

Practical information for older adults

18 June 2020

Greater Manchester Ageing Hub at Greater Manchester Combined Authority has compiled the following practical information for older adults.

This information is designed to be copied and pasted into your newsletters or communications, to help this information reach the older residents of Greater Manchester.

The information below, drawn from a range of official sources, covers key issues for older adults during the coronavirus pandemic.

Where possible, we have included links to more information including signposting to non-digital resources.

Please send any enquiries to us at ageing.hub@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Please find below practical information on:

1. Staying active
2. Nutrition and hydration
3. Mental health advice and support for older people
4. How to get up after a fall
5. Scams and fraud
6. Dementia
7. Money management and access to essentials

1. Staying Active

It is important for all of us, including older people, to stay active. It is great for both mental and physical health and helps to protect the body from infection and illness.

Before you start exercise

- If you get any symptoms of a heart, kidney or metabolic condition contact your GP.
- Clear away clutter
- Keep something sturdy and solid nearby for support
- Have a glass of water nearby.
- Wear well-fitting and supportive shoes, and loose clothing
- If you are exercising on your own, keep a telephone nearby, just in case.
- Warm up

Strength and balance exercises

Here are just a couple of the many strength and balance older people can try at home to help keep steady on their feet.

Sideways step

- A. Stand with your feet together, knees slightly bent.
- B. Step sideways in a slow and controlled manner, moving one foot to the side first.
- C. Move the other to join it.

Perform 10 steps each way or step from one side of the room to the other.

Heel-to-toe walk

- A. Standing upright, place your right heel on the floor directly in front of your left toe.
- B. Then do the same with your left heel. Make sure you keep looking forward at all times. If necessary, put your fingers against a wall for stability.

Try to perform at least five steps. As you progress, move away from the wall.

Ways to keep active

Here are some ways to help you keep moving at home:

- Cleaning
- Dancing
- Gardening
- Going up/down stairs
- Stretch or stand during TV advert breaks or after each chapter of your book,

More information

You can find more information including more strength and balance exercises in the Keeping Well at Home booklet which can be downloaded for free: <https://www.greatersport.co.uk/ways-to-keep-moving/moving-for-older-adults>

2. Nutrition and hydration

What we eat and drink is really important for our health, it keeps our immune system strong and resilient as well as enabling us to have the energy to do the things we enjoy.

Planning for and preparing meals and cooking is also a good way to keep up our daily routine.

Tips on eating and drinking well

Enjoy your food

Try some new foods or go back to old favourites.

Have plenty of variety in your diet

This will give you all the nutrients you need and help you maintain a healthy weight.

Keep an eye on yourself

If you think you are eating less than usual or don't have much appetite keep track of your weight or check if your clothes, are looser than usual.

Increase the amount of energy and protein you get

This will help if you have been losing weight without trying or have a low body weight. Also try eating little and often and using full-fat food and drinks.

Keeping your kitchen cupboard and freezer stocked

Think about how you will get your shopping – ask a neighbour, family member or Community Hub to help.

Make meal preparation easy

Make sure you have tasty and long-lasting foods, such as tinned soup and rice pudding in. These are always good to have in the cupboard for a fast snack.

Stay well hydrated

We need about 6-8 drinks per day to stay well hydrated. This reduces infections and improves concentration, energy and mood.

If you drink alcohol

It is recommended to not have more than 14 units (one unit is a half pint or a small glass of wine) a week, spread out, responsibly and safely.

More information:

- Contact Age UK Salford on 0161 7887300 to request a nutrition and hydration resource pack to be sent through the post
- For free booklets on eating and drinking well in later life, visit <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/salford/about-us/improving-nutrition-and-hydration/nutrition>

3. Mental health advice and support for older people

Our mind matters and keeping our mind active is important. We all need to think about our mind in the same way that we need to think about our bodies, especially in times of change.

Tips on keeping our mind well and active

Stay connected

- Stay in touch with friends, family, neighbours, clubs, and your community by phone
- Asking for help with shopping and running errands
- Volunteer to get or become a phone befriender to others

Stay on top of difficult feelings and worries

- Try to focus on things in your control
- Limit how much news you watch or listen to and use trusted sources (BBC/ITV).
- Take time to chat about how you're feeling with others, it can really help.

Plan practical things

- Keep up with usual everyday activities and interests at home.
- Make a 'to do list' for each day: writing shopping lists, making calls, order repeat prescriptions.
- Continue accessing treatment and support for health conditions from your GP.

Take time to notice and feel joy

- Take time to focus on activities you enjoy at home.
- Set yourself a goal, learn a new skill, or take on a challenge.
- Take note of things that bring you joy and share with others

More information

- You can call the team at Silver Line Helpline on 0800 470 8090 for a chat
- You can text a crisis volunteer at SHOUT by texting GM to 85258.
- You can explore further available options on the website:
<https://hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/covid-19-resources/>

4. How to get up after a fall

If you do have a fall, lie still for a minute, try to stay calm and check yourself for injuries. Even if you are unhurt, make sure that you tell a healthcare professional, family member or carer that you have fallen.

If you know you can't get up, or feel pain in your hip or back

Try to call for help by using your phone or pendant or by banging on radiators or walls. Try to keep warm by covering yourself with whatever is close by and try and keep moving your limbs and roll from side to side if you are able to.

