

# Healthy living



Looking after yourself  
physically and mentally

# Information written with you in mind.

This information guide has been produced with the help of older people, carers and expert peer reviewers.

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## What this guide is about

**We could all benefit from being a bit healthier. And that doesn't have to mean working up a sweat or joining a gym – just a few small changes can make a big difference.**

The changes you want or need to make will be specific to you, as they depend on your starting point and what you want to achieve. But whatever your circumstances, this guide can help you think about ways you can improve your health.

**“Being active doesn’t just help me physically – it’s been so important for my mental health too.”**

Theresa, 70



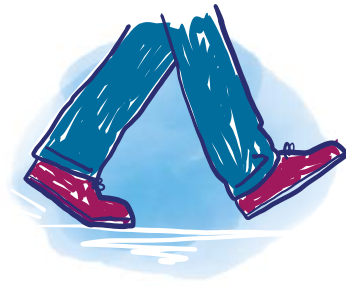
There’s no one-size-fits-all approach, and what works for you might not work for someone else. We’re all dealing with different circumstances – for example, living with a disability or health condition, juggling caring responsibilities, or getting used to living alone for the first time. The important thing is to find the right approach for you.

Whatever your reason for wanting to improve your health, this guide can help you decide what changes might suit you.

## **Next steps**

It’s a good idea to find out the number for your local council. They’ll be able to provide a lot of the support and information mentioned in this guide.

**My local council phone number is:**



## Getting active

Being active is a great way to stay healthy – but what we're able to do can change as we get older. It's different from person to person, too. The most important thing is to find something that works for you.

### The benefits of moving more

Whatever you're able to do, there are lots of benefits to being more active. It can:

- improve your mood
- reduce your risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, some cancers and other conditions
- strengthen your bones and muscles
- improve your balance
- reduce your risk of a fall
- help manage high blood pressure
- improve your range of movement and joint mobility
- boost your energy levels.

This can mean you're able to stay independent for longer – climbing stairs, carrying shopping, and getting washed and dressed. You'll be in a better position to keep doing the things you enjoy, too – from hobbies to going on holiday.

## If you're just getting started

Getting active can seem daunting if you don't currently move much – so start small. It's always a good idea to build up your activity levels gradually. Lots of everyday activities count as exercise, so look for simple ways you can begin to move more that fit in with your daily routine.

Every step counts – even if it's just a few extra here and there. It's about moving more each day, in whatever way works for you.

You could start by:

- getting up and stretching if you've been sat down a while
- walking about when you're on the phone or during the adverts on TV
- walking to the shops instead of driving
- using stairs instead of lifts or escalators
- getting off the bus a stop earlier than usual and walking the rest of the way
- choosing a parking space a bit further away from the shops
- walking around the block
- doing housework or gardening.

### Good to know



If you're a carer, it can be particularly difficult to make time to look after your own health. For information about looking after yourself as a carer, see our guide **Advice for carers**.

## If you're ready to take the next step

Adding more physical activity to your day-to-day routine can help you do more and keep you active for longer.

Being more active shouldn't feel like a chore, so it's important to find something you enjoy. You might want to take up a new hobby or revisit something you used to do. Finding something enjoyable can make it much easier to stick with.

You might want to try:

- things in your own home, such as gentle chair-based exercises
- doing some gardening or heading out for a walk
- cycling, jogging or swimming
- sports such as tennis, squash or walking football
- joining a local dance class.

### Good to know



Many smart phones and watches have built-in fitness and activity trackers which can track how many steps you take each day and log the exercise you do. Visit the NHS website (page 36) for physical activity guidelines for older adults.





## If you have a health condition

Living with a health condition can make being active much more challenging – but it doesn't necessarily mean there aren't ways you can move more.

### Find what works for you

While everyone should find activities that work best for them, there are certain considerations if you have a condition. These might include:

- where and when you can get active
- the symptoms of your condition
- the medical advice you've been given.

But the key is still finding an activity that you enjoy and can do.

### It's OK to have an off day

Some days will be better than others. Some days, your body might be telling you that you need to do less or do nothing at all – and that's OK. The main thing is to be more active overall than you were before. Regular activity, however and whenever it suits you, really adds up.

