

Better You

Apr–Jun 2019

Win!
A spa package for two p.8

Inside

Simple ways to save yourself a trip to hospital

Help your child get confident with their hands

Get the most out of your health appointments

The latest health and wellbeing apps

“Believe in yourself”

Finding fitness at 75: the secret of success



Health and wellbeing advice, brought to you
by your local NHS community services provider

Editor's letter

Welcome to this edition of BetterYou. It's so important to us here at Bristol Community Health to help you and your family look after your own health. Read on for some advice and inspiration.

Andre, one of our fantastic volunteers, talks about how he's become a gym lover at 75 – and how he's now motivating people with lung conditions to get on the move (p.4).

If you look after children and want to help them feel more confident with things like buttons and cutlery, have a look at the tips on p.6.

We've also got advice from our REACT team (p.3) to keep you safe at home. They're based in A&E to stop people getting admitted to hospital when they don't need to be, so they know what they're talking about!

And we're giving away a dinner and spa package for two at Thermae Bath Spa, so turn to the back page and find out how to enter. Good luck!

C Madsen

Claire Madsen

Deputy clinical director and consultant physiotherapist



Preparing for an appointment

You manage your own health 24/7, but you might only see a healthcare professional a few times a year. Make every minute count, says Claire Valsler

- ✓ Bring some notes with you to help you remember the things you want to discuss. List the symptoms you are concerned about, in order of importance. Think about whether you need to book a separate appointment to cover everything.
- ✓ Keep a daily diary tracking symptoms, including when they started, how they affect your life, and what makes them better or worse. Be specific. Track what effect medications have. Bring your diary along with you, along with a list of current medications.
- ✓ Consider any extra support you might need at your appointment. Do you need to book an interpreter, or have any other communication support? Would it help to bring someone else with you?

Next time

Making sure your voice is heard at your appointment

Claire (right) has several long-term conditions and has become an expert at managing her own health. Have a look at our film at bit.ly/shared-decisions to hear her story.



Stay safe at home

There are simple things you can do to be safer at home and prevent a trip to hospital, says Amanda Bennett from our REACT team.



1 Take regular pain relief

Many patients battle on without regular pain relief. Basic medication like paracetamol stops pain escalating if taken at regular intervals, and may help you manage without needing more help.

2 Stay hydrated

A quarter of people over 55 say they do not drink any water during the day, according to research. This has a knock-on effect on all bodily systems. If you are an older person, dehydration can lead to urine infections, confusion and falls – and can damage your kidneys.

3 Make sure your shoes fit

Something as simple as badly fitting footwear can cause falls. As you age, mobility and agility changes, along with the way you walk. You might find it harder to pick up your feet. Be aware of changes in your stride, and adapt. Get comfortable footwear that helps you walk safely. If you have swollen feet, consider finding shoes and slippers with velcro fastenings.

4 Wear your personal alarm

If you have one, wear it – and don't be afraid to press it! Lying down for a long time after a fall can lead to other complications. Make sure it's always within reach.

5 Declutter!

Did you know that 1 or 2 people in every 100 have a problem with hoarding? Clutter can make it hard to get around, keep things clean and make repairs. Keep doors, stairs and halls clear to reduce the risk of falls – and so you can be reached in an emergency. Remove unnecessary rugs and watch out for hanging bedding.

Tackle clutter in stages so it doesn't feel overwhelming. Prioritise your most valued things and get help if you need it.

6 Plan ahead

Don't wait until you are nearly out of medications before re-ordering. A delay might mean you need

medical help. If you have a lung condition, keep a supply of inhalers in case you have a sudden flare-up. Don't over-stock, though, as medications can't be re-used once they are dispensed.

7 Get support if you're lonely

Loneliness affects a fifth of the UK population, and it's linked to dementia, heart disease, depression and more.

wellaware.org.uk has local groups to join or you can volunteer at **do-it.org**. If you're an older person, contact U3A at **u3a.org.uk**; Community Navigators Bristol at **communitynavigators.org.uk**; or the Silverline support line on 0800 4 70 80 90.

Learn more

 Age UK has advice on falls, footcare and wellbeing: ageuk.org.uk/information-advice

Tech round up App reviews by our staff*

mypossibleself.com

"A great mental health app, which aims to reduce symptoms of anxiety, stress and low mood. There are free activities that you can do at your own pace, techniques to help you, and the mood tracker finds out about your day to help identify trends." Laura, Performance team

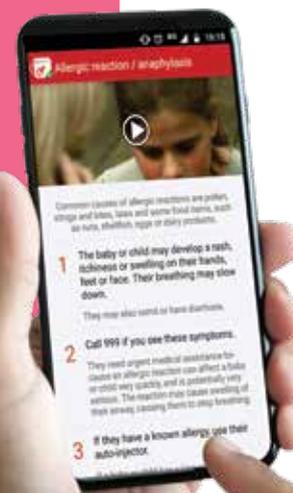
Drink free days: nhs.uk/oneyou/apps

"This app aims to help you to have more days without drinking, and to cut down. Very motivating to watch the calories and money saved stacking up! The daily tips also helped me stay on track." Amy, Communications team

Baby & child first aid redcross.org.uk/first-aid

"Tips, animations and videos from the Red Cross. Reputable advice to help in most first aid situations, like choking, broken bones and more." Victoria, school nurse

*Apps featured are not necessarily endorsed by Bristol Community Health



“Be bold, be brave – and believe in yourself”

How Andre went from battling for breath to gym hero at 75 – and is passionate about helping older people to challenge themselves.

