



## Section 2

# Health and well-being

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# Keep well, keep active

Physical activity is good for you  
in lots of ways.

It helps you keep a healthy body weight.  
It helps you feel generally fitter and healthier.  
It reduces stress anxiety and depression.  
It reduces cholesterol levels.  
It reduces blood pressure.  
It stimulates your whole metabolism.  
It helps prevent heart disease and cancer.

You don't need to join a gym to keep physically active. Just 30 minutes of brisk walking a day will keep you healthy. Build it into your routine gradually over time. Take the stairs, not the lift, and walk to work, or to a bus stop that's further from home and work.

If you find it hard to get motivated, try exercising with friends. Take up a new sport. Join a yoga or Pilates class, take up a martial art or join a dance class. They are all different forms of healthy exercise.

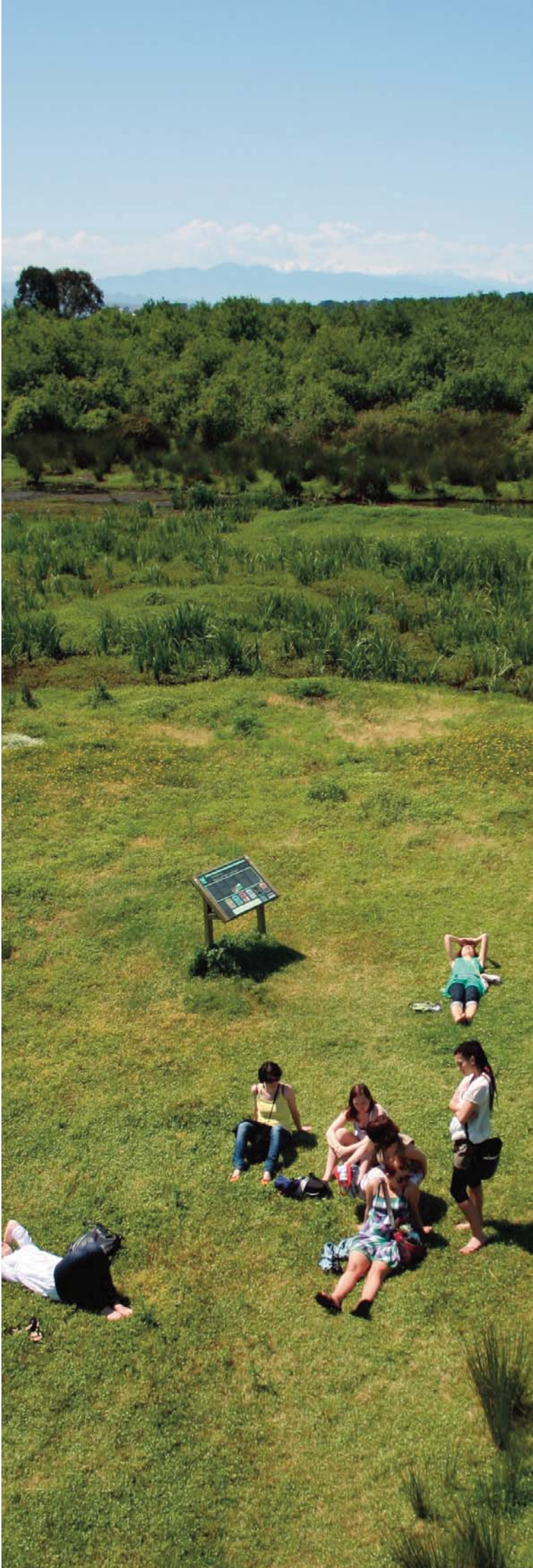
If you do decide to join a gym, make sure it's close to home or work, so you can get to it easily, and use it regularly. Make sure they are offering classes that interest you or you won't feel motivated to go.

Check out the equipment and facilities, how many staff they have and how much help and advice they offer.

Do they offer an introductory health and fitness assessment and regular checks on your progress and how you are using the equipment?

Most gyms offer free introductory classes – or they should do. Ask for a free introductory session.

Coram young people on forest safari in Georgia,  
Eastern Europe





## Sports and leisure activities

Sports and leisure activities are good for your physical and mental health. It's a way to meet other people and it's also good to do something different from your usual routine and activities. Having a hobby or interest that's different from your daily work is also good for your mental health.