## Make the most of what's out there

There are lots of free tutorials online to help get you moving – and YouTube is a good place to start. You can do it from the comfort of your own home, or out in the garden if you have one. If you don't feel confident using the internet, your local Age UK might be able to help you get started online. In Wales, get in touch with your local Age Cymru.

If there's a specific charity supporting your condition, you could contact them to see if they recommend any specific activities.

## Get others involved

Some of us don't particularly enjoy getting active by ourselves – so why not ask a friend or family member to join in? They might be able to help you with certain activities you'd find difficult on your own and give you added peace of mind. Plus, it's a great opportunity to spend some time together.

**“I hadn't been feeling like myself for a while so I knew it was time to have a chat with the GP.”**

Ruth, 76



## Good to know



Talk to your doctor about increasing your activity levels to make sure you're doing so safely. For more information about being active if you live with a health condition, visit the We Are Undefeatable website at [www.weareundefeatable.co.uk](http://www.weareundefeatable.co.uk).

# Eating and drinking

What we eat and drink becomes even more important as we get older. And while one person's nutritional needs can be quite different to someone else's, for most of us it's about finding a balance that's enjoyable, manageable and sustainable.

## Maintaining a weight that's right for you

If you've noticed you've gained some excess weight, you might decide to eat a bit less and move a bit more. If you've noticed yourself losing weight without meaning to, it's important to eat more.

An unexpected change in your weight can be a sign there's something else going on. If you've gained or lost weight and you're worried about it, talk to a health care professional such as your doctor or practice nurse.

### Good to know



Calories tell us how much energy there is in food and drink. If we consume more calories than we use, our bodies store the excess as fat, which over time can mean we put on weight. If we use more energy than we take in, we can lose weight. The number of calories needed to maintain a healthy weight depends on age, sex and how active someone is.

## Eating a balanced diet

Public health messaging tends to focus on losing weight, eating more healthy foods, and cutting down on less nutritious foods. While this isn't recommended for everyone (see page 14), there are benefits for most people.

It's recommended that you:

### **...eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day**

Eating plenty of fruit and veg reduces your risk of developing heart disease and certain cancers. Frozen, canned and dried options all count – and so do juices. Don't be put off if you don't always reach your '5 a day' – 2 or 3 portions is better than none.

### **...base meals around starchy food**

Starchy foods like rice and pasta are a good source of energy. Wholegrain and high-fibre versions are even better as they help prevent constipation too.



### **...eat fish at least twice a week**

Having a portion of white fish (like cod or shellfish) and another of oily fish (like salmon or mackerel) each week is ideal. Oily fish is rich in vitamin D and a type of fat that helps reduce the risk of heart disease. Grilling, poaching or baking fish is healthier than frying it.

### **...eat different sources of protein**

It isn't just meat that contains protein – beans, lentils and soya-based meat substitutes do too. Dairy products such as milk and cheese also contain protein, as well as calcium, which helps to keep your bones strong. If you eat meat, limit your intake of red or processed meat, and try to choose lean cuts or mince.

### **...cut down on foods that are high in salt, fat and sugar**

Eating too much salt can increase your risk of high blood pressure and stroke. Look for lower-salt versions of foods where you can. Foods high in saturated fat, such as cakes, pies and cheese, increase cholesterol levels in the blood and raise your risk of heart disease and stroke. It's best to see these as a treat rather than as something you'd have day-to-day.

**“I have good and bad days –  
but everyone does, don't they?  
I just do what I can.”**

Sara, 79



## If you've lost weight unexpectedly

There are lots of reasons you might lose weight without meaning to. You might have a health condition that means it's difficult to eat enough. Or there might be things going on in your life that mean you forget or feel too anxious to eat – such as caring for a loved one, worrying about money, or coping with a bereavement.

Whatever the reason, there are things you can do to help yourself eat enough.

### **Eat what you can**

If you're struggling to eat enough, then it's better to eat a bit of what you fancy than nothing at all. If the only thing you can face is a slice of cake, for instance, then you should have it. Calorie-rich, sugary foods can help you maintain your weight if you're losing too much.

### **Add more calories to meals**

If you're finding it difficult to eat often enough, you could add things like full-fat milk, cream and butter to recipes. This is called 'fortifying' your food – and while it doesn't make your portion feel much bigger, it will have more calories in it.

