

FROM THE HEART

**World Stroke Day –
highlighting NICHS
stroke services**

Get active this autumn

Our new vaping campaign

**The benefits of
seasonal produce**

Autumn 2023

**Chest
Heart &
Stroke**

Hello and welcome to our autumn edition of From the Heart

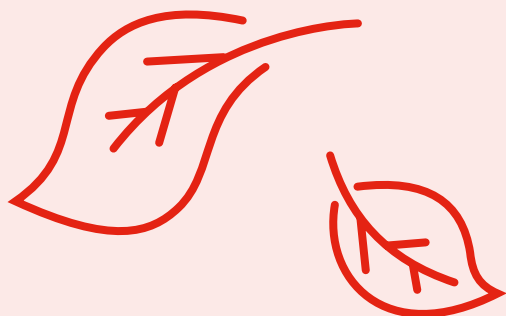
First of all, we would like to say thank you to everyone who completed and returned the feedback survey which we sent out with the summer edition of the magazine. We were delighted with the response rate, and it was great to hear your opinions on what you like about the magazine as well as find out about topics you would like to see covered in From the Heart. We aim to incorporate the feedback into future editions so we can continue to produce a magazine which is both informative and enjoyable for our clients.

In this edition of From the Heart we have lots of great reading. Some of our Care Services Coordinators tell us more about the services they deliver to people and families affected by stroke to mark World Stroke Day. We give lots of great ideas and tips on how to stay active safely this autumn as the colder, darker weather sets in, and we highlight the benefits associated with eating seasonal produce.

We hope you enjoy the magazine. Until next time, take care!

Care Services Team

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke



Highlighting NICHS Stroke Services For World Stroke Day

World Stroke Day is observed every year on 29th October, and we thought this edition of From the Heart was a great opportunity to tell you more about how we can help people affected by stroke and their families. Here, we introduce some of our Care Services Coordinators who tell us a bit more about themselves and the services they deliver.

Family Support From Norma

My name is Norma and I work in the Western Trust, covering Fermanagh. My role involves delivering Family Support as well as facilitating our Wellness Sessions, PREP and Taking Control programmes. In November I will celebrate 20 years of working for NICHS and the time has flown by!



Family Support is normally my first point of contact with a client, when I make a home visit to introduce myself and our services to them and their family. I explain the services we offer, signpost the client on to other organisations who can help and provide information and support. When a client feels ready to attend our services, I am there to support them on their journey. Getting out of the house can be a daunting experience and I hope that coming along and seeing a familiar face makes that experience easier.

During my time with NICHS I have worked with both stroke and respiratory clients and while the conditions may be different, the challenges and concerns people face are similar- worries about future health, the

impact on family and relationships, adapting to change. This is where Family Support can help, providing information for both the client and their family, reassuring them that there is support to help them on their journey and that they are not alone.

In my free time I enjoy running. I normally challenge myself to do a run every day throughout October as autumn is my favorite season. I love seeing the change in the scenery around me as I am out running- the leaves changing colour, the cooler air and the darker skies. I will be taking part in the London Landmarks Half Marathon in April next year. This is a race I have always wanted to take part in, and I thought it was a fitting way to celebrate my 20 years with NICHS.

Carers Education Programme With Lauren

I'm Lauren and I work in the Belfast Trust. I have worked for NICHS since April 2022. I work mainly with stroke survivors who attend our PREP, Wellness Sessions, Taking Control and Carers Education programmes.



I would like to tell you a little bit about our Carers Education Programme. This programme is delivered online with the recent addition of the option to come along face to face as well. The programme is here for you if you are caring for a loved one who has had a stroke. The programme includes Q&A sessions with healthcare experts such as physiotherapists, pharmacists and speech and language therapists. It also provides signposting to other organisations who can give further support and guidance on caring roles.

Your Family Support Coordinator, like Norma, can refer you on to the Carers Education Programme or you can do it yourself via our website by visiting nichs.org.uk/referral

I enjoy delivering the programme and helping and supporting carers on their journey. The peer support within the group is invaluable and it is great to see carers getting answers and advice from the healthcare professionals. A participant once said about the programme, "It's great to know someone is there for both me and my husband. Life is good when you know someone is there for you."