Think about what sports and leisure activities you enjoy. You don't have to be a world champion; what matters is that you enjoy it.



As a young person, you may be able to get a free or reduced cost pass to your local authority leisure centre. Visit your local council or Connexions office to find out more information.

Your local authority may run youth clubs where you can join dance or drama groups or art classes. Local authorities also offer a huge range of evening and day exercise and sports classes for adults, which are often subsidised for people on low incomes. Check out your local authority website or get a brochure from your local library.



These are some useful websites with information about health and fitness and exercise:

[www.bbc.co.uk/health/treatments](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/treatments)

[www.keepfit.org.uk](http://www.keepfit.org.uk)



Coram young people raising money for Women in Congo by doing a 10k run

**Keep fit**

# Health, food and diet

Food is fuel. Our body is like a car: it needs fuel to operate. The higher the quality of fuel (more nutritious food, better balance of ingredients), the better our body will work.

So it's important to eat the right amounts of different foods, so our body can turn what we eat into energy.

## What's in what you eat?

These are the main ingredients that our body needs.

### Protein

We need protein to help the body grow and repair itself.

Protein is found in meat, fish, cheese, eggs and milk.

### Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are vital to give us energy.

Carbohydrates are found in pasta, rice, cereals, bread and in sweet foods. These are also known as 'starchy foods'.

### Fats

Fats also provide energy and help protect the body against cold.

Fats are found in butters, margarine and oils, and also in eggs, milk, meat and oily fish.

### Vitamins

Vitamins are vital for our general health and well-being because they help us convert and absorb the goodness from what we eat.

- Vitamin A (fat soluble) is needed to help our body repair broken bones and prevent tooth decay (by repairing tooth enamel). It is also important for night vision (yes, really).
- Vitamin B1 is needed to convert carbohydrates into energy and also to maintain our nervous system and keep our heart and other muscles functioning well. It also helps us cope with stress. Vitamin B2 helps repair hair, skin and nails. Vitamin B3 helps blood circulation and reduces cholesterol so we are less likely to get blocked arteries. Vitamin B6 boosts the immune system and is essential for the production of red blood cells. Vitamin B12 is essential for all cells, and for digestion and absorption of all foods.
- Vitamin C is good for the skin, and helps us fight off colds and flu viruses.
- Vitamin D is essential for bone growth and strength (it also comes from sunlight).
- Vitamin E is good for your heart but also helps prevent skin scarring (which is why it is found in many skin creams) and maintain blood vessels.
- Vitamin K is vital for blood clotting and can also help reduce menstrual flow. It is also important for maintaining bone strength.

### Minerals

Minerals help us turn food into energy and also keep the body working well. Essential minerals include:

- calcium
- iron
- magnesium
- phosphorus
- potassium
- sodium
- sulphur.

Minerals are found in most foods, and we need only small amounts in our diet. They are important though. Calcium, for example, helps keep bones and teeth strong. Iron is needed to make red blood cells, which are vital for carrying oxygen around the body.



### Roughage

Roughage helps us digest our food. It's found in fruit, vegetables and wholemeal bread, and in packet cereals, muesli and grains like oats and bran.

### Water

Water makes up about two thirds of our body weight and is absolutely essential to our body's functioning and to carry nutrients around the body.

### How much of what should you eat?

The energy we get from food is measured in calories. Some kinds of food (sugar) release a lot of energy very quickly. These kinds of calories are known as 'empty calories' because their energy is burned up (or stored away as body fat) very quickly. Other kinds of food (pasta and wholegrain rice) take much longer to release their energy, so our bodies get more long-term benefit.

The recommended daily amount (RDA) of calories that women need is 2000; for men it is 2500.

Most healthy eating advice uses 'portions' to describe how much of what foods you should eat.

### The eat well plate

A healthy, balanced diet needs to include a balance of foods. The eat well plate ([www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)) shows you how much you should eat of which kinds of foods.

Most people don't have time to bother with measuring how much they eat of what. Just try to balance what you eat in terms of carbohydrates, protein, fats and sugars. Your body will soon tell you if you are not eating properly – weight gain, weight loss, frequent colds and virus infections, poor skin, lack of energy, poor sleep and even low mood and depression can all be caused by poor diet (and other things too, of course, so you should go to your GP as well as check your diet).