## **Good to know**



Unplanned weight loss is something you should talk to a healthcare professional about. It can be a good idea to weigh yourself regularly to make sure you're not losing weight without meaning to. If you don't have scales, you can always keep an eye on whether your clothes or rings feel looser.

## Focus on protein

We all need protein – but unlike carbohydrates and fats, our bodies don't store it. So if you can, it's a good idea to have a source of protein (such as fish, meat, eggs or plant-based substitutes) at each meal.

## Eat in a way that suits you

Having a meal 3 times a day might not suit you. Smaller meals or regular snacks might make eating feel more manageable – and might also mean you're able to eat more protein each day overall.

If you have difficulty chewing, try eating softer food like yoghurt or scrambled eggs – or why not have a go at making smoothies? If you have difficulty chewing because of problems with your teeth or dentures, speak to your dentist.

## Explore other options

If you have trouble cooking or cutting up food, speak to your healthcare professional or the social services department of your local council to find out what support might be available.

If you're finding it more difficult to do the shopping or carry shopping home, there might be local organisations or food delivery services that could help you too.

## Next steps



For more information about weight loss, you can order an **Eating Well in Later Life** booklet for free by calling the Age UK Advice Line on **0800 169 65 65**.

## Tips if you're cooking

If you're cooking for one or cooking on a budget, feeling motivated to prepare food can be trickier. There are some things you can do that might help:

- Plan out your meals for the week so you use ingredients across different meals and minimise waste.
- Write a list to help you stick to a budget and avoid buying things you won't get round to eating before they go off.
- Keep some things in the cupboard for days when you don't fancy cooking. Even if you enjoy cooking, there might be times you just can't face it. It's always handy to have something in that's quick and easy – like baked beans or spreads.
- Make plans to eat with others. If you're not used to eating alone, it can put you off eating altogether. If you can, make plans to eat with friends or at a social club every so often.
- Find a cooking class. It might be that you need to start cooking due to a change in your circumstances. There are plenty of online cooking tutorials to help you get started – or your local Age UK might be able to help you find a local class. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.

### Good to know

It's worth checking you're getting the benefits you're entitled to. Visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/benefits-check](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/benefits-check) or see our guide **More money in your pocket** to find out more. In Wales, see Age Cymru's version of this guide.



## If you follow a certain diet

Lots of people follow a certain diet for various reasons. Whatever your preferences, it's important to make sure that you're still getting the nutrients you need to stay well.

### Vegetarian and vegan diets

These days, there are plenty of plant-based options and meat alternatives. This can make it easier and more affordable to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet. All care homes and hospitals should provide suitable options for you if you follow one of these diets.

### If you go into hospital or a care home

You might worry about how to maintain your preferred diet if you go into hospital or move into a care home. But in both of these settings, you should be offered nutritious options that are suitable for you – taking into account any moral, religious or cultural requirements.

Let staff know if you need help with certain things, if there are foods you do and don't like, or if you follow a particular diet. You can also let them know about other preferences – for example, when you like to eat your main meal.



# Drinking

It's important to drink enough to avoid dehydration and make sure your body functions as it should.

It's recommended that you aim to drink 6-8 cups of fluid a day – that's about 1.5 litres or 2.5 pints. It can be of any hot or cold drink – for example, tea and coffee, juice, soup and smoothies all count. When the weather's hot, you might need to drink more to stay hydrated.

## If you feel like you're not drinking enough

- Drink little and often. This can be easier than trying to drink a whole glass at once.
- Have drinks at certain times of the day – such as with meals or when you sit down to watch TV.
- Eat foods with more water in them – such as fruit and veg, soup, jelly or yoghurt.
- Find a way to drink that works for you. This might mean using a straw, a bottle, or a cup with handles – whatever you prefer.

## If you feel like you're drinking too much alcohol

- Try a few alcohol-free days during the week. It's sensible to spread what you do drink over the other days, rather than drinking a lot of alcohol in a single day. You shouldn't regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week. Drinkaware (page 36) has a handy guide to units and measures.
- Consider alternatives. You can get alcohol-free versions of lots of drinks, such as beer – or you could try a new soft drink.
- Talk to someone. This might be a friend or family member, a healthcare professional, or one of the organisations listed at the back of this guide (pages 35-38).