The first sign that something was up was my coughing. My daughter kept nagging me about it. The stairs were suddenly really hard. I always used to walk fast, but suddenly it was too much. It just felt like there was something wrong with my lungs.

I worked in factories that made lead, and I used to smoke – it can't have helped. The doctor put me on inhalers, and we tried a few other things. Then I was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a lung condition, in about 2015.

Wake-up call

I had always promised myself that

I would start exercising, go to the gym. But somehow I never did. Then I got the diagnosis of COPD, and also had a heart attack. That was a real wake-up call. I thought: “Hey, hold on a minute! I want a telegram from the Queen!”. I realised that I wanted to live a lot longer than I was on track to live.

So I threw myself into the pulmonary rehabilitation course run by Bristol Community Health's Community Respiratory Team. On the course the nurses and physios educate you about the condition, put together an activity plan, and then help you to exercise at the gym. They encourage you to get out of breath safely, which improves activity

levels and then in turn reduces the breathlessness. The idea is that you gain the confidence to keep active after the course, and get more control over your condition.

I didn't realise how much I would enjoy the exercise, and how quickly it would start helping me. After the course I kept going to the gym, and now I go four times a week. I really enjoy the social side of it too. I live on my own, so it's great to get involved with people again.

Since I've been exercising, I feel 1,000% better than I ever felt since before I was diagnosed with COPD, even. I've got muscles now! I do still get out of breath, but I can handle it. I feel as if I'm more on top of my condition.

It's spurred me on to eat more healthily, too. I do lots of wok cooking now, with fish and chicken – I don't eat any red meat any more. I used to eat a two-litre tub of ice cream a week! But now I only have one or two scoops a week. I can't completely give up ice cream though...

Motivating others

I really want to say a big thank



Ceinwen (r), respiratory nurse, helps a COPD patient on the pulmonary rehab course



“I thought: ‘Hey, hold on a minute! I want a telegram from the Queen!’. I realised that I wanted to live a lot longer than I was on track to live.”

Andre (r) is a volunteer ‘exercise buddy’, and helps motivate other people to get more active.

Learn more

 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the name for a group of lung conditions that cause breathing difficulties. It includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. It’s a common condition and many people don’t realise they have it. The breathing problems tend to get gradually worse over time and can limit normal activities, although treatment can help keep the condition under control. [nhs.uk/conditions](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

you to the Community Respiratory team, because now I’ve progressed so much that I’m in the position to give something back. So I’ve started volunteering as an exercise buddy to support new people starting the rehab course. I see them wandering round the gym – looking just like I used to. Starting to exercise at a gym can feel daunting, but it doesn’t take long to get confident on the equipment.

You can do it all at home too. If you have a floor, or stairs, or a chair, then you’ve got something to exercise on. There are plenty of things you can do on the first step or holding onto the back of a chair.

As a society, we don’t help older people because we say: “Slow down! Take it easy! You aren’t as young as you used to be!” Then they start feeling scared. If you are an older person – even if you have COPD – you need to be active or your problems will get worse.

Believe in yourself. Just start slowly. Get advice from your GP if you need it. Once you’re a little bit fitter, you won’t get out of breath so much. I’m an exercise junky now, but to start with I couldn’t do 10 minutes.

And if you care about an older person or someone with a lung condition, give them faith in themselves.



Get support

Our Community Respiratory Service is a team of nurses, physiotherapists and support staff who help people with chronic respiratory conditions. We treat patients at home to prevent hospital admission and help people get home from hospital sooner. The team provides pulmonary rehabilitation, a programme of personalised exercises and education to help patients understand and manage their own condition.

To receive COPD support from the team at home you’ll need to be referred by a healthcare professional. You can refer yourself to pulmonary rehab if you have a chronic respiratory condition. Call 0117 961 7159 or visit [briscomhealth.org.uk/our-services/copd](https://www.briscomhealth.org.uk/our-services/copd)

Fam!ly

8 ways to help your child use their hands

Does your child struggle to button up their cardigan? Do they make a meal out of cutlery? Louise Race, occupational therapist, has some tips for developing fine motor skills.

Fine motor skills are the movements made by small muscles in our hands, wrists and fingers. They help us to hold and press things, or pick things up between finger and thumb. Help your child improve their fine motor skills with these simple activities.

1 Make things out of playdough

Encourage your child to explore the playdough, pulling it apart, poking it and rolling it. Use utensils and cutters to make different shapes.

2 Draw, colour-in and paint

Not just pens and pencils – use crayons, chalk or paint to spark their senses. You don't have to draw on paper. If you want to get messy, you could use chalks outside or use other materials like shaving foam.

3 Use tweezers or large kitchen tongs

Start a game where you use a pair of kitchen tongs or large tweezers to pick up some small objects like

sultanas, pasta, buttons and coins. See if you can all put them into a bowl without dropping any.

4 Cutting with scissors

Draw shapes to cut around, and try cutting up playdough with scissors. Use scissors which are suitable for the age-group, and remember to get some left-handed scissors if needed. You can also buy spring loaded scