



# Employee Wellbeing

**Keeping your workforce well during the current pandemic, whether they are key workers, working from home or furloughed.**



To learn more about our services visit:  
**[nichs.org.uk](https://nichs.org.uk)**

The logo for 'Chest Heart & Stroke' is written in a white, handwritten-style font inside a red, teardrop-shaped circle.

Chest  
Heart &  
Stroke

# Healthy Eating

**Eating a healthy, balanced diet based on The Eatwell Guide can help you maintain a healthy weight and immune system, and protect against cardiovascular disease. Here are some tips for ensuring you're getting a good diet while working during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**1. Don't skip breakfast** – A healthy balanced breakfast will keep you going until lunch time. Examples include porridge topped with fruit, poached eggs on wholegrain toast or low sugar wholegrain cereals.

**2. Eat at regular intervals** – Eating 3 meals per day with healthy snacks in between, if needed, can help sustain energy levels, blood sugar levels and metabolism. Routine can also help reduce anxiety in stressful situations.

**3. Keep hydrated** – Aim to drink 6- 8 glasses of fluid per day. Water is best and lower fat milk, sugar free drinks, tea and coffee all count. Be careful how much caffeine you drink in one day.

**4. Try new recipes** – If you are spending more time at home, experiment with some new healthy recipes. If you need inspiration, check out the NICHS recipe book.

**5. Write a shopping list** – Only buy what you need based on the meals you have planned for the week. Remember to check your cupboards to keep track of what you already have.

**6. Home delivery** – Take advantage of local food suppliers offering home deliveries of fresh local ingredients.

**7. Be mindful of portion size** – Being at home for extended periods with limited activities can lead to overeating. Limit the amount of highly processed food you buy when you're shopping.

**8. Tinned & Frozen are as good as fresh** – Use tinned lentils, beans, vegetables and fruit (in juice rather than syrup) and also make use of your freezer. This can make preparing healthy, balanced meals a lot easier and cheaper. As we are going out to the shops less frequently, be mindful of the food you buy and how it is stored.





# Alcohol

**As so many of us are now spending more time at home, and searching for ways to relax during these uncertain times, it's important not to let your alcohol consumption creep up.**

**Recommendations** – To reduce your risk, try to limit your alcohol consumption to no more than **14 units a week** and plan some alcohol-free days during the week.

**What is a unit?** – A unit is a measurement of the amount of alcohol in an alcoholic drink.

**Keep track** – Try to keep track of your units of alcohol while drinking at home. Download the app 'Know your units' to help track how much you may be drinking at home.

**Make a plan** – Don't stockpile alcohol in your home. Instead plan how much alcohol you are buying in your weekly shop. Choose low alcohol and no alcohol choices.

**Alcohol free activities** – Think of other activities to help you relax, such as reading, watching a film or chatting to family & friends.

**Children** – Keep alcohol out of sight of children and be mindful of not drinking alcohol around children. Always make sure there is at least one nondrinking adult in the house at all times.

Find support services in your local area at **[www.drugsandalcoholni.info](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info)**



# Stress

**During this time of uncertainty, it is normal to feel stressed or worried. These five simple steps can help you to look after and improve your mental wellbeing.**

**1. Connect** – Keep in contact with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, particularly those that live alone, using online video tools and telephone. Remember that constant news/social media updates may increase your stress levels. Only view credible sources, and it may be helpful to limit how often you check these.

**2. Be active** – Regular physical activity can benefit both your physical and mental health. Find something you enjoy. Take time for physical activity including exercise outdoors in line with government advice, or try out online physical activity classes at home. Remember that gardening and housework also count.

**3. Take notice** – Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings and be kind to yourself. Let go of what you can't control and focus on what you can control. Try out some of our online Stress Management tools, which include videos on breathing techniques, reframing and mindful cooking.

**4. Keep learning** – Take time to relax by learning a new skill. Learn a new language online, try a new recipe, listen to a podcast on a topic you want to learn more about. This gives us a sense of achievement, and increases our confidence and enjoyment.

**5. Give** – Giving our time and helping others also boosts our own wellbeing. Try a random act of kindness such as delivering groceries/ medication for someone that can't leave the house. Don't forget by staying at home you are helping your community and the health service.

**If you are struggling at this time, please seek help. Local support services can be found [here](#).**



# Physical activity

**Physical activity can help to reduce your risk of developing cardiovascular disease, maintain an effective immune system and boost our mental & physical wellbeing.**

## How much activity do I need?

### Moderate-intensity aerobic activity

Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.



### Muscle-strengthening activity

Do activities that make your muscles work harder than usual.



## Ideas for keeping active:

Set up a new routine and plan physical activity into your day at regular intervals.

- Exercise outdoors in line with current Government advice, for example go for a brisk walk, cycle, jog or run.
- If working from home, try and reduce the amount of time spent sitting. Every hour stand and stretch - check out this video for some tips.
- Limit the time also spent sitting watching TV, playing on the computer and scrolling through social media.
- Be active with friends and family. Connect remotely to take part in an online physical activity class. This can help boost motivation levels and is great fun!
- Doing any activity around the home is better than doing nothing at all. Remember that housework, gardening and washing the car all count.
- If you are not regularly active, start slowly and under advice of a GP.



# Sleep

**Better sleep is the single best contributor to living better. During the current pandemic a change in your daily routine, heightened levels of stress and anxiety and excess screen time are only some of the factors that can impact on sleep quality.**

## Why is sleep important?

Sleep is critical to physical health. Good sleep can help reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease and improve the health of your immune system. It also plays an important role in good mental health.

## How much sleep do you need?

Everyone is different, and sleep will vary with age, however as a guideline:

- Adults (18-64 years) should aim for 7-9 hours of sleep
- Older adults (64+years) should aim for 7-8 hours of sleep.

## Tips for a good night's sleep

- **Start your day off with time outdoors**  
– this helps to reset your sleep cycle
- **Reduce caffeine throughout the day**  
– no more than 400mg for adults or 200mg during pregnancy
- **Take time to unwind in the evening**  
– try a mindfulness app or yoga online class
- **Establish a bedtime routine**  
– This should include wind down time, bed time and wake up time. Try to stay in the same routine at the weekends.
- **Limit technology and screen time**  
– Electronic devices emit an artificial blue light, which leads to a delay in release of the sleep hormone. This can lead to problems falling asleep or staying asleep.
- **Create a calm, relaxed space to go to sleep**  
– Your bedroom shouldn't be an extension to the rest of your home. Don't use it as a living room, kitchen or work space.





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