# Looking after your mental health

Keeping healthy isn't just about looking after yourself physically – it's about looking after yourself mentally too.

## Get active

Mental health and physical health are linked. One of the benefits of being more active is that it can improve your mood and energy levels. To read more about different ways to be active and the other benefits of moving more, see pages 6-10.

## Make time for yourself

There's lots about getting older that can have an impact on your mood. For example, it can be hard to adjust to a lack of routine after retiring. But having more free time can be a great opportunity to do things for yourself – whether that's doing a course or spending more time in the garden.

It can be hard to find time for yourself if you have certain commitments, such as being a carer. But if you have lots going on, it's especially important to have a break for something you enjoy – even if some days this is just a few minutes for a cup of tea or a chat on the phone with a friend.

## Good to know



Our **Your mind matters** guide has more information about looking after your mental health. Our **Advice for carers** guide has more information especially for people who care for someone else.



### **Connect with others**

Spending time with others can help you feel more grounded and less anxious. Being with family or friends can remind you of happy memories – while meeting new people gives you the chance to share thoughts and ideas and discover interests.

You could consider joining a local club or volunteering in your community. Think about what you like doing, or what you've always wanted to try. If you can't do some of the things you used to, why not go for something totally new?

Connecting with others online is an option too. You could try video-calling friends or family, or chatting on social media or online forums. There's a forum for pretty much anything you might be interested in – whether that's sport, gardening, politics or photography – so you'll definitely find like-minded people to chat to.

If you aren't confident using the internet, your local Age UK might be able to help you or direct you to a computer class in your area. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.

## **If you're feeling down**

If you're feeling low, anxious or out of sorts, the best thing you can do to start feeling better is to talk to someone about it. Talking about these things can be easier said than done – but it's really important to let someone know how you're feeling and ask for support if you need it.

The sooner you get support, the sooner you'll start to feel better – and the less likely the feelings are to develop and become more serious. Is there a family member or a friend you could speak to? If you prefer, you can talk to your doctor – they'll be used to having these conversations and they won't judge you.

You might like to speak to someone from a dedicated organisation. Samaritans (page 38) has a helpline for anyone who needs to talk – it's open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## **If you've been feeling down for a while**

If you've been feeling out of sorts for a few weeks or more, you might be experiencing depression. Symptoms include low mood, not enjoying the things you usually do, a loss of self-confidence, and unexplained aches and pains.

Depression is something that's now more openly spoken about – both by healthcare professionals and by society more generally. It can be treated in different ways. If you're experiencing any of the symptoms above, speak to your doctor and explain how you're feeling.

## **Good to know**



If you need support or advice on mental health issues, contact Mind or Samaritans. You can also contact C.A.L.L. in Wales. In Northern Ireland, you can contact AWARE. See pages 35-38 for contact details.

## After Ron's wife died, he found it hard to take an interest in anything.

**Ron, 75, joined his local bowls club to meet new people – and improve his health.**

'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 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 we 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, and I feel healthier. Life seems better.’

# Other ways to keep healthy

Diet and exercise aren't the only things that have an impact on our health. There are other ways you can feel healthier.

## Quitting smoking

Even if you've smoked for years, it's never too late to stop. Regardless of your age and how long you've been smoking for, you'll notice a lot of positive changes to your health if you quit.

You're likely to:

- breathe more easily
- reduce your risk of developing heart and lung problems – or making them worse
- reduce your risk of smoking-related cancers or a stroke
- reduce your risk of eyesight problems
- recover more quickly after operations
- feel better overall and live longer.

Lots of people find it difficult to give up, even when they know how unhealthy smoking is. Ask your doctor or community pharmacist for help – they'll be able to tell you about medication or local support that can help you stop.

### Good to know



NHS Smokefree has tips on stopping and details of local services that can help (page 37). In Wales, contact Help Me Quit and in Northern Ireland, contact Stop Smoking NI (both page 37).



# Looking after your eyesight

It's important to have your eyes tested regularly so that any problems – such as cataracts, glaucoma or age-related macular degeneration – are picked up early. If you're over 60, you can get a free NHS sight test every 2 years – though you should get a test more regularly if you're advised to.