In my spare time I enjoy keeping fit and I am looking forward to the hockey season starting back on Saturday afternoons, playing for my local club. I like Halloween time as it's around my birthday and I have fond childhood memories of ducking for apples, collecting conkers and dressing up using a black bin bag and popping on plastic 'witch' fingers!

Taking Control Programme With Linzi

My name is Linzi, and I have worked for NICHS for nearly 13 years within the Western Trust. One of the programmes I deliver is Taking Control.



The Taking Control Programme is for anyone who wants to learn skills, tips, and positive ways to manage the symptoms of their condition. It is a 6-week course covering a wide variety of topics such as sleep, difficult emotions, better breathing and healthy eating and exercise. I would not hesitate to encourage anyone who is looking to make a positive change to speak to their local Care Services Coordinator about a place on the programme. You can attend face to face or online, whatever works best for you.

I have been delivering Taking Control for 10 years and every time I get something from the programme too. Action planning to achieve goals is hugely motivating and the small successes that participants achieve is infectious- we encourage and cheer not just for ourselves, but for our group. The final week of the programme can be quite emotional as you really see the positive changes in each person, which is a great moment for me as a facilitator. One of my proudest moments was co-delivering the programme with a client who was so inspired by the course she went on to do the training herself!

Chest Heart & Stroke

Outside of work I am a keen runner. I ran the Berlin Marathon last year which was my third marathon. I also enjoy gym classes as I love being a part of such a positive environment. My tip for anyone starting to exercise is to just start slowly and find an exercise you love, be it walking, swimming or just boogying around your living room. I also love cooking and make my own sourdough bread, kombucha (which is a fermented drink) and just for fun, my own butter!

PREP

With Tracey

I am Tracey and I joined the NICHS team in November 2021. Part of my role is to deliver PREP (Post Rehab Exercise Programme) which is a 6-week programme focusing on two aspects – physical activity and education. PREP is designed to support stroke survivors through an evidence-based, physio led, physical activity programme. This is followed by a series of talks which cover useful health and wellbeing information.



PREP is a great programme and can be truly inspiring. I have witnessed the difference it makes to our stroke survivors – in their physical capabilities, their confidence, and their overall emotional wellbeing. For me, the biggest success of this programme is the peer support that the participants give each other.

Another key factor to the success of PREP is the dedication of our wonderful volunteers. They give up their time week in week out to attend our PREP groups, offering assistance and support to the participants. This support can be practical to allow our participants to successfully complete an exercise, for example, counting repetitions. Quite a few of our volunteers are also stroke survivors who have completed PREP themselves. Their first-hand experience of the programme as well as their understanding of what our participants are going through is priceless. That peer support is so important and is great to witness.

Wellness Sessions With Emma

My name is Emma and I have been working in the Southern Trust area for over two years.

Caring for and supporting individuals and families after a stroke is something that resonates with me on a personal level.



My grandad had a stroke in 2019 whilst I was at university. I took some time out from my studies to care for my grandad alongside my family. As a carer, you not only gain a wealth of knowledge regarding the physical side effects of a stroke but also the emotional and mental impact this can have on the individual and their family. Sadly, my grandad passed away soon after his stroke, but I knew I wanted to continue on this journey and help others in a similar position.

I deliver three Wellness Sessions across the Southern Trust. Our Wellness Sessions run fortnightly and aim to incorporate activities that are informative, but also promote a sense of wellbeing and support to each participant. The Wellness Sessions offer people the opportunity to meet others in a similar situation, whether they are living with a condition or caring for someone who is. The sessions are a safe space to chat to others, form friendships and engage with content that is both informative and supportive.

For many of the clients attending my Wellness Sessions, I have worked with them from the first day they started using our services. I have walked alongside them on their journey with NICHS and have seen the progress they have made. Through the Wellness Sessions I see friendships made, progress achieved, and support given which is great.

Get Active This Autumn

There's no doubt about it, activity is good for us all and motion is the lotion we need to move! It benefits our minds and bodies, our mental and physical health and wellbeing.



