.

It's important to remember the parts of your body that are crucial to keeping active – your feet, eyes and ears.

This guide highlights changes you may like to consider and the benefits they can bring.

Throughout this guide you will find suggestions for organisations that can offer further information and advice about your options. Their contact details are in the 'Useful organisations' section (see pages 30–38). Contact details for organisations near you are usually in your local phone book. If you have difficulty finding them, your local Age UK should be able to help (see page 30).

As far as possible, the information given in this guide is applicable across the UK.

Key

This symbol indicates where information differs for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

what next? This symbol indicates who to contact for the next steps you need to take.

Staying active

There's no doubt that keeping active makes us feel more energetic. But there are other more specific benefits, including helping to:

- manage high blood pressure and angina
- keep you at a healthy weight
- maintain regular bowel movements
- stimulate a poor appetite
- strengthen muscles and bones, which reduces the risk of falls and fractures
- ease discomfort if you have arthritis or Parkinson's.

Regular exercise also increases production of brain chemicals that lift your mood and make you feel happy – so it can be a good way to deal with stress and anxiety.

Developing and maintaining stamina, strength, flexibility and balance are particularly important as you get older, and can help you to do everyday tasks more easily as well as enjoy activities more.

Stamina helps you to walk longer distances, swim and mow the lawn.

Strength helps you to climb stairs, carry shopping, rise from a chair and open a container.

Flexibility helps you to bend, get in and out of a car, wash your hair and get dressed.

Balance helps you to walk and climb steps confidently, stand from a sitting position and respond quickly if you trip.

Any amount of extra activity that's appropriate for your age group and health makes a difference.

If you don't do any exercise

If you haven't been very active before it's never too late to start.

Try to limit the amount of time you spend sitting watching the TV, reading or listening to music. Everyday activities count as exercise, so look out for simple ways you can become more active. They could include:

- walking to the shops instead of taking the car or bus
- using the stairs instead of lifts or escalators
- doing the housework.

Every 10 minutes count so try and set yourself achievable goals every day. Always build up gradually and speak to your GP before increasing your activity levels significantly.

If you're fairly active but could do more

If you're generally fit and have no health conditions that limit your ability to move around, the Government recommends that you build up to doing two-and-a-half hours of moderate activity each week.

Moderate activity may leave you feeling warm and a little breathless. It can include:

- walking fast – visit the Walking for Health website (see page 38). (In Scotland, visit the Paths for All website – see page 36 and in Wales visit the Ramblers Cymru website – see page 37)
- cycling on level ground
- playing a motion sensor game on a computer console like a Wii or Xbox
- hand washing the car.

If you're already active

If you're already active, you can improve your fitness and health by doing 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week. This can include:

- running
- cycling fast or up hills
- climbing stairs
- playing tennis or football.

Muscle-strengthening activities

Staying active isn't just about getting your heart rate up. It's important to keep your strength up too. The Government recommends that you build up to two sessions of muscle-strengthening activity a week.

Exercises that help strengthen your muscles can include dancing, heavy gardening, yoga and pilates. Lifting bags of shopping or weights can help to strengthen the muscles in your arms and wrists. For more information on improving your strength and balance, see our free guide *Staying steady*.

what next?

Visit the NHS Choices website (see page 35) to read the Government's physical activity guidelines – there are separate guidelines for older adults (those aged 65 and over) and for adults aged 19–64. In Wales, visit the 'Lifestyle and wellbeing' section of the NHS Direct Wales website and in Scotland, visit NHS Inform (see page 35).

What kind of exercise might suit you?

Different activities bring a different range of benefits, so try a variety of things. Finding something you enjoy means you're more likely to do it regularly. The benefits of some activities and exercise classes are outlined below.

Activity/exercise	Flexibility	Strength	Stamina	Balance
Brisk walking		✓	✓	✓
Climbing stairs		✓	✓	
Swimming	✓		✓	
Dancing	✓		✓	✓
Bowls or golf	✓		✓	✓
Yoga	✓	✓		✓
Tai chi	✓	✓		✓

You don't have to be moving around to benefit from exercise. Chair-based exercises, which you can do while sitting or holding on to the back of a chair, are ideal for improving muscle strength and flexibility. You can watch videos online that demonstrate chair-based exercises.