## Are you a healthy eater?

Write down in this diary sheet what you eat and drink in one week.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				



After reading this section, fill out the diary sheet again with healthier alternatives (unless you are eating healthily already). Try to make changes to eat better – you'll feel much healthier for it.

You can also make copies of the diary sheet and use it to write out your menus for each week. It's a good way of keeping a check on your diet. It can also save you money because you can do one big shop at the supermarket and it will make sure you only buy what you need.

### Money-saving shopping tips

- Take your own lunch to work/college – it's much cheaper than buying sandwiches.
- Buy in bulk if at all possible.
- Shop at supermarkets – the corner shop will be more expensive.
- Supermarket own brands are usually much cheaper.
- Shop at the end of the day, when fresh food is often cheaper in supermarkets.
- Get your fruit and vegetables from your local street market – they're usually much cheaper than the supermarket or corner shop.
- Don't buy prepared meals – they're really expensive.
- Check out a price comparison website like **[www.mysupermarket.co.uk](http://www.mysupermarket.co.uk)** – you can compare the prices for the same items at all the main supermarket chains.

## Eight tips to a healthy diet

- 1 Base your meals on starchy foods.
- 2 Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.
- 3 Eat more fish, rather than meat.
- 4 Cut down on fats and sugar.
- 5 Try to eat less salt – no more than 6g a day.
- 6 Get active and try to keep a healthy weight.
- 7 Drink plenty of water.
- 8 Don't skip breakfast.

### Base your diet around starchy foods

Starchy foods – pasta, bread, potatoes, rice – should make up about a third of the food we eat. They are a good source of energy and the main source of fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins.

Start the day with a wholegrain breakfast cereal, have a sandwich for lunch, and potatoes, pasta or rice with your evening meal.

### Eat plenty of fruit and veg

We should eat at least five portions of fruit and veg every day – fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juiced.

Potatoes (and that includes chips) are a starchy food – they don't count as vegetables!



## Five a day

It's not hard to make sure you eat your five portions of fruit and veg a day. You don't need to make any really big changes to your diet or give up anything you like eating. Just add more fruit and veg to your usual meals.

- Eat fruit (dried or fresh) or raw veg as a snack.
- Add fruit to your breakfast cereal.
- Always have some salad – lettuce, grated carrot, tomato – in your lunchtime sandwiches, and some fruit for afters.
- Put extra pepper, onion, mushroom, sweetcorn or pineapple chunks on your thin-crust pizza.
- Add beans, lentils and pulses to stews, bakes and salads.
- Always have a salad or veg with your main meal.
- Put extra tinned, frozen or fresh veg in your spaghetti sauces.
- Add peas, sweetcorn or mashed carrot to your mashed potato (remember, potato doesn't count as a veg).
- Drink a glass of 100% unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice (but only one glass of juice counts a day).
- Drink a smoothie – smoothies are usually equivalent to two portions of fruit.

## Eat more fish

Aim to eat at least two portions of fish a week, including a portion of oily fish. The fish can be fresh, frozen or tinned (although tinned and smoked fish can be high in salt).

Salmon, mackerel, trout, herring, fresh tuna, sardines, pilchards and eel are all oily fish. They are rich in omega 3 fatty acids, which can help keep your heart healthy.

Haddock, plaice, coley, cod, tinned tuna, skate and hake are white or non-oily fish.

Try to choose as wide a variety of fish and shellfish as possible – it's good for your diet and good for environmental reasons, so we don't use up all the stocks of particular fish. Don't eat more than one portion a week of shark, swordfish or marlin, as these contain high levels of mercury.

## Cut down on fats and sugar

Some processed foods are very high in fats and sugars. You should try to cut down on:

- meat pies, sausages, meat with visible white fat
- hard cheese
- butter and lard
- pastry
- cakes and biscuits
- cream, soured cream and crème fraîche
- coconut oil, coconut cream or palm oil.

Use a little bit of vegetable oil or a reduced fat spread instead of butter, lard or ghee. If you do eat meat, try to choose lean cuts and cut off any visible fat.