If you feel like you can bring yourself to get up and have no pain in your hip or back:

- A. Roll onto your side, and then push up onto your elbows.
- B. Use your arms to push yourself onto your hands and knees.
- C. Crawl towards a very stable piece of furniture (a sturdy chair or bed) and hold onto it for support.
- D. Slide or raise the foot of your stronger leg forwards so it's flat on the floor.
- E. Lean forwards and push up using your arms and front leg, slowly rising to a standing position.
- F. Turn around and sit down. Sit for a minute or two and catch your breath.

More information

You can find more information in the Keeping Well at Home booklet which can be downloaded for free: <https://www.greatersport.co.uk/ways-to-keep-moving/moving-for-older-adults>

5. Scams and fraud

More of us are spending increasing amounts of time online.

Although online services are making it easier for us to keep in touch with family and friends, as well as work from home, this increase in online activity also has its risks.

In the UK, the National Cyber Security Centre has detected a growing use of Covid-19 related themes being utilised by cyber criminals. This amplified online threat means that it is more important than ever for everyone to be more vigilant against fraud, particularly when it comes to sharing financial and personal information.

Tips on how to stay safe online

It is important to remember to Stop, Challenge, and Protect when being asked for your money or information:

- Stop and think before parting with your money or information
- Challenge whether the request could be fake and
- Protect yourself by contacting your bank immediately if you think you have fallen for a scam

Remember if you are in doubt, call it out:

- Please always refrain from clicking on any links contained within text messages.
- If you suspect a spam text you can report it to your mobile network provider by forwarding it to **7726**
- To spot a phishing email look for urgent calls to action, generic addresses e.g. dear friend, poor quality images and spelling mistakes.

- You can report any phishing or fraud attempts to Action Fraud via their website: **[actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk)** or call **0300 123 2040**

More information

- Updates on the latest COVID-19 scams:
<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/campaign/covid-19-guidance-and-advice>
- Top tips for staying secure online:
<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/top-tips-for-staying-secure-online>

6. Dementia

Living with dementia at any time brings everyday challenges for the person and those around them. Coronavirus is making daily life much harder. You may feel anxious, scared or lonely. But you are not alone – help is available.

Coping with your dementia

Activities

Set up different areas around your home so that you can move from activity to activity;

- watch favourite films and musicals in the living room;
- listen to the radio in the kitchen;
- do jigsaw puzzles at the table;
- take walks around the garden, if you can.

Wellbeing calls

Staying in contact with others, or having someone you can talk to is important. You can call the Dementia Connect support line on **0333 150 3456**.

Supporting someone with dementia at distance

Contact

- If you know trusted neighbours or friends, ask them to pop a note through the door to offer help.
- Look for community support groups in their area.
- Help them set up ways to connect with you (phone, post, text, email or using systems such as Skype).

Support tasks

- Look to help them as much online – including shopping for the essentials. If they have difficulty getting a delivery slot, you can complete the NHS Volunteers scheme form to ask for groceries or medicine to be delivered at home.
- Potential temporary access to the person's bank account – would help with banking and paying for deliveries online. Talk to the bank because the person will need to complete a form, and have capacity to do this.

More information

You can call the Dementia Connect support line on **0333 150 3456**.

There's a range of resources available: <https://dementia-united.org.uk/home/covid-19-information/>

7. Money management and access to essentials

There are a number of schemes across Greater Manchester that older people can use to pay for food and essentials during the COVID-19 crisis.

If you are not digitally confident, or do not have digital access

Food parcels

Many charities and organisations are providing food parcels free of charge. These are delivered directly to your home by volunteers or staff. You can request these through your local authority or local community hubs.

Allowing a trusted person to access money

Banks now allow a third party to access money on behalf of the account holder. This enables them to have access and make payments for you. If you are considering this option, please only give access to someone that you trust, like a family member.

Payment by cash to a volunteer

Payment by cash may still be the only option available for some older people. If you only have cash available it is important to be vigilant with the handling of cash, although The World Health Organisation notes that cash is no more likely to carry the virus than other surfaces.

If you are digitally confident and have digital access

Payment by cheque

Many banking apps now allow people to immediately pay cheques into their accounts via their smartphone camera, known as cheque imaging.

Ordering over the phone

Some local shops will take an order over the phone which can be paid for by debit or credit card over the phone.

Shopping online

Both delivery and Click & Collect services are available at supermarkets and other shopping facilities. You can order your shopping via the website and pay digitally using your card details.

Please be aware with click & collect services, some shops require the card paid with in order to collect on the customer's behalf.

Practical information resources

Keeping Well at Home booklet

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/2958/keeping-well-at-home-dv02-gm-11th-may-2020-download.pdf>

Greater Sport

<https://www.greatersport.co.uk/ways-to-keep-moving/moving-for-older-adults>

Ambition for Ageing

<https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/alternatives-cash-during-covid-19>

Action Fraud

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/campaign/covid-19-guidance-and-advice>

National Cyber Security Centre

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/top-tips-for-staying-secure-online>

Dementia United

<https://dementia-united.org.uk/home/coronavirus-information-for-people-affected-by-dementia/>

<https://dementia-united.org.uk/home/covid-19-information/>