If you're physically able, but find yourself sitting in front of the computer or television for hours at a time, try to break it up and build activity into your day. You can do this by going for a short, brisk walk around the garden or in the street – for example, during the advert breaks or after writing an email.

However, if you have a health condition that makes moving about difficult or painful, such as Parkinson's, arthritis or osteoporosis, always consult your GP for help in choosing the right exercise for you. They may be able to suggest suitable activities and know of special exercises or classes for people with these health conditions. In some areas, your GP may be able to refer you to a structured exercise scheme, where trained instructors introduce you to exercise over a period of 12–20 weeks.

Alternatively, you can contact the relevant organisation for your health condition to find out how taking part in an exercise programme could help you (see pages 30–38).

Volunteer driver or community transport schemes may be able to help if you need transport. Contact your local council or Age UK to find out what services are available in your area.

what next?

Decide what activities you would like to try and find out more about. Your local Age UK may organise a range of activities and will know what else is available. Try your library or leisure centre, too.

In Wales, ask Age Cymru about the activity programmes they run to encourage older people to become more active (see page 30). Your local Age Cymru may also organise activities.

Mental wellbeing

Feeling well is not just about being physically fit and healthy – it's equally important to your overall health that you feel good mentally. There are several things that you can do to help support mental wellbeing.

Social contact

Meeting friends, enjoying hobbies and getting involved in the local community makes life fulfilling and helps us to feel good about ourselves and life in general. If you find that you're not able to do the things that you used to, why not try something new? Spending time with other people can prevent you from feeling lonely or anxious and give you a chance to share experiences, thoughts and ideas. Volunteering is a good way to meet people. Start by thinking about the kinds of things you like doing, what you're good at and what type of organisation you want to help. To find out about volunteering opportunities in your area contact your local Age UK or Volunteering England (see page 38). There are separate organisations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (see page 38).

Stay in touch

If you have family and friends nearby, try to meet up with them regularly or ask them to call round. Otherwise, regular phone calls can help you to stay close. The internet has opened up more ways to stay in contact, such as exchanging emails and using Skype to make video phone calls. Feeling that people care about you can make a big difference to your outlook. If you aren't confident using the internet, ask your local Age UK for help – many offer training sessions and advice on getting online for older people. UK Online Centres also help people who want to learn basic computer skills (see page 38).

Make plans

People can have mixed feelings about retirement, and you may feel your life lacks purpose without work. However, it should mean that you have time to do all the things that you never had time for when you were working. Setting yourself goals, however small, can give you a sense of achievement and motivation. Your goal could be anything from finishing a crossword puzzle or making a phone call to a friend, to doing some gardening or reading a chapter of a book. Planning days out or arranging activities for the week or month ahead will give you something to look forward to and keep you feeling positive.

Take a break

Whether you work or not, it's important for your mental and physical wellbeing to take breaks from your routine. If you're on your own or your usual travel partner isn't available, why not see whether your local Age UK or another local club organises group holidays?

what next?

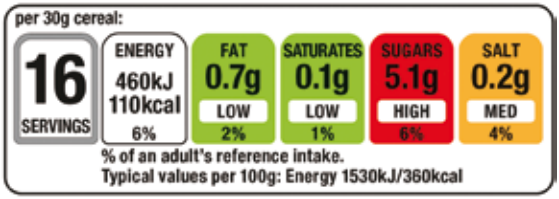
See the Mental Health Foundation guide *How to look after your mental health in later life* for further information and advice (see page 35). Contact your local Age UK for details of local activities, volunteering and other local groups (see page 30).

Healthy eating

No single food contains everything that you need to stay healthy, so the golden rule is to eat a variety of foods each day. Eating healthily doesn't mean cutting out foods that you enjoy, but simply eating some foods less often and/or in smaller portions, and eating more of other foods.

All major supermarkets have agreed a standard label that you'll find on the front of food packaging to help you make healthy choices.

*



Red means high, amber means medium and green means low so you can see at a glance whether the food has high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat (saturates), sugar and salt. For more information on how to read food labels, visit www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Goodfood and click on the 'Food labels' link. In Wales, see the 'Lifestyle and wellbeing' section of the NHS Direct Wales website (see page 35).