# Eat your greens



### Tips for healthy eating

- Semi-skimmed milk is healthier than full cream milk.
- Dried fruit is a healthy alternative to biscuits and sweets.
- Steam or stir fry vegetables, rather than boil them – boiling destroys vitamins.
- Eat thick cut chips rather than French fries – they contain less fat.
- Wholemeal foods are healthier than white, refined foods as they contain more fibre and vitamins and also fill you up more.
- A baked potato contains more than half the recommended daily amount of vitamin C.
- If you fry food, use oil instead of fat.
- Grill meat or fish rather than fry, as it uses less fat.

### Eat less salt

Three quarters (75%) of the salt we eat is already in the processed food we buy, such as breakfast cereals, soups, sauces and ready meals. So even if you don't use a lot on your food or in cooking, you could be eating too much salt without realising it.

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. People with high blood pressure are three times more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke than people with normal blood pressure.

### Get active and try to be a healthy weight

We put on weight when we eat more than our body needs, because our body stores up the energy we don't use.

It's not a good idea to be either underweight or overweight. Being overweight can lead to health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure or diabetes. Being underweight can also affect your health.

- Only eat as much food as you need.
- Choose low-fat and low-sugar foods; eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and wholegrains.
- Keep physically active – this will use up the excess energy your body is storing.

If you do find you are putting on weight, don't put yourself on a crash diet. Crash diets aren't good for your health and you can get stuck in a cycle of losing a lot of weight and then putting it back on again. The best way to reach a healthy weight and keep it is to change your diet and lifestyle gradually. Aim to lose no more than 0.5 to 1kg (about 1 to 2lbs) a week, until you reach a healthy weight for your height.

You can check if you are a healthy weight for your height from:

**[www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/healthyweight/heightweightchart](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/healthyweight/heightweightchart)**

## Drink plenty of water

Try to drink about 6 to 8 glasses (1.2 litres) of water every day – and more when the weather is warm or when playing sports or other physical activities. Don't drink too many soft and fizzy drinks – they contain a lot of added sugar. Tea, coffee and alcohol dehydrate the body, so don't drink too much of them either.

## Reading food labels

Packaged food now has to list the ingredients, including the amount of fats and sugars it contains. Look at the order of the ingredients – the biggest ingredient always comes first.

### How much fat?

High is more than 20g fat per 100g.

Low is 3g fat or less per 100g.

If the amount of fat per 100g is in between these figures, then that is a medium level of fat.

### How much saturated fat?

High is more than 5g saturates per 100g.

Low is 1.5g saturates or less per 100g.

### How much sugar?

Look for 'Carbohydrates (of which sugars)' on the label. But watch out for other words used to describe added sugars, such as sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, hydrolysed starch and invert sugar, corn syrup and honey. If you see any of these near the top of the list, you know the food is likely to be high in added sugars.

High is more than 15g sugars per 100g.

Low is 5g sugars or less per 100g.

### How much salt?

High is more than 1.5g salt per 100g (or 0.6g sodium).

Low is 0.3g salt or less per 100g (or 0.1g sodium).



## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 typical Apple

Amount Per Serving

Calories 79Kcal

per 100 grams

Protein	0.26g
Carbohydrate	13.81g
(of which Sugars)	10.39g
Fat	0.17g
Sodium	1mg
Calcium	6mg
Iron	0.12mg
Potassium	107mg
Zinc	0.04mg
Vitamin C	4.6mg

## Don't skip breakfast

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. When you wake up, your body hasn't had any food for several hours and your energy levels will be low. Breakfast helps us power up our bodies and brains to start the day. People who miss breakfast tend not to work or study so well, and it doesn't help you control your weight.



You can find more useful information and advice about food and healthy eating at:

**[www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)**

These sites are good for easy recipe ideas.

**[www.getstuffed.info/recipes.html](http://www.getstuffed.info/recipes.html)**

Fun site with simple recipes for young people who don't know much about cooking.

**[www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes](http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes)**

BBC site with 12,840 recipes – you can search by ingredient, chef or TV programme.

**[www.studentrecipes.com](http://www.studentrecipes.com)**

Includes a handy section where you can type in the ingredients you've got in your cupboard and it finds you recipes.

**[www.uktv.co.uk/food/homepage/sid/6037](http://www.uktv.co.uk/food/homepage/sid/6037)**

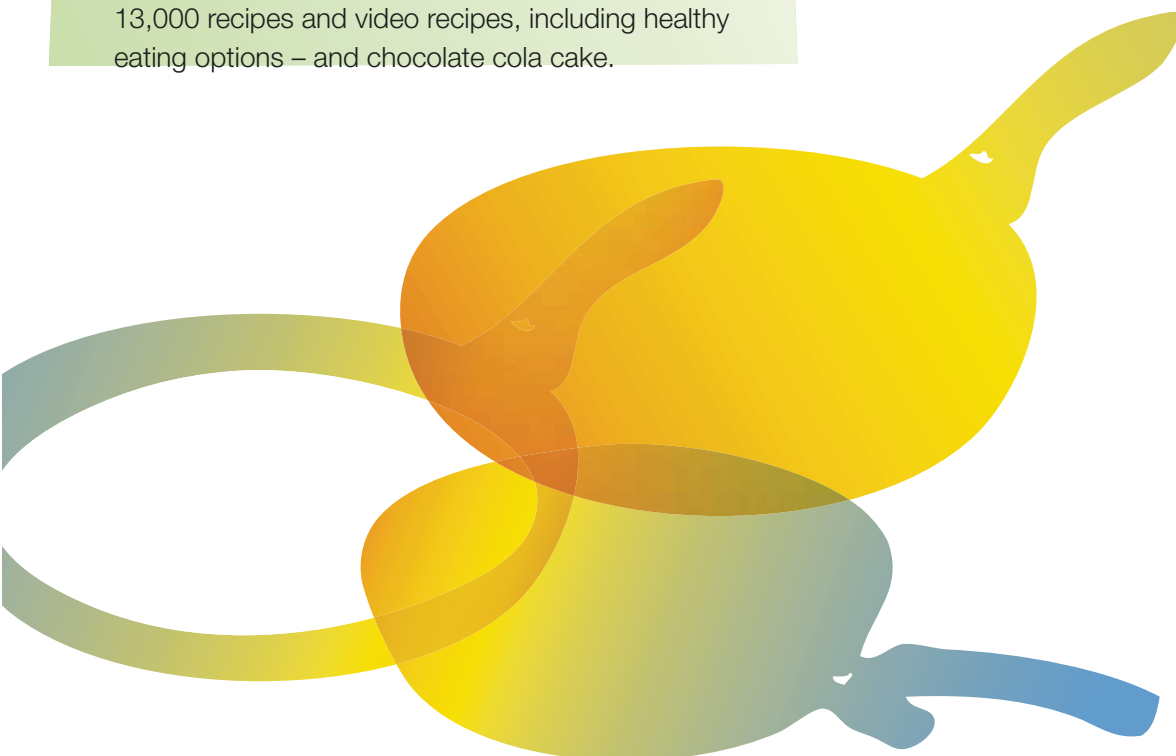
13,000 recipes and video recipes, including healthy eating options – and chocolate cola cake.

And finally...

## Kitchen hygiene

If you want to avoid food poisoning....

- wash your hands before cooking
- wipe down kitchen surfaces with a clean cloth after preparing food, especially if you are cutting up uncooked meat or fish
- never use the same surface for chopping raw meat and other cooked and uncooked products without wiping it down first
- never handle food if you have a stomach upset
- never reheat food more than once
- never re-freeze frozen food once it has defrosted
- never leave food uncovered. Put leftover food in the fridge as soon as it has cooled
- put refrigerated food (milk, cream, yoghurt etc) into a fridge as soon as possible after buying it.





# Mental health and emotions

Good mental health is just as important as good physical health.

This section explains some of the main mental health issues, but you should check with your GP or a mental health professional if you have any concerns about your mental health.

## Coping with feelings

Everyone has mood changes. Mostly it's to do with what's happening in our lives. If someone has a lot of difficulties in their life, they may react by feeling very anxious or depressed. They may get angry very easily, or be easily upset and tearful.

## Stress

Stress is good, so long as you aren't under too much stress. When you are under stress, your body releases adrenaline. This is the 'fight or flight' response. If it happens too often, or for too long, it can lead to difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression and sleeplessness. Other symptoms include loss of appetite, over-eating (comfort eating), heart palpitations, breathlessness, and loss of sex drive.

Go to your GP if you are feeling very stressed. They can refer you for counselling, or prescribe antidepressant medication, if you want it. The pills and counselling won't 'cure' the root problems, but they should help you cope better with the stress so you can sort out the problems yourself.

You could try:

- going for a walk in a quiet, relaxing place (not shopping)
- talk to friends
- do some exercise
- listen to relaxing music
- sit quietly by yourself.

You could also try meditating, or breathing exercises. Yoga can be very good for managing stress as it involves physical exercise, breathing and meditation.

Your local authority may run yoga day or evening classes. You could also check out your local wholefood shop or natural health centre as they often have adverts for yoga classes.



## Getting angry

Some people have difficulty controlling their anger. They may end up hitting other people, or hurting themselves, or doing very risky things. They may try to bottle up their anger, but that can cause problems too.

Anger is often a release of a build up of stress. These techniques may help you manage your anger better.

- Take yourself away from the trigger situation.
- Count to ten before reacting.
- Take ten breaths but breathe out for longer than you breathe in.
- Do something physically active – go for a run.
- Learn relaxation techniques.
- Hit something soft like a cushion.
- Talk to someone about how you are feeling.

If you think your anger is a problem, you can get help. There are special anger management courses you can do. Visit your doctor and explain your problem. They can refer you to an anger management course, or to a psychologist for treatment such as cognitive behavioural therapy (see right). This will help you understand what triggers the anger and how you can change how you respond in stressful situations.



You can find helpful information about anger, why people get angry, simple ways to control it and sources of help at:

**[www.nhs.uk/conditions/anger-management](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anger-management)**  
and

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

Search for the Cool Down booklet, which has advice about managing stress and anger.

## Talking treatments

If you are feeling very down, or trying to make sense of difficult things in your life, you might find it helpful to see a counsellor.

A counsellor is someone who will listen to you, who won't judge you and who will try to help you understand what's bothering you and decide for yourself how best to deal with your problems. They won't tell you what to do and they will respect your beliefs and lifestyle. Anything you tell them will be totally confidential.

You can get a referral to a counsellor via your GP. Sessions usually last about 50 minutes, and people are generally offered six sessions to begin with and then you can decide with the counsellor if you need more sessions.

Counselling is a kind of talking treatment. There are other kinds of talking treatments, such as psychotherapy and cognitive behavioural therapy. Psychotherapy is a more in-depth form of counselling that can be helpful in dealing with long-term mental health issues that have built up over a long time. Cognitive behavioural therapy is technique used by mental health professionals to help you identify unhealthy patterns of thinking and behaviour and change how you think and behave in particular difficult situations so you get a better result. You should ask your GP if you might find these helpful.

If you think you will find it hard to talk to your GP about your problems, talk to your Coram support worker first. They will be able to help you decide what you want to tell your GP.



## Bereavement

When someone in your family dies, or someone who is important to you – a friend, a teacher, a work colleague – it can feel very scary and confusing.

Everyone reacts differently to bereavement. There isn't a 'right' way to feel, and there isn't a set time when you should 'get over it'. You may always feel sad that this person isn't in your life any more.

You may feel relieved that they've died – maybe they were very ill and in a lot of pain; maybe they weren't kind to you – and that can be difficult and confusing too.

A lot of people feel really alone in the world after someone they love has died – it can be as if the whole world has been turned upside down, and nobody else seems to understand. Sometimes people think they're going mad because they see or hear the dead person. That's normal – it's just that your brain takes time to catch up with the fact that this important person in your life is no longer around.

It isn't a good idea to bottle up grief. Talk to someone you trust. Talk to other people who knew the person who has died. Talk to other people who have been bereaved – they will understand what you are going through.

It may seem hard to believe at the time, but you will feel better and you will come through this awful time.

If you feel very down or even feel like taking your own life, or you just want someone to listen to how you feel, visit your GP or contact a support organisation.



Cruse Bereavement Care is a free support service for people who are bereaved. Ask to talk to a bereavement supporter with special training in helping young people.

Cruse has a special website for young people where you can read about how other young people have coped and post messages and download free booklets and information.

They also have a young people's helpline.

**www.rd4u.org.uk**

Young people's helpline **0808 808 1677**

**email: info@rd4u.org.uk**

The national Cruse contact details are:

**www.cruse.org.uk**

National helpline **0844 477 9400**

**email: helpline@cruse.org.uk**

Winston's Wish is another good organisation for bereaved young people. They have lots of information about bereavement on their website and DVDs that you can download. You can post messages there too.

**www.winstonswish.org.uk**






## Mental illness

Common mental illnesses like anxiety and depression affect around one in six people. Severe mental illnesses are much rarer and affect only about one in 100. These include psychosis, schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder.

## Depression



Lots of people sometimes feel a bit blue and miserable. Depression is when you feel really down, not just unhappy.

### Reasons for depression include:

- physical illness or feeling run down
- heavy drinking, illegal drug use
- bad things happening in your life
- insecurity and feeling you have no control over what's happening to you
- changes in your circumstances (living alone, changing jobs, moving house, relationship break-up).

### Symptoms of depression include:

- feeling constantly tired
- feeling sad and hopeless most of the time
- losing interest in things you enjoy
- feeling lonely
- no interest in sex
- feeling irritable
- drinking more alcohol, using drugs or smoking more than usual
- eating more/eating less
- can't sleep/feel tired all the time/wake up early
- physical aches and pains
- feel numb or empty
- negative thoughts
- thoughts of suicide or death.

If you feel really down, and especially if you feel like ending your life, go to your GP. They may suggest you take antidepressants, or refer you for counselling or psychotherapy or cognitive behavioural therapy. You may be able to find a voluntary organisation that provides free counselling and psychotherapy to young people. Check with your GP or your support worker.

Some people find 'alternative' and 'complementary' therapies helpful. These include things like relaxation, yoga, massage and homeopathic and natural herbal remedies. Exercise is also good for depression, and gentle and creative activities like gardening and art.

People who are depressed can get isolated. Getting involved in activities and social groups can help with the depression. It may be difficult to motivate yourself when you're depressed, so ask a friend to come too if you are finding it hard to get the energy or courage to join a group.



## Anxiety

Anxiety is when you feel really worried all the time so that it's difficult for you to live a normal life.

### Reasons for anxiety include:

- too much stress
- feeling unwanted or not needed
- relationship problems
- new situations
- unfamiliar surroundings
- feeling you have no control over what's happening
- major life changes (moving house, new job, living alone for the first time)
- pressure from others
- pressure from yourself
- using drugs (some illegal drugs can cause anxiety and panic attacks).

### Symptoms of anxiety include:

- **physical symptoms** – dry mouth, sweating, aching muscles, heavy or rapid breathing, tense muscles, indigestion, dizziness, headaches, diarrhoea, racing heart
- **mental symptoms** – irritability, poor sleep, inability to concentrate, worried all the time, afraid, can't stop thinking about one subject.

Some people have phobias, or panic disorders. They may be really terrified of going outside (agoraphobia), or of being in small spaces (claustrophobia), or of meeting new people (social phobia or social anxiety) – there are lots of different phobias and they're no joke!


If your anxiety or phobia is making it hard for you to cope with everyday life, go to your GP. The treatments are medication and/or talking treatments. A lot of people find self-help groups useful. Cognitive behavioural therapy can be very helpful as it helps you break your pattern of thinking, which may be the cause of the anxiety. Some people learn relaxation techniques to help them cope with difficult situations that trigger their anxiety.



## Other mental health problems

There are a lot of other mental health problems that aren't as common but are very serious and can affect young people in particular.

### Eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia)



People with anorexia are very afraid of eating and putting on weight, for a lot of different reasons. They won't let themselves eat enough, even if they are really hungry. Sometimes they do a lot of exercise to burn off the calories, and get very anxious if they can't. They may also take laxatives to try to get rid of any food they've eaten. Anorexia is sometimes called the 'slimmer's disease' but it is nothing to do with slimming and everything to do with being very unhappy. If someone goes below a healthy body weight, they may need specialist hospital treatment – and they can die from malnutrition and reduced resistance to infection.