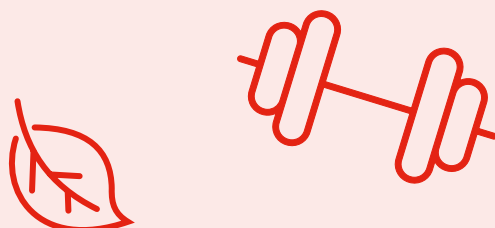
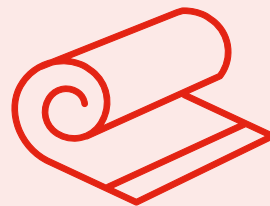
We can find it more difficult in the colder, darker days of autumn and winter however to get motivated and get out and about. Finding ways to be more active at home in a safe way is therefore very important.

Please remember to always follow the advice you have been given by your doctor or healthcare professional in relation to exercise as they will know you and your condition well. The exercise information in From the Heart should not be treated as a substitute for that medical advice. If you are unclear and not sure if it is safe for you to be more active, check with your doctor first.

Here we share some tips on getting more active safely:

- A good place to start if you haven't exercised in some time is getting to know your own body. Keep an activity diary for a week, noting what you already do each day, how much effort it is and how you feel after. That will be different for each of us depending on our ability e.g. "I got washed and dressed, it was no effort, I felt good after and didn't need to rest", or, "It was a lot of effort, I felt slightly out of breath, warm and tired after and it took an hour of rest to recover." Do this for each activity. This gives you a starting point; you know what is normal for you and how active you currently are.
- Next you can use your diary to set small activity goals and record how you are getting on. By looking back in your diary, you should see improvements, and this could really motivate you to keep going.
- Exercise just means moving a little more each day than you normally would. All activity counts, no matter how small. Start slowly and gradually do a little more each week as you get stronger and fitter.

- Find exercises that suit your ability and you enjoy- remember variety is good. You could do your everyday tasks but do them for a little longer or with less help.
- Depending on your ability you can exercise in lying, sitting, or standing. It can be as easy as moving more in your chair, standing up more frequently, walking slightly further, using floor pedals, or moving to music.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing and supportive footwear and keep hydrated.



Chest
Heart &
Stroke

- **Stop exercising immediately and rest if you feel unwell, develop pain, dizziness, or severe shortness of breath. Inform a family member or your carer and seek medical advice.**
- The recommended guideline for adults is that they do at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week- that is about 20-30 minutes per day. Aim to be active every day for 5 or 10 minutes at different stages through the day- it all adds up. If you are exercising at a moderate level, you can still talk as you exercise.

There are lots of online resources with information and ideas on exercise. Pick what suits you and get advice from a professional if you are unsure about anything and do not attempt exercises you are uncomfortable with. Remember, safety first!

- **Sitting exercises** - www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flexibility-exercises/sitting-exercises/
- **Keeping mobile and preventing falls** - <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/keeping-mobile-and-preventing-falls>
- **Stronger my way** - <https://www.csp.org.uk/campaigns-influencing/campaigns/stronger-my-way/i-want-feel-stronger>
- **The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy** - <https://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/keeping-active-and-healthy/love-activity-hate-exercise-campaign>
<https://www.youtube.com/@cspphysiovideos>



Go Walking, It's What To Do, Go Walking, Stepping Out Is Good For You!"

Many of us might remember that ditty from health promotion TV adverts, promoting the benefits of walking no matter the season. Walking has always been lauded for its health benefits for both mind and body. It is great for maintaining or improving physical fitness and tremendous for heart and lung health!

Walking in autumn gives us the chance to enter a world of colourful scenery, increased opportunities to spot wildlife, amazing skies and offers a different experience from the previous season. As the days are shorter and darkness is upon us more quickly however, greater consideration should be given to the potential risks of walking. We still want stepping out to be good for you so read on for some tips on how to plan a safe and enjoyable walk:

- Choose a route before you head out. Somewhere well-lit and well used is preferable, with stopping points and seats along the way in case you need a rest. Don't get caught out by dimming light with the sun setting when you are only halfway home, be prepared!
- Where possible when walking on footpaths try to avoid walking near to the kerb, with your back to traffic. It is safer and easier for you to spot any potential hazards when walking towards the traffic.