If sight problems affect your ability to go about your daily life safely, ask your local council's social services department about equipment and support that might help.

There are lots of day-to-day things you can do to look after your eyesight too. You can:

- protect your eyes from the sun by wearing sunglasses on sunny days – look for ones labelled CE or UV400
- adjust the settings on your electronic devices to make the display as clear as possible
- make sure there's a good level of light around your home
- eat a balanced diet
- quit smoking.

## Next steps



Our factsheet **Help with health costs** has more information. In Wales, see Age Cymru's version of this factsheet. Contact the Macular Society (page 36) or the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) (page 37) for more information about eye health and the services they offer.

## Looking after your hearing

As you get older, you might notice that you have to turn up the volume on the TV or radio, or that you find it more difficult to hear what's being said around you. While some hearing loss can be normal, it's important to speak to your doctor if you're having trouble with hearing things or being able to communicate.

Some hearing aids and batteries are available for free on the NHS. If you think you have tinnitus (a condition that causes you to hear ringing or humming noises), let your doctor know.

You can also try the free hearing check on the RNID website (page 37), which will let you know if you should see your doctor.

### Combined sight and hearing difficulties

If you have difficulties with both your sight and your hearing, contact your local council's social services department and explain how your day-to-day life is being affected. They may have a specialist team who can help.



### Good to know



Deafblind UK offer support, practical advice, home visits and befriending to people who are deafblind or who have combined sight and hearing loss (page 35).

## Keeping your bones healthy

As you get older, your bones tend to get weaker – and this can mean they're more likely to break if you fall.

You're more at risk of osteoporosis (a condition which weakens your bones) if:

- you've been immobile for a long time
- you've been a smoker or regular drinker
- you have a parent who broke a hip
- you're underweight
- you're female.

While the health of your bones largely depends on your genes, your lifestyle can help look after them too. Regular physical activity helps, as does eating foods rich in calcium such as dairy products, canned fish, leafy greens and nuts.

Vitamin D is also important, as it helps your body absorb calcium. Most people get the vitamin D they need from being in the sun so, if you can, spend time outside in spring and summer – but be careful not to let your skin redden or burn.

During autumn and winter, you're unlikely to get enough vitamin D from being in the sun, so it might be worth taking a daily supplement. If you think you might not be getting enough vitamin D, speak to your doctor.

### Next steps



For more information about avoiding falls, see our **Staying steady** guide.



## Keeping your teeth healthy

Keep your teeth healthy by:

- cleaning them twice a day
- visiting your dentist regularly for a check-up.

Even if you have full dentures, it's important to go for regular check-ups. The shape of your mouth changes over time, which can mean your dentures don't fit as well.

At the dentist, you can also get checked for signs of mouth and neck cancer.

Problems with our teeth can also affect our diet – it can become harder to eat and chew certain foods. This can mean you unintentionally start to lose weight, which can put you at risk of becoming malnourished. There's more information about this on pages 14-15.



In Wales, you can get a free NHS dental check-up if you're over 60.

### Next steps



See our **Dental care: NHS and private treatment** factsheet for more information on dental services. In Wales, see Age Cymru's version of this factsheet.

## Caring for your feet

It's important to keep an eye on your feet and contact your healthcare professional if you notice any changes – especially if you have a long-term health condition such as arthritis or diabetes.

As you get older, your feet lose some of their natural cushioning and blood flow may decrease. This can mean blisters or sores take much longer to heal. But there are things you can do to look after your feet, such as:

- wear well-fitting, supportive shoes that are comfy to walk in
- avoid wearing the same shoes every day
- keep toenails short and smooth
- have a regular diabetic foot check
- dry your feet carefully after a shower or bath, particularly between your toes
- avoid soaking your feet for too long – it can cause dry skin
- avoid talcum powder as it can clog skin and cause friction
- apply foot cream containing urea which hydrates the skin (but avoid applying it between your toes). It's best to do this before you go to bed to avoid slipping.

### Good to know



If you find it difficult to cut your toenails, your local Age UK or Age Cymru may offer a nail-cutting service. If not, they might be able to help you find one.