People with bulimia tend to have compulsive eating binges, and then may make themselves vomit to get rid of the food. This is very distressing for them and causes long-term damage to their physical health.

### Obsessive compulsive disorders

Some people need to do things repeatedly in a kind of ritual, such as washing their hands or doing things a set number of times, because they think something bad will happen if they don't. This can take over their life so they can't go out for fear they will touch something and have to wash their hands.

### Self-harm

Some people cut or burn themselves, or harm themselves in other ways. They don't do it because they want to die; they do it because they are very unhappy and they find it makes them feel better, or because they feel guilty about something and this relieves their guilt. There are lots of complicated reasons for self-harm. Sometimes people find it easier to hurt themselves than to deal with whoever or whatever it is that is really hurting them.

## Severe mental health problems

Bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia are very severe mental health problems that can have a major effect on a person's life and relationships.

Bi-polar disorder used to be called manic depression. People with bipolar disorder tend to have big mood swings – from feeling very depressed to feeling on top of the world and superhuman.

Schizophrenia (or psychosis) is a label used to describe a lot of different symptoms. They include hallucinations (hearing voices and seeing, feeling or smelling things that no one else can); delusions (believing things that aren't based on what is really happening); paranoia (thinking people are plotting against you) and jumbled up thoughts and speech. The feelings are so real to them that the person may not realise that they are experiencing psychosis. Psychosis can also affect how you feel and behave.

### Drug-induced psychosis

Some stimulating drugs, like amphetamines, can cause psychosis. Other drugs, including marijuana, can trigger psychosis in someone who is already at increased risk because they have vulnerability to psychosis.

It is also thought that some drugs such as amphetamines and cocaine can cause a condition known as a 'drug-induced psychosis'. This usually comes from heavy or prolonged street drug use. This psychosis can last up to a few days and you may get hallucinations, delusions, memory loss and confusion.

If you already have psychosis, drug use is very risky and can make you much more unwell and delay recovery.

### Personality disorders

Our personality is the way we think and feel and behave. Some people think and feel and behave in ways that make it very difficult for them to get on with other people and cope with ordinary life. They may have trouble keeping control of their feelings and behaviour and may get very angry and distressed and even hurt themselves or other people.

Personality disorder can be treated with talking treatments, such as cognitive behavioural therapy and group therapy, to help the person change the way they see the world and how they behave towards other people.



## The Mental Health Act 2007

If you are very unwell and are at risk of harm to yourself, you may be admitted to a psychiatric hospital. You can be admitted as a voluntary, or 'informal', patient. But sometimes if someone is really unwell and they don't think they need or want any help, they may have to be admitted to hospital against their will. This is done under what is called a 'section' of the Mental Health Act.


The Mental Health Act is a law that allows the mental health services to take someone into hospital and give them medication against their will, because otherwise they may come to harm, or harm someone else. They won't be allowed to leave hospital until the doctors have decided they are well enough. The Act applies to children and young people as well as adults.

### Who can help?

If you are worried about your mental health, the first place to go for help is the GP. They may offer you antidepressants or counselling. If they think these won't help, they will refer you to the mental health services, to see a psychiatrist.

There are specialist services for children and young people up to the age of 16 or, in some areas, 18. After that, you will be treated by the adult mental health services.

Mental illnesses are not a life sentence. Lots of people recover from a first episode of schizophrenia and never have another. Some people live with schizophrenia or bi-polar disorder all their life, but still manage to hold down demanding jobs, have a family and live an otherwise perfectly ordinary life.

 If you feel you want to end your life you can ring the Samaritans at any time, any day of the week, on: **08457 90 90 90**

You can download useful information about mental health problems from:

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

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

You can also get more information about mental health problems, including self-harm and eating disorders, from:

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

You can contact other people who have similar problems via these organisations.

### Schizophrenia and psychosis

Hearing Voices Network – information and self-help support for people who hear voices

**[www.hearing-voices.org.uk](http://www.hearing-voices.org.uk)**

### Bipolar disorder

MDF: the Bipolar Organisation

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

### Sexual abuse survivors

Survivors UK

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

NAPAC

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

### Self-harm

The National Self-Harm Network

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

### Eating disorders

bEat (includes special section for young people)

**[www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)**