- This certainly applies on roads with no paths which is very common in rural areas. Always walk on the right-hand side and be prepared to walk in single file, taking care of verges that drop away. If you are walking into a sharp right-hand bend, where approaching cars will have poor visibility, the highway code advises that walkers should cross to the opposite side of the road until they are around the corner and then cross back again. In essence, for a short period, a pedestrian will be on the 'wrong' side of the road but will ultimately be safer.
- Stay alert and avoid distractions such as phones or headphones when walking on public roads. It is important you are able to hear oncoming traffic or sirens, often before you see them.
- Hi-Vis clothing, reflective armbands etc. are a must to increase the visibility of pedestrians. These are particularly important in bad weather and at those times when dusk turns to dark, and dawn turns to day. Many fetching accessories are available, even for your furry friends, so you can still be fashionable! These reflective materials can be seen by drivers using headlights up to 3 times as far away as non-reflective clothing. Be safe, be seen!
- Weather should always be considered when walking and most of us will have a raincoat and umbrella to hand but it's important to take into account our base layer and footwear. For example, layering clothes will help keep you warm rather than wearing a bulky coat over a t-shirt. Light shoes or trainers may not be equipped for the heavy rain that accompanies autumn and winter. Choose waterproof or water-resistant footwear where possible to protect your feet from getting damp.
- Consider the type of sole your footwear has too. At this time of year it can be lovely to walk through the dry, rust coloured autumnal leaves and hear them crunch underfoot. They are not so nice however when they have been rained upon and turned to mulch! This can be a slip hazard so look for soles with good grip and good ankle support in your footwear.
- Don't forget decent socks have an important role to play too. They cushion and keep your feet warm and also help prevent friction and rubbing between your feet and your shoes, keeping you safe from blisters. Ill-fitting socks that slip down into your shoes will cause blisters or other injuries. The walk becomes more pain than pleasure if your feet are uncomfortable!

So, grab a walking buddy for company, wrap up against the elements and plan for a shorter walk if necessary to avoid bad weather. That buddy could be the motivating factor you need to get you moving when typically, motivation levels wane with the turning of the seasons!

Spotlight On NICHS Cardiac Services

Here, Gillian Thompson our Cardiac Head of Service, gives an update on what has been happening within our cardiac support services over the past few months.

“Our cardiac support services are the most recent addition to NICHS’s care services, and I am currently focusing on developing our service offer to reach even more people in Northern Ireland who are living with a cardiac condition. In the months ahead, I hope to be able to introduce new and innovative services to our cardiac care pathway, all of which will be of support to those living with a cardiac condition and their caregivers.

I want our cardiac services to be informed and shaped by those who understand the needs of this section of our population most of all- that is those living with a cardiac condition and their caregivers. Over 180,000 people in Northern Ireland are living with a circulatory condition and I have been speaking to some of these people to hear their lived experiences and learn from them as to what their needs are and what they think support services should look like. I have also been meeting with academic researchers to make sure that our service offer is evidence based and the most effective it can be. This is very exciting work and already I have learned so much from talking to the real ‘experts’ living in Northern Ireland, particularly those living with a diagnosis of heart failure. I look forward to sharing these developments with you in the months to come.

In late September NICHS attended the European Society for Vascular Surgery Conference which saw members of this European council descend on Belfast for a 3-day learning and networking event. We were delighted to be named as the charity partner for this event. We attended to network with European clinicians but also to meet the general public, complete health checks and share information about the support services we provide.

The conference also coincided with World Heart Day which was on the 29th of September. This global awareness day aims to raise awareness of one of the world’s biggest health concerns- cardiovascular disease.



Conditions that affect the heart or blood vessels such as heart attack, stroke and heart failure kill more than 20.5 million people globally each year. We, of course, want to reduce this number and share the message that there is hope. By making changes to lifestyle, how much we exercise, managing what we eat and drink and learning how to cope with stress, we can better manage our heart health. These secondary prevention themes will run through all the cardiac care services in development whilst also focusing on something we see as vitally important, peer support. We recognise the value and positive impact that meeting others in the same position has on your wellbeing, understanding and resilience and all our service users get a chance to meet others with shared experiences. You have told us that this is one of the key elements to our services that you want to see developed and therefore we will continue to ensure this vital peer support is at the heart of our work.