Keeping to a healthy weight is important. It's not good for us to be either overweight or underweight. If you're concerned about your weight in any way, make an appointment to speak to your GP.

You can find out more about food labels and maintaining a healthy weight in our free guide *Healthy eating*.

* The Co-operative Food's front-of-pack nutrition label

Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day

Research suggests that people who eat plenty of fruit and vegetables are less likely to develop heart disease, certain cancers and eye conditions. To help you reach the target of five a day, think of all the fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits, fruit juices and vegetables that you like. Try to choose five different-coloured ones to have with or between meals.

Eat fish at least twice a week

You should aim to have one portion of white fish, such as haddock or cod, and another of oily fish, such as salmon, mackerel or sardines. Oily fish are rich in vitamin D and a type of fat that helps prevent heart disease. But grill, poach or bake fish rather than frying it.

Cut down on salty foods

Many of us eat too much salt, which can increase our risk of high blood pressure and stroke. Always think before you sprinkle salt on your meal. Compare food labels and look for lower salt versions of foods such as processed meats, savoury snacks, biscuits, cheese, bacon, soups and ready meals – much of the salt that we eat is already in food when we buy it. If you're choosing between two similar products, food labels can help you quickly find the healthier choice.

Cut down on foods that are high in saturated fat

This includes foods such as cakes, biscuits, sausages, meat pies, fatty meat and cheese. Saturated fats raise the level of cholesterol in the blood and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Drink plenty of fluid: about six to eight glasses each day

This does not have to be water. Tea, coffee, fruit juice or squash will do. It's particularly important to drink plenty in hot weather. See our free guide *Staying cool in a heatwave* to find out more about staying well in hot weather.

Do I need bran to prevent constipation?

Bran should only be used as a last resort. First, make sure that you have enough wholegrain cereals and fruit in your diet. Drinking plenty of liquids can help, too. Physical activity helps to keep the bowels moving, so try to think of ways to stay active.

Look after your teeth

In order to enjoy your food, it's important that you keep your teeth and gums in good condition and if you wear dentures make sure they fit comfortably. You can keep your teeth and gums healthy by brushing them twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and by visiting your dentist regularly for a check-up. Even if you have full dentures, a regular check-up is still important. The shape of your mouth changes over time, so you are likely to need new dentures every five years. See our free factsheet *Dental Care: NHS and private treatment for information on dental services*. In Wales, see Age Cymru's version of this factsheet.

Use the NHS Choices website

The NHS Choices website has information on nutrition, healthy cooking, weight loss and more (see page 35). If you have a smartphone or tablet, look at the NHS Choices health apps library to download trusted and reviewed apps. Visit apps.nhs.uk to find out more.

what next?

Our free guide *Healthy eating* has more information about eating a balanced diet and what to do if you're worried about your weight or a poor appetite. Your GP practice may have information about healthy eating or you could visit www.nhs.uk/tools and click on 'healthy eating' to find recipe ideas, meal planners, and food and exercise diaries. In Wales, visit the 'Lifestyle and wellbeing' section of the NHS Direct Wales website.

Eating healthily doesn't mean cutting out foods that you enjoy, but simply eating some foods less often and/or in smaller portions, and eating more of other foods.

Sensible drinking

Many of us enjoy an alcoholic drink now and then. A celebratory drink can be a traditional way to mark a family occasion or a milestone. However, it isn't advisable to use alcohol to lift your mood, as in the long term it increases feelings of depression. If you find yourself regularly having a drink to help you cope, speak to someone you trust about how you're feeling.

Drinking wine or beer in the evenings – maybe with your meal or while watching TV – has not received the same media attention as binge drinking. But regular drinking like this can damage your liver, brain, blood vessels and other organs. The liver needs at least two alcohol-free days per week to recover from the toxic effects of drinking.

Government guidance is that we should drink in moderation, which means that:

- men should not regularly drink more than 3–4 units a day
- women should not regularly drink more than 2–3 units a day.

'Regularly' means every day or most days. As an example, a pint of beer (4 per cent alcohol) and a (175ml) standard glass of wine (13 per cent alcohol) both contain 2.3 units.

You should avoid alcohol when taking certain medicines, so always read leaflets that come with prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines or herbal medicines. If in doubt, ask your pharmacist.

