

A dose of Health & Wellbeing

Your bitesize guide to a healthier lifestyle from the school nursing team
for parents of secondary school students

April 2023

Hello and welcome

This newsletter aims to provide you with some useful information, hints and tips from the School Nursing team for keeping your child healthy.



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Exams: Looking after your child's mental health

The exam season can be extremely stressful. If you notice your child is struggling, here are some resources that can help.

[Charlie Waller](#) has some simple tips for how to take care of your child when exam season approaches, and to help them to reach out for help and support if things get too much.

There is lots of support which you could share with your child to help with exam stress on the [Mind website](#). Their article on [14 ways to beat exam stress](#) is particularly helpful. We also have a really informative [blog on coping with exam stress](#) on our website.

Getting active

Being active reduces the risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and other medical conditions later in life. But did you know it can also improve your mental wellbeing?

- Try and encourage your child to aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity each day.
- Vary the type of activity and intensity they do.
- Reduce the amount of time spent sitting or lying down by taking regular breaks to get up and walk around and be active.

Search for the following apps in your App store which might help you to find ways to be more active and encourage your child to follow suit.



Couch To 5k

A programme for beginners that can be completed in as little as 9 weeks



Active 10

Track your steps set goals, and tips to boost activity

Avoiding ticks

Preventing tick bites and removing ticks correctly is crucial to avoiding Lyme disease. [Watch this short YouTube film to see how to prevent tick bites and what to do if you're bitten.](#)

Find out more from [Lyme Disease UK](#).

What is an eating disorder?

It is completely normal to have days when we eat more or less or your appetite varies. But sometimes the way your child feels about food and eating can be a problem. Some signs that there may be a problem are:

- Focussing a lot on controlling what or how much they eat
- Having urges to get rid of the food from their body
- Feeling unable to stop eating
- Using food to manage their emotions
- Feeling guilty for enjoying food

If you're worried that your child may have an eating disorder, [visit the Young Minds website](#).

Hayfever

10-15% of us are affected by hay fever. It's usually worse between late March and September, especially when it is warm, humid, and windy. It's caused by airborne allergens from grasses, trees, weeds, plants and outdoor moulds that are wind pollinated.

It may be mistaken for a cold. It can be very distressing and make you feel pretty miserable.

Symptoms

- Sneezing
- Itchy nose/ throat
- Blocked or runny nose
- Post-nasal drip (mucus running down back of throat)
- Red/itchy/watery eyes
- Cough
- Wheezing/asthma symptoms/tight chest
- Headache/blocked sinuses
- Nose bleeds
- Blocked/itchy ears



What can help?

- Monitor pollen forecasts, and stay indoors if possible when the pollen count is high. Counts are usually higher on dry warm days and rain washes pollen from the air.
- Keep windows closed indoors, especially in early morning and evening.
- On high pollen days, shower and wash your hair after arriving home and change clothing to remove pollen from your hair, body and clothing.
- Wear wrap-around sunglasses to keep pollen out of the eyes.
- Wear a hat with a peak or large brim to keep pollen from the eyes and face.
- Apply an allergen barrier balm around edge of nostrils to trap/block pollens.
- Keep car windows closed and the air intake on recirculate.
- Remove pollen from pets with a damp cloth when they have been out.

Medication

Medication can control symptoms and reactions but are not a cure.

Antihistamines block the allergic response & come in tablet, liquid, or nasal form. Nasal steroids reduce inflammation. Eye drops are available over the counter or on prescription.

Seek advice from a pharmacist or your GP before you use any.

Visit [Allergy UK](https://www.allergyuk.org) for more advice and information.

Epilepsy

If your child has epilepsy it is very important that school staff are made aware of this and that your child has an epilepsy care plan in school, whether they need emergency medication or not.

Please contact the school nursing team for support if you need it.

Adrenaline Pens

If your child has an adrenaline pen prescribed for severe allergic reactions, don't forget to make sure the pen is in date and that the school is made aware of any changes to their treatment/dose so their care plan is always up to date.

Please contact the school nursing team for further support if required.

Check out our school nursing Tik Tok: [How to use an adrenaline auto-injector](#) 🧑🏻‍⚕️ #allergy #allergyawarenesswe... | [TikTok](#)

Is your child up to date with their immunisations?

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, less children are having their vaccinations and we are worryingly starting to see outbreaks emerging locally such as measles.

Vaccines are free, prevent children becoming ill from infectious diseases and help save lives.

You can check your child's red book (PCHR), speak to your GP or our local child health service (0300 5611851) to check whether they have received all immunisations.

If your child was vaccinated outside of the UK it is important that you provide evidence to your GP practice so that they can check whether your child needs any further vaccinations.

To find out more visit the [NHS Conditions website](#) and the [Berkshire Healthcare website](#).

You can also contact the school aged immunisation team on:

0300 365 0077 or

consentschoolimms@berkshire.nhs.uk



14 THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU'RE HAVING A BAD DAY



GET DRESSED



DRAW OR PAINT



READ A GOOD BOOK



MEDITATE



LISTEN TO MUSIC



TAKE A NICE HOT,
LONG BATH



SPEND TIME WITH
FAMILY & FRIENDS



DO AT LEAST A 15
MINUTE WORKOUT



GO OUTSIDE FOR A
WALK



CREATE A LIST OF
GOALS



WATCH A
MOTIVATIONAL VIDEO



PREPARE A
HEALTHY MEAL



LEARN SOMETHING
NEW



TURN OFF YOUR
PHONE



We all have bad days. But if your child seems to be having more bad days than good days, or their low mood won't go away, they could be depressed.

To find out more and what you can do to get better and how to seek support visit the [Young Minds website](#).

Sleep – is your child getting enough?

Not getting enough sleep can have a huge impact on how you feel both emotionally and physically. Sleep can help you feel energised, be less likely to get infections, as well as help your brain to retain information.

Here are some tips for a good night's sleep:

- Have a routine. Get your child to go to bed at the same time each night and wind down an hour before bed
- Reduce screen time and turn off electronics 30-45 minutes before bed
- Create a good environment – keep it cool and dark, with comfortable and clean bedding
- Reduce how much caffeine your child drinks, especially in the evening
- Get some natural light during the day, open the curtains as soon as your child wakes up and encourage them to spend some time outside
- Get your child to be active and get regular exercise, it really helps with sleep
- Try to get your child to use their bed for sleeping only, not other activities such as homework
- If they find it difficult to fall asleep, try suggesting some activities to distract them that doesn't make them feel any emotions such as counting backwards from 1000 in 7s, listing songs or films they enjoy, naming the football teams in each league, thinking of capital cities or countries that begin with each letter of the alphabet
- Have a maximum of a 2 hour lie in at weekends or in school holidays

[The Teen sleep hub](#) gives some excellent advice and tips and has a free e book all about teenage sleeping; they even have a weekly live chat session.

For further support and advice you can also contact your child's school nurse.



Is your child leaving school after their exams?

School may soon be a dim and distant memory for your child but the help and support they have received from NHS services will continue. Without the school nurse team to support them it's now more important than ever that they and you know how to access help when it's needed.

GP

Everyone should be registered with a general practitioner, often known as a family doctor, for all our non-emergency health needs.

[If you don't have a GP you can find one here.](#)

If you don't have a GP and need advice, the [NHS 111](#) telephone service is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year and is intended for 'urgent but not life-threatening' health issues.

Sexual health advice

For all information and services relating to sexual health advice including contraception visit [Safe Sex Berkshire](#).

Dentists

Dental care is also provided on the NHS. [Find your nearest NHS dentist and find out how to book your appointment here.](#)

Mental health

It's just as important to look after your child's mental health as their physical health. Whether it's spending time on social media, being with friends and family, or going to college, university or starting a job, there are things we do every day that impact on our mental health.

[For advice on how to talk to your child about their mental health visit Young Minds.](#)

Parenting isn't always easy. This page on the Young Minds website has a [guide to looking after your own mental wellbeing.](#)

And don't forget, our website has loads of information and support for your child's mental and emotional health as well as their physical health and development. [Visit our website here.](#)

How to contact your School Nursing team

We are available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.
There is reduced cover during school holidays.

Bracknell Forest

0300 365 6000, select option 3
Bracknellforest.SN@berkshire.nhs.uk

Reading

0118 9047320
csnreading@berkshire.nhs.uk

Wokingham

01189047330
csnwokingham@berkshire.nhs.uk

West Berkshire

01189 9047325
csnwestberks@berkshire.nhs.uk



You can also use our website to make a referral to our service.

cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/school-nursing



Chat Health

If you're aged 11-19 you can also contact a member of the school nursing team by text message for confidential, anonymous help and advice.

We can offer advice and support on many topics like:

- Sleep
- Low Mood
- Self-Harm
- Body Changes
- Relationships
- Emotional health & wellbeing
- Smoking
- Healthy eating
- Anxiety/Stress
- Drugs & alcohol
- Bullying



Text: 07312 263194

Open 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri
(excluding bank holidays)