Should you, or someone you are caring for, wish to hear more about our current cardiac service offer you can check out our website, nichs.org.uk/care-and-support/heart-support, or get in touch with your local Care Services Coordinator to hear more. We would be delighted to tell you about the services currently on offer in your area.”

NICHS Branding At Local Hospitals

We are delighted to have had the opportunity recently to brand walls within a number of local hospitals. The artwork and information hubs allow us to provide patients and their family members with information about our charity and the services we offer. The people featured on our Hall of Hope within the Stroke Ward at the Royal Victoria Hospital are all previous Care service users, willing to share how our charity helped them on their post-stroke recovery journey. We hope these stories will help bring hope to people as they face difficult times.

We have branded walls within the Royal Victoria, Craigavon Area, and Lurgan Hospitals, with plans for Antrim Area Hospital in the near future. We also have comic strip artwork within the asthma clinic at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.



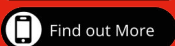
Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

Give a regular donation – make a lasting impact

Help us to be here **supporting local people and families living with life-changing illnesses** - today, tomorrow and for years to come.



Visit www.nichs.org.uk/regulardonation



Charity Reg No. NIC103593



Vaping Campaign

Mum backs our vaping awareness campaign after 12-year-old daughter is admitted to Intensive Care

We recently launched our new vaping awareness campaign which comes as a result of our concern about the number of young people choosing to vape and the misconceptions often associated with vaping.

Fidelma Carter, Head of Public Health at NICHS explains; "A recent survey found that 21%, or one fifth, of young people have used an e-cigarette at least once¹. The survey also highlighted that the number of Year 12s who class themselves as regular e-cigarette users has increased from 6% in 2016 to 17% in 2022."

"The biggest misunderstanding about vapes is that they are harmless compared to cigarettes. This is not true, and this message needs to change to prevent more young people from taking up and getting addicted to vaping because they think they are risk free. The long-term health implications are unknown - just as they once were with tobacco."

"Vapes are designed to deliver vaporised liquids into your lungs when you breathe in. This vapourised liquid isn't water and it almost always contains nicotine, flavours and either/or a combination of humectants such as propylene glycol, vegetable glycerine or glycerol. Many flavours and humectants have been approved in the UK for oral ingestion but not for inhalation. Therefore, the health risk is not well known, when consumed in this manner."

Fidelma continues; "There is also emerging evidence and increasing concerns about the impact of vaping on our lungs, hearts and blood vessels which could lead to future cardiovascular and respiratory illness. We need to cull vaping until we have more research knowledge on the long-term health implications."



"Through our campaign we want to dispel some of the myths around vaping, such as 'It's just flavoured air', and make people aware of the potential dangers associated with it. People may be surprised to learn for example that vapes can contain the same harmful chemicals found in cleaning products, nail polish remover and weed killer. Also, one 20mg disposable vape can have as much as 20 cigarettes worth of nicotine in it. Our campaign includes extensive outdoor, digital and radio advertising."

"Our stance on vaping is that we recommend avoiding the use of vapes other than in a short-term attempt to quit smoking and would urge people, if you don't smoke, don't vape."

Mary Griffin, from Belfast, and her daughter Sarah understand the dangers associated with vaping all too well. They are speaking out in support of our campaign after Sarah was recently admitted to ICU and put in an induced coma after she had been vaping. The mother and daughter now want to raise awareness of the potential dangers of vaping, especially among young people.

Mary explains; "It was a Sunday night, Sarah was getting ready for bed and said she didn't feel great. She started coughing but because Sarah has asthma, we put that down to the change in weather as that has been a trigger for Sarah's asthma before. Her cough was no different from any other time and she used her inhaler and nebuliser throughout the Sunday night into Monday morning."