If you are worried about your own or another person's drinking, speak to your GP or contact one of the organisations on pages 32-33. For more information about drinking sensibly, visit the Drinkaware website (see page 34).

Smoking

Even after many years of smoking, it's still worth giving up. The encouraging news is that older smokers who decide to give up have been shown to be more successful at staying away from smoking than younger people.

Whatever your age you can expect a range of benefits if you stop smoking, and many of these benefits can be seen quite quickly. You're likely to:

- be able to breathe easier
- feel better overall
- find that any existing heart and lung problems you have are less likely to become serious
- be less likely to have a stroke, or heart and lung problems
- recover more quickly after an operation
- live longer.

Most people know how unhealthy smoking is but, because they enjoy it, they find it difficult to give up. The first step is to convince yourself that you would like to be a non-smoker. Why would being a non-smoker be right for you? Ask your GP practice about local one-to-one or group support to help you. Medication to stop smoking is available on prescription.

what next?

Call the NHS Smokefree Helpline (see page 36) or the charity Quit (see page 37). The NHS Smokefree website also has tips on stopping smoking and details of local Stop Smoking services. In Wales, you can contact Stop Smoking Wales or visit the website. In Scotland, call Smokeline, and in Northern Ireland call the Smokers' Helpline. See page 36 for contact details.

My story

‘I joined the local bowls club and it was the best thing I could have done. I have more energy and life seems better every day.’

After Ron’s wife died he found it hard to take an interest in anything on his own.

‘When my wife, Joan, was alive we used to play golf every week. But since she died last year, I haven’t wanted to go; it just wouldn’t be the same. In fact, I don’t seem to have the same interest in many things we used to do together – like gardening and going to car boot sales.

‘When I went for my blood-pressure check, I was chatting with the practice nurse and I told her how I was feeling. We talked about Joan.

‘She said I wasn’t unusual in finding it difficult to go back to places and activities that Joan and I had always gone to together.

‘My blood pressure was still OK, but I’d put a bit of weight on since last time. She suggested I was missing the exercise and perhaps the company too, so why not try something different?

‘I’d heard my neighbour, Ken, talking about the local bowls club so I thought I’d go along with him and give it a go. It was the best thing I could have done. They’re a really nice group, my technique has improved, I have more energy and life seems better every day.’

Healthy bones

Your bone health is largely influenced by your genes, but it is affected by your lifestyle too.

You can strengthen your bones by doing regular weight-bearing activity (this means exercise where your legs and feet support your weight, such as walking, jogging and tennis) and by eating a healthy diet with plenty of calcium-rich foods, such as reduced-fat dairy products.

Vitamin D is also important for strong bones. Most of us get the vitamin D we need from regular exposure to summer sunshine rather than from food. Try to go outside every day from May to September without sunscreen for around ten minutes. Try to do this once or twice a day but don't let your skin redden or burn. The Government recommends that certain groups of people take a vitamin D supplement of 10 µg daily, including people aged 65 and over. If you think you could be at risk of not getting enough vitamin D, particularly if you're housebound or cover your skin for cultural reasons, raise this with your GP. Always speak to your GP before starting to take a vitamin D supplement or over-the-counter medicine on a daily basis.

Bones tend to become weaker over time and everyone has some degree of bone loss as they get older. Osteoporosis is the term used when bone loss makes bones significantly more fragile. It commonly affects bones in the spine, wrists and hips. It means that you're more likely to break a bone if you fall, or experience chronic pain if bones in your spine collapse.

You are more at risk of osteoporosis if you:

- are female and had an early menopause or hysterectomy
- have a parent who broke a hip, particularly after only a minor fall
- have taken corticosteroid medication for a long time
- are underweight or have suffered from an eating disorder
- have been a smoker or heavy drinker
- have a condition such as Crohn's or coeliac disease
- have a medical condition that means you're immobile for a long time.

Complete the healthy bones questionnaire on the National Osteoporosis Society's website (see page 35) to discover which factors could affect your bone health. You can print out a factsheet based on your answers which you could take to your GP if you're concerned about osteoporosis.

what next?

See the Age UK website for more information on osteoporosis (click on 'Conditions and illnesses' in the 'Health & wellbeing' section). Speak to your GP if you think you may be at risk or contact the National Osteoporosis Society for more information (see page 35).

Foot care

It's not until we have a problem with our feet that we really appreciate how important they are to our wellbeing and our ability to get out and about. It's vital to look after your feet and basic daily foot care should include:

- washing in warm soapy water (but don't soak your feet too long – it destroys their natural oils, causing dry skin)
- drying carefully, particularly between the toes
- applying moisturiser, but not between the toes
- lightly applying foot powder.

What you put on your feet is important too. Wear clean socks each day. Don't wear the same shoes every day, and always choose ones that support your feet but aren't too tight. Wearing natural materials such as leather, wool and cotton will allow your feet to breathe.

It's important to get to know your feet. Contact your GP if they become painful, feel noticeably hot or cold or if there is a change in their colour. If you have corns, bunions, an ingrown toenail, or other common foot problems, report these to your practice nurse too.

Cutting toenails regularly and straight across prevents ingrown toenails. If your sight is not good or bending down is difficult, this can be a problem. Contact your local Age UK if you need help with nail-cutting. They may offer a service themselves or know where help is available. In Wales, your local Age Cymru may offer a similar service. In Scotland, if you've had a care assessment that shows you need help with keeping your nails trimmed, you shouldn't be charged for this service. For more information, contact Age Scotland.

what next?

Report any foot problems to your practice nurse or GP, particularly if you have diabetes.

Sight

We don't need to tell you how important it is to look after your eyes. Doing the following can help you to keep your eyes healthy.

- Have your eyes checked every two years, or every year if you're over 70. This means that changes in your vision can be corrected and problems such as cataracts, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration (AMD) can be picked up early – before they significantly affect your sight. NHS sight checks are free if you are 60 or over (except in Scotland where everyone is eligible for a free sight check, regardless of age). You may be able to get help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses if you are on a low income.
- Protect your eyes from the sun, particularly if you are near water or snow – they can be damaged by UV rays. Always wear sunglasses on a sunny day. Choose sunglasses that protect you from 99 to 100 per cent of UV light. This includes those labelled UV400 or with a CE mark.
- Stop smoking. Smoking increases your risk of developing AMD and cataracts.
- Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- If you use a computer, adjust the settings to make the screen as easy to view as possible. For example, increase the size of the text and change the brightness or colour palettes.

Even with the right glasses, you may still find it hard to see things clearly. Day-to-day tasks can be made easier by good lighting and using low-vision aids or other equipment. If sight problems affect your ability to carry out everyday tasks safely, ask your local social services department what equipment and services they can offer.

If you care for someone who is unable to recognise or communicate sight problems, for example someone with dementia, remember to arrange for regular eye tests – you can ask the optician about using special non-verbal tests. Encourage the person to wear glasses if they need them.

Contact the Macular Disease Society or the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) for more information about eye health and the services that they offer partially-sighted and blind people (see pages 35 and 37).

what next?

See our free factsheet *Help with health costs* for more information. In Wales, see Age Cymru's free factsheet *Help with health costs in Wales.*

Have your eyes checked every two years, or every year if you're over 70.

Hearing

Hearing loss is common in older people. You may find you need the TV on louder or that you cannot always tune into conversations, particularly in a crowd. If you're worried about your hearing, you might like to try the free telephone-based or online hearing check run by Action on Hearing Loss (see page 32). It tells you at the end of the check whether it's advisable to see your GP.

Your GP will check your ears and may refer you for a hearing test. If you need them, hearing aids and batteries are free on the NHS.

Tinnitus, often described as a ringing sound in your ear or head, is another hearing-related problem. It can be distressing but there are many ways to manage it.

what next?

Contact Action on Hearing Loss for more support and information or to speak to someone on their tinnitus helpline (see page 32).

Combined sight and hearing difficulties

You may have difficulties to varying degrees with both sight and hearing, but there are things that can be done to help you enjoy a better quality of life.

If you have a sight or hearing difficulty, or both, contact social services and explain how your day-to-day life is affected. They may have a specialist team who can help.

what next?

Support group Sense (see page 37) can help people with both sight and hearing difficulties, and their families.

Feeling well is not just about being physically fit and healthy – it's equally important to your overall health that you feel good mentally.

Memory loss

You may be worried that you've become noticeably more forgetful or confused. Perhaps you're struggling to remember things that happened recently, even though you can easily remember things from long ago, or you've been getting confused in a familiar place, or have trouble remembering names and following conversations.

You may be worried these are early signs of dementia, but most of us experience these things from time to time. These can be symptoms of many common conditions, such as stress, depression, vitamin deficiencies, thyroid problems, constipation, dehydration or urinary tract infections.

If you're worried about memory loss you should talk to your doctor to find out what's causing it. This can either set your mind at rest or allow you to get the help and support you need. A diagnosis of dementia won't make things worse but it can help you plan for your future.

what next?

If you have been diagnosed with early-stage dementia, or if you care for someone with dementia you may find it useful to read our free information guides *Living with early-stage dementia* and *Caring for someone with dementia.*

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 (see page 34). Call Samaritans if you need to talk to someone about how you're feeling (see page 37).

In Northern Ireland, you can also contact Aware Defeat Depression, and in Scotland contact Action on Depression. In Wales, you can contact Journeys or the CALL mental health helpline. See pages 32–35 for details.

Sleep

Your sleeping patterns will change naturally as you get older, and you may not get as much sleep as you used to. But it's important that you get enough sleep to enable you to function during the day.

Many older people suffer from insomnia – ongoing difficulties with getting to sleep and staying asleep long enough to feel refreshed the next morning – which can make you feel tired, low on energy and depressed.

You can improve your sleeping patterns by:

- cutting down on daytime naps
- going to bed at the same time each night
- reducing the amount of caffeine you have during the day, perhaps by trying decaffeinated (decaf) tea and coffee
- getting up and walking around if you can't get to sleep, or doing something for half an hour before going back to bed.

what next?

If you have persistent problems with sleep, go to your GP who may be able to help you find a solution. If you suffer from insomnia, the NHS Choices website (NHS Direct Wales website in Wales or NHS Inform website in Scotland) has tips on treating it (see page 35).

Checklist 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. Use this handy checklist to see the key things you can do to stay healthy.

1 EAT A VARIETY OF FOODS

Check food labels before you buy and try to eat five different coloured portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Aim to have fish twice a week, making sure that one portion is oily fish.

2 GIVE UP SMOKING

It's never too late to get help to stop and enjoy the benefits of being a non-smoker.

3 GET ENOUGH SLEEP

If you have persistent sleep problems, talk to your GP to see if they can help.

4 DRINK SENSIBLY

Keep note of how much alcohol you're drinking and make sure you stick to safe limits.

5 STAY ACTIVE

Make sure you take part in regular exercise - whether it's a hobby such as gardening or playing bowls or joining an exercise class.

6 KEEP TO A HEALTHY WEIGHT

It's not good to be overweight or underweight. If you're concerned about your weight, make sure you talk to your GP.

7 GET YOUR EYES TESTED

Get your eyes tested every two years, or every year if you're over 70.

8 VISIT YOUR GP

Make sure you get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly. Book your seasonal flu jab and if you're aged 70, 78 or 79 ask your doctor if you're eligible for a shingles vaccination. Follow up invitations for NHS screenings for breast, cervical and bowel cancer.

Useful organisations

Age UK
We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65
Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.
www.ageuk.org.uk

Call Age UK Advice to find out whether there is a local Age UK near you, and to order free copies of our information guides and factsheets.

In Wales, contact
Age Cymru: 0800 022 3444
www.agecymru.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact
Age NI: 0808 808 7575
www.ageni.org

In Scotland, contact **Age Scotland** by calling
Silver Line Scotland: 0800 470 8090 (This is a partnership between The Silver Line and Age Scotland)
www.agescotland.org.uk

Age UK runs a number of services in England that promote physical exercises and healthy eating to older people in order to improve their health and mental wellbeing.

To find out more visit www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/fit-as-a-fiddle/ or contact your local Age UK, or call Age UK Advice for more information and to find out whether there is a project near you.

In Wales, Age Cymru runs two physical activity programmes to encourage older people to become more active – Nordic Walking, which is suitable for all ages and fitness levels, and Low Impact Functional Training (LIFT), where trained volunteers deliver low-level activities and games to older people. For more information, call 029 2043 1555 or visit the Age Cymru website.

In Northern Ireland and Scotland, contact Age Northern Ireland or Age Scotland to find out whether they can arrange, or know of, any special physical activity sessions.

Action on Depression

Support organisation for people in Scotland affected by depression.

www.actionondepression.org

Action on Hearing Loss

Provides advice and support for people who are deaf or hard of hearing through an information line, tinnitus helpline and range of factsheets.

Tel: 0808 808 0123
Textphone: 0808 808 9000
Hearing check phone line: 0844 800 3838
Tinnitus helpline: 0808 808 6666
Tinnitus textphone: 0808 808 9000
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Addiction NI

Alcohol and drug addiction treatment for people aged 55 and over in Northern Ireland.

Tel: 028 9066 4434
www.addictionni.com

Alcohol Concern

Offers information and support about alcohol abuse and local services.

Drinkline: 0800 917 8282
www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcohol Focus Scotland

Offers online information and a helpline for people in Scotland affected by alcohol problems.

Drinkline: 0800 731 4314
www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

All Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline

A free, bilingual helpline in Wales providing advice on drug and alcohol issues. Advisers are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Tel: 0808 808 2234
www.dan247.org.uk

Arthritis Care

National organisation offering information and support for people with arthritis.

Tel: 0808 800 4050
www.arthritiscare.org.uk

Aware Defeat Depression

Support network for all those in Northern Ireland affected by depression or bipolar disorder (manic depression).

Tel: 0845 120 2961
www.aware-ni.org

British Heart Foundation

Offers information and support for people with heart disease, including advice on how to be more active. Download or ask them to send you their free booklet *Get active, stay active* for ideas on how to live your life as actively as possible.

Tel: 0300 330 3311
www.bhf.org.uk

CALL (Community Advice and Listening Line)

Offers confidential support and information to people in Wales who are concerned about their mental health or that of a relative or friend.

Tel: 0800 132 737 or text 'Help' to 81066
www.callhelpline.org.uk

Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland

Provides care, support and information for people in Scotland affected by chest and heart conditions and stroke.

Tel: 0808 801 0899
www.chss.org.uk

Deafblind

National charity for people who are deafblind or have a combined sight and hearing loss.

Tel/Textphone: 0800 132 320
www.deafblind.org.uk

In Wales, contact:
Deafblind Cymru
Tel/Textphone: 01733 358 100

In Scotland, contact:
Deafblind Scotland
Tel: 0141 777 6111
www.deafblindscotland.org.uk

Depression Alliance

Provides information and a network of local support groups for people affected by depression.

Tel: 0845 123 23 20 (information pack request line)
www.depressionalliance.org

Drinkaware

An organisation funded by alcohol firms and offering tips on responsible drinking.

Tel: 020 7766 9900
www.drinkaware.co.uk

Journeys
Offers support and understanding to people in Wales affected by depression, and their friends, families and carers.

Tel: 029 2069 2891
www.journeysonline.org.uk

Macular Disease Society
Provides advice and support to people with age-related macular degeneration.

Tel: 0300 303 0111
www.maculardisease.org

Mental Health Foundation
Provides information and support on mental health.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

National Osteoporosis Society
Offers information and support on prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

Tel: 0845 450 0230
www.nos.org.uk

NHS Choices
Offers information about health topics including healthy eating and drinking, physical activity and insomnia.

www.nhs.uk
www.drinking.nhs.uk

In Wales, visit **NHS Direct Wales**
Tel: 0845 4647
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

In Scotland, visit **NHS Inform**
Tel: 0800 22 44 88
www.nhsinform.co.uk

NHS Smokefree
For information on stopping smoking and details of support.

Tel: 0300 123 1044
www.nhs.uk/smokefree

In Wales, contact **Stop Smoking Wales** to find your local group and for general advice on quitting.
Tel: 0800 085 2219
www.stopsmokingwales.com

In Northern Ireland, call the **Smokers' Helpline** on 0808 812 8008

In Scotland, call **Smokeline** on 0800 84 84 84.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke
Provides care services, carries out research and lobbies the Government to improve health service policy.

Tel: 028 9032 0184
www.nichs.org.uk

Paths for all
Promotes walking for health in Scotland.

Tel: 01259 218 888
www.pathsforall.org.uk

Parkinson's UK
Provides information and support to people with Parkinson's disease and their families.

Tel: 0808 800 0303
www.parkinsons.org.uk

Quit
Helps people who want to stop smoking.

Tel: 020 7553 2100
www.quit.org.uk

Ramblers Cymru
Promote and encourage outdoors walking in Wales through their Let's Walk Cymru programme.

Tel: 029 2064 6893
www.ramblers.org.uk/wales

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
Provides information and support for blindness and visual impairment.

Tel: 0303 123 9999
www.rnib.org.uk

Samaritans
Confidential support for people who are despairing or suicidal. Lines are open 24 hours a day.

Tel: 08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org

Sense
Provides information and support to those with dual sensory impairment (deafblindness).

Tel/Textphone: 0300 330 9256
www.sense.org.uk

In Scotland, contact **Sense Scotland**
Tel: 0300 330 9292
www.sensescotland.org.uk

Volunteering England
Provides details of local volunteer centres and opportunities across England.

www.volunteering.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact:
Volunteer Now
www.volunteernow.co.uk

In Scotland, contact:
Volunteering Scotland
www.volunteerscotland.net

In Wales, contact:
Volunteering Wales
www.volunteering-wales.net

UK Online Centres
Helps people to master basic computer and internet skills.

Tel: 0800 77 1234
www.ukonlinecentres.com

Walking for Health
Runs a network of health walk schemes across England.

Tel: 020 7339 8541
www.walkingforhealth.org.uk

Can you help Age UK?

Please complete the donation form below with a gift of whatever you can afford and return to: RSXZ-KTTS-KSHT, Age UK, Tavis House, 1–6 Tavistock Square, LONDON WC1H 9NA. Alternatively, you can phone 0800 169 87 87 or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/donate. If you prefer, you can donate directly to one of our national or local partners. Thank you.

Personal details

Title: | Initials: | Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel: | Email:

By providing your email address and/or mobile number you are agreeing to us contacting you in these ways. You may contact us at any time to unsubscribe from our communications.

Your gift

I would like to make a gift of: £

☐ I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to Age UK

Card payment

I wish to pay by (please tick) ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ CAF CharityCard ☐ Maestro ☐ American Express

(Maestro only)

Signature **X**

Expiry date / Issue no. (Maestro only)

Gift aid declaration

☐ (please tick) Yes, I want Age UK and its partner organisations* to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as gift aid donations. I confirm I pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity will reclaim on my donations in the tax year. Date: ___/___/___ (please complete). *Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI

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We will use the information you have supplied to communicate with you according to data protection guidelines. Age UK (registered charity number 1128267) comprises the charity, its group of companies and national partners (Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI). If you would prefer not to hear from them or carefully selected third parties, let us know by phoning 0800 107 8977.

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What should I do now?

For more information on the issues covered in this guide, or to order any of our publications, please call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65** or visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/healthandwellbeing**

Our publications are also available in large print and audio formats.

The following Age UK information guides may be useful:

- *Healthy eating*
- *Living with early-stage dementia*
- *Staying steady*

The Age UK Group offers a wide range of products and services specially designed for people in later life. For more information, please call **0800 169 18 19**.

If contact details for your local Age UK are not in the box below, call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65**.

Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 6825798). Registered address: Tavis House, 1–6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA. Age UK and its subsidiary companies and charities form the Age UK Group, dedicated to helping more people love later life. ID201882 10/14

Supporting the work of Age UK

Age UK aims to enable all older people to love later life. We provide vital services, support, information and advice to thousands of older people across the UK.

In order to offer free information guides like this one, Age UK relies on the generosity of its supporters. If you would like to help us, here are a few ways you could get involved:

1 Make a donation

To make a donation to Age UK, simply complete the enclosed donation form, call us on **0800 169 8787** or visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved**

2 Donate items to our shops

By donating an unwanted item to one of our shops, you can help generate vital funds to support our work. To find your nearest Age UK shop, visit **www.ageuk.org.uk** and enter your postcode into the 'What does Age UK do in your area?' search function. Alternatively, call us on **0800 169 8787**

3 Leave a gift in your will

Nearly half the money we receive from supporters come from gifts left in wills. To find out more about how you could help in this way, please call the Age UK legacy team on **020 3033 1421** or email **legacies@ageuk.org.uk**

Thank you!