# Sleeping well

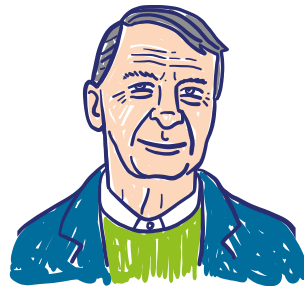
Sleeping patterns often change with age, and it's natural to not get as much sleep as you used to. But with the right routines, environment and diet, you can still get enough.

To improve your sleeping patterns, you can:

- try to be more active during the day
- go to bed at the same time each night
- avoid eating a lot or drinking alcohol too close to going to bed
- reduce the amount of caffeine you have during the day (you might like to switch to decaf tea or coffee, for instance)
- cut down on daytime naps
- avoid using smartphones and tablets just before sleep
- getting up and doing something for half an hour if you can't get to sleep, before going back to bed.

**“Reading before bed helps me unwind and de-stress.”**

Michael, 68



## Next steps

If you have persistent problems sleeping, your doctor might be able to help. If you suffer from insomnia, the NHS website (page 36) has tips. In Wales, visit the NHS 111 Wales website.

# Health checks

Routine health checks can catch problems at an early stage when they're easier to treat. Are you due for any of the below?

## Blood pressure

Your pharmacist, practice nurse or doctor can check this for you. They can offer advice if it's too high or too low.

## Cholesterol

You can have your cholesterol level measured at the pharmacy or doctor's surgery. If it's too high, you can make changes to lower it – such as adjusting your diet.

## Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA)

Tests for AAA are offered to men in the year they turn 65 – as it's most common in men over this age. But even if you're not offered a test, you can ask for one if you think you need it.

## Cancer

There are NHS screening tests for bowel, breast and cervical cancer which are offered to different groups at different ages.

## General health

You'll be invited for a free NHS Health Check every 5 years if you're between 40 and 74 years of age and don't already have certain health conditions.

## Vaccinations

You might want to get seasonal jabs to protect you from acute respiratory infections like flu and coronavirus. Depending on your age, you could also be eligible to get vaccinated against shingles and pneumonia.

# Your health checklist

This handy checklist shows the key things you can do to stay healthy, both physically and mentally.

## 1 Stay active

Make sure you exercise regularly – whether that’s a hobby such as gardening or joining an exercise class.



## 2 Eat a variety of foods

Try to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Aim to have fish twice a week, making sure that one portion is oily fish.



## 3 Keep 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 doctor or other healthcare professional.



## 4 Drink in moderation

Keep a note of how much alcohol you’re drinking and make sure you stick to the safe limit of no more than 14 units spread out over the week.



## 5 Give up smoking

It’s never too late to get help quitting and enjoy the benefits of being smoke-free.





6

### Care for your feet

Look after your feet by cutting your toenails regularly, wearing supportive shoes and getting any problems checked by your doctor.



7

### Get your eyes tested

Get your eyes tested for free every 2 years if you're over 60 – or annually if you're over 70.



8

### Get enough sleep

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



9

### Take care of your mental wellbeing

Stay in touch with friends, do things you enjoy, and perhaps try some new things too. They can all help you feel better.



10

### Visit your doctor

Get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly. Book your seasonal flu jab, follow up invitations for NHS cancer screenings and NHS health checks. If you're aged 70 to 79, ask your doctor about the shingles vaccination.



# Useful organisations

## Age UK

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

**Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65**

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.

**[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**

In Wales, contact Age Cymru Advice: **0300 303 44 98**

**[www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)**

In Northern Ireland, contact Age NI: **0808 808 7575**

**[www.ageni.org](http://www.ageni.org)**

In Scotland, contact Age Scotland: **0800 124 4222**

**[www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)**

## **Alzheimer's Society**

Offers advice, information and support to people with dementia, their families and carers through its helpline and local offices.

Tel: **0333 150 3456**

**[www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)**

## **AWARE**

Provides support for people living with depression in Northern Ireland.

Tel: **028 9035 7820** (Belfast)

Tel: **028 7126 0602** (Derry/Londonderry)

Email: **[info@aware-ni.org](mailto:info@aware-ni.org)**

**[www.aware-ni.org](http://www.aware-ni.org)**

## **C.A.L.L. (Community Advice & Listening Line)**

Offers support to people in Wales 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](http://www.callhelpline.org.uk)**

## **Cancer Research UK**

Provides information about cancer and support for those affected by cancer. Call their helpline to speak to a nurse.