¹ The Young Persons Behaviour & Attitudes Survey 2022: Substance Use (Smoking, Alcohol & Drugs)
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/young-persons-behaviour-attitudes-survey-2022-substance-use-smoking-alcohol-drugs>

“That morning I was taking my other two children to school when Sarah rang and said, ‘Come back mummy, I don’t feel well, I’m afraid’. I got home, gave Sarah her inhaler and nebuliser again and she seemed to settle. A while later I popped out to the shop quickly and Sarah rang again, this time completely out of breath, barely able to string a sentence together, saying, ‘I need a doctor or to go to hospital’.”

“Her dad immediately took her to the Royal Victoria Hospital. The nurse did Sarah’s vitals, and her oxygen levels were very low. The next thing I knew, Sarah’s dad phoned me to say Sarah was in Resus. I went to the hospital, and Sarah was just terrified. She was on oxygen and was linked up to all sorts of machines. There were medical staff all around and they said she needed to go to ICU as she was deteriorating very quickly.”

Mary continues; “The doctor showed me an X-ray of Sarah’s lungs and explained one had been badly injured. The other was therefore working overtime and aggravating her asthma. Sarah also had an infection, so everything combined had a massive impact on her body, extremely quickly.”

“When we got to ICU the team worked on Sarah for four and a half hours before having to put her into an induced coma. There were tubes, wires, and machines everywhere- it was heart-breaking to see her like that.”

“As her mum I just felt so helpless- it was a nightmare come true. I was terrified there was a real possibility Sarah would not make it. I never thought something like this would happen to us, you never do.”



The medical team worked on Sarah around the clock, but it was a difficult journey. Sarah had machines breathing for her and she was very

unstable for a few days. Once doctors got Sarah stabilised, they were able to explain to Mary what had happened and how at risk her daughter had been. Mary says; “The doctors explained that if Sarah hadn’t of been vaping, she would have been in a better position to fight off the infection. Vaping had left her lungs very weak.”

“The doctors said if Sarah had of got to hospital any later the outcome would have been entirely different. That is something I can’t even think about.”

Thankfully Sarah is recovering but the effects of what happened to her will unfortunately be long-term. Mary explains; “Sarah will be classed as a high-risk patient if she is admitted to hospital for the rest of her life because of the effect this has had on her physically. Sarah was discharged with steroids, new inhalers, and a new Personal Asthma Action Plan to help manage her asthma. She has also been transferred to the care of the Difficult to Control Asthma Clinic at The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, when previously her asthma was well controlled.”

“The mental impact has been as big as the physical impact. She has been through such a trauma. She still has a long road ahead of her, but we are just so grateful to have her back home with us.”

Talking of her support for our vaping awareness campaign Mary says; “What Sarah has experienced could easily happen to other young people, and we don’t want that which is why we’re sharing our story and supporting NICHS’s vaping campaign.”

“We want other young people to see the potential impact vaping can have as it will hopefully make them think twice about doing it. The photos of Sarah in ICU are hard to look at, but we think it’s important people see these and get a better understanding of the possible dangers. Sarah says that if sharing her story helps save another young person and their family going through the same thing we have then it’s worth doing.”

For further information and support about vaping visit nichs.org.uk/vaping

Chest
Heart &
Stroke

The Benefits Of Seasonal Fruit And Vegetables

Eating a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables is a cornerstone of a healthy diet and seasonal produce offers a number of benefits including:

- **Nutrient rich** - seasonal fruits and vegetables are at their peak in terms of flavour and nutritional content. They are packed with essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants which are beneficial for heart health.
- **Cost effective** - buying in-season produce is usually more budget-friendly as these items are abundant and readily available.
- **Reduced environmental impact** - choosing seasonal produce can help reduce the carbon footprint associated with food transportation as it often requires fewer air miles to reach your plate.

Fruit and vegetables that are in season during autumn and winter include apples, pears, squash, leeks, kale (which is packed with lots of heart-healthy nutrients), potatoes, along with many more. It can be challenging however to always choose fresh produce and thankfully there are alternatives, such as frozen and canned options, that offer numerous benefits. Frozen and canned fruit and vegetables are often thought of as the 'ugly sister' of fresh produce. People think they are not healthy, but the truth is there are a number of benefits to using frozen and canned items. Frozen fruit and vegetables are picked and often frozen straight away, locking in nutrients. They can be a more convenient option, are practical and produce less waste.