Tel: **0808 800 4040**

**[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)**

## **Deafblind UK**

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

Tel: **0800 132320**

Text: **07903 572885**

**[www.deafblind.org.uk](http://www.deafblind.org.uk)**

## Drinkaware

Offers tips on responsible drinking, as well as support to cut down or stop completely.

Drinkline: **0300 123 1110**

**[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)**

## Macular Society

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

Tel: **0300 3030 111**

**[www.macularsociety.org](http://www.macularsociety.org)**

## Mind

Provides advice and support on mental health issues.

Infoline: **0300 123 3393**

**[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)**

## Royal Osteoporosis Society

Offers information on the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

Tel: **0808 800 0035**

**[www.theros.org.uk](http://www.theros.org.uk)**

## NHS

Offers information about health topics including healthy eating and drinking, physical activity, mental health and health screening programmes.

Tel: **111**

**[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**

For guidelines on physical activity visit: **[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-older-adults](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-older-adults)**

For sitting exercises visit: **[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises)**

In Wales, visit **[NHS 111 Wales](#)**

**[www.111.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.111.wales.nhs.uk)**

## **NHS Smokefree**

Provides information on stopping smoking and details of support available.

Tel: **0300 123 1044**

**[www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)**

In Wales, contact **Help Me Quit**

Tel: **0800 085 2219**

**[www.helpmequit.wales](http://www.helpmequit.wales)**

In Northern Ireland, contact **Stop Smoking NI**

**[www.stopsmokingni.info](http://www.stopsmokingni.info)**

## **Ramblers**

Runs a network of health walk schemes across England. Visit their website and enter your postcode to find your local group. You can then contact them directly.

Tel: **020 3961 3232**

**[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)**

In Wales, contact **Ramblers Cymru**

Tel: **020 3961 3310**

## **Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)**

Provides advice and support for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. You can check your hearing on their website.

Tel: **0808 808 0123**

Text: **07360 268 988**

Email: **[contact@rnid.org.uk](mailto:contact@rnid.org.uk)**

**[www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)**

## **Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)**

Provides information and support for people who are blind or have a visual impairment.

Tel: **0303 123 9999**

**[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)**

## **Samaritans**

Confidential support for people who are experiencing despair or suicidal thoughts. Lines are open 24 hours a day, every day.

Tel: **116 123**

Email: **jo@samaritans.org**

**www.samaritans.org**

## **University of the Third Age (u3a)**

Local groups of older people who learn together informally.

Tel: **020 8466 6139**

**www.u3a.org.uk**

# Help us be there for someone else

We hope you found this guide helpful. When times are tough, it's so important to get some support. Did you know you could help us reach someone else who needs a little help? Here's how:

1

## Give your views on guides like this

Our Readers' Panel helps make sure the information we produce is right for older people and their families. We'd love you to join. Go to [www.ageuk.org.uk/readers-panel](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/readers-panel).

2

## Donate to us

Every donation we receive helps us be there for someone when they need us. To make a donation, call us on **0800 169 8787** or go to [www.ageuk.org.uk/donate](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/donate).

3

## Volunteer with us

Our volunteers make an incredible difference to people's lives. Get involved by contacting your local Age UK or at [www.ageuk.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/volunteer).

4

## Campaign with us

We campaign to make life better for older people, and rely on the help of our strong network of campaigners. Add your voice to our latest campaigns at [www.ageuk.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/campaigns).

5

## Remember us in your will

A gift to Age UK in your will is a very special way of helping older people get expert support in the years to come. Find out more by calling **020 3033 1421** or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/legacy](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/legacy).

# What should I do now?

You may want to read some of our relevant information guides and factsheets, such as:

- **Your mind matters**
- **Staying steady**
- **Your hospital stay**

You can order any of our guides or factsheets by giving our Advice Line a ring for free on **0800 169 65 65** (8am-7pm, 365 days a year).

Our friendly advisers are there to help answer any questions.

All of our publications are available in large print and audio formats.

There's plenty of really useful information on our website, too. Visit **[www.ageuk.org.uk/wellbeing](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/wellbeing)** to get started.

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



**0800 169 65 65**  
**[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**



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