Growing your own fruit and vegetables is also an option, even in small spaces. This allows you to enjoy fresh produce at its peak and reduce your reliance on imported items. Additionally, you can freeze excess produce to enjoy throughout the year. Many vegetables can be grown in our climate but it's important when growing your own fruit and vegetables that you check when they need to be planted. If it's not the correct season, consider getting a deep planter and setting in front of a window in your house.

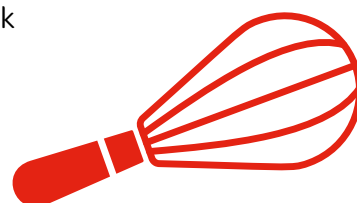
Maintaining a healthy diet throughout the year is possible by embracing the variety of fruits and vegetables available in every season. While fresh produce is ideal, frozen and canned alternatives offer numerous benefits and can be enjoyed guilt-free. By making informed choices, considering the environmental impact of your food, and even growing your own, you can support both your health and the planet. So, whether it's a fresh summer salad or a cosy winter dessert, there are delicious and healthy options for every season.

Here is a seasonal recipe for butternut squash and sweet potato soup which can be easily made in the oven.



Ingredients

- 700g mix of butternut squash and sweet potato
- 1 red onion
- 1 large carrot
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 2 slices smoked bacon
- 750ml ham stock
- 15 ml milk



Method

1. Turn the oven on to 180°C/200°C/gas 6 and line a large baking tray with greaseproof paper.
2. Roughly chop all the vegetables into chunks and arrange on the tray.
3. Drizzle over the olive oil, add the nutmeg, chilli powder and cinnamon and mix with the vegetables.
4. Trim the fat off the bacon, cut into strips and layer on top of the vegetables.
5. Roast in the oven for 45/50 minutes, tossing the mixture occasionally during cooking.
6. Bring the ham stock to the boil in a pot and add all the roasted vegetables.
7. Blitz all ingredients until smooth, adding milk to reach the desired consistency.
8. This soup is delicious served with a wholemeal roll or bread.



Why Is It Important To Have Wholegrains?

Wholegrains are a great way to increase our fibre intake which is important for our health as it provides some essential vitamins and minerals.

What Counts As Wholegrain?

- Wholemeal or wholegrain bread
- Wholewheat pasta
- Brown rice
- Wholegrain breakfast cereal
- Porridge oats
- Grains such as bulgur wheat, pearl barley, quinoa

By making simple changes we can fit wholegrains into our everyday diet and feel better for it!

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

Your legacy of hope and care - a gift in your Will.

A gift in your Will could not only help your loved ones but can leave a legacy of hope for generations to come.

In Northern Ireland four in ten adult deaths are caused by chest, heart and stroke illnesses. We're working hard to change this by funding life-changing research and caring for those who are affected by devastating health conditions every day.

We've been helping local people for over 75 years, and with your help we can continue to be there for people who need us now, as well as those who will need us in the future.

Please visit nichs.org.uk/giftsinwills for further information on leaving a gift in your Will to NICHs or call us on 028 9032 0184.

Preventing, Supporting, Caring and Rebuilding across Northern Ireland.

**Chest
Heart &
Stroke**

Breathing Better With Help From NICHS



World COPD Day is on 15th November and here we highlight the work of our Breathing Better team and the services we offer people living with a respiratory condition.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the name used to describe several long-term lung problems, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema, which can make breathing difficult. It develops slowly over many years, and you may not be aware you have it at first. Most people with COPD do not develop symptoms until they are in their late 40s or 50s. The most common symptoms are a persistent cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, chest infections and production of mucus and phlegm.

Almost 43,000 people have been diagnosed with COPD in Northern Ireland and as many as 24,000 people could be living with it undiagnosed. Many of these people have mild or moderate COPD but if they were diagnosed early, they could take the necessary steps to manage the disease and improve their outcomes.

COPD is progressive and cannot be cured, however with timely and accurate diagnosis, and supportive ongoing management, the impact of the disease can be reduced.

Here are some of the ways our Breathing Better service can help people living with COPD and other respiratory conditions.

Wellness Sessions

Our monthly Wellness Sessions are a great way for respiratory service users to come together and support one another. The sessions are led by NICHS Care Services Coordinators and are supported by our fantastic team of volunteers. The atmosphere at our wellness sessions is welcoming, relaxed and comfortable. The sessions allow people with similar conditions and problems to chat, share experiences, hints and tips and provide peer support.

A facilitator is also arranged for every session who will focus on a health and wellbeing topic. Topics covered are wide ranging- in the past we have had breathing experts, musicians, meditation facilitators and dietitians, as well as sessions from the PSNI, Consumer Council and NICHS Health Promotion team, to name a few!

Seasonal Walking Groups

From April to September, NICHS respiratory walking groups run in various locations throughout Northern Ireland. The walking groups take place in local parks which provide ample parking, toilet facilities, benches and most importantly, which are flat! Volunteers help out at the groups to ensure a safe, supportive environment for everyone that comes along.

Everyone is welcome at our walking groups. Getting outside and being social is the most important thing- the exercise almost takes care of itself! You can walk as far as you like and are comfortable with. There is no pressure, at our walking groups we are there to support each other and have fun.

Inspire Choir

Whether you are an Adele soundalike or love singing but don't quite hit the right notes every time, it doesn't matter, our Inspire Choir is great fun, and you will leave feeling positive and happy!

Inspire Choir provides a great option for working on lung health in a different way. Singing is fantastic for our lung health- it works our lung capacity and puts our diaphragm through its paces.

Our Inspire Choir meets once a month at Cityside Retail Park in Belfast as well as online via Zoom. The session is delivered by Karen with her expert piano playing and fantastic singing voice. Choir members are given a choice of songs to sing along to and this changes throughout the year, reflecting seasonal themes, holidays etc.

Education Programme

This is a 4-week programme delivered by our Care Services Coordinators which covers a variety of different topics including respiratory conditions, medication, diet, and sleep. The course aims to equip people with a better understanding of their respiratory condition and improved confidence in how to best manage it. The education programme also provides a great opportunity for participants to share information and support others.

Don't just take it from us that our Breathing Better service is great however- take it from one of our service users! Raymond McCrory is 69 and lives in Conlig, County Down. He has been living with COPD for over 25 years and has been an NICHS service user for many years. Raymond's experience with NICHS has been so positive that he is always interested in new services that become available and has sampled nearly everything we have to offer.



Zoom was a lifeline for me and others. I was able to stay connected and take part in weekly programmes. I didn't know what Zoom was until NICHS introduced me to it!"

Raymond was able to continue to benefit from NICHS support during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 through our online services.

It allowed me to see how other people with different conditions such as stroke experience life. For me it was the best programme I have completed, and I got a lot out of it."

Raymond speaking about his Taking Control Self-Management Programme experience.

It's great that I can use Zoom to take part in the Inspire Choir. My mic is on mute, so I don't disturb anyone - one day my cat wasn't so keen and jumped up and ran away when I was singing!"

Raymond says he loves the effect the singing through Inspire Choir is having on his lung health. And it is great craic!

This was a fantastic forum to brush up on my condition because I was aware I had been developing bad habits over recent years."

Raymond found taking part in our Education Programme helpful.

I wouldn't want to miss any sessions as I enjoy meeting and socialising with people with similar issues. The social side is hard to measure but it is invaluable."

Raymond is a regular attendee at the monthly Wellness Sessions in Newtownards.

Chest
Heart &
Stroke

Almost 90% of our income
comes from public donations.

**Find out how you can support us at
www.nichs.org.uk**

Follow us:

 Facebook: www.facebook.com/NorthernIrelandChestHeartandStroke

 Twitter: @nichstweet

 Instagram: @nichestheartandstroke

 LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/nichs

 TikTok: @nichestheartandstroke

 YouTube: www.youtube.com/nichestheartstroke

 Threads: @nichestheartandstroke

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

21 Dublin Road, Belfast BT2 7HB

t. 028 9032 0184

www.nichs.org.uk



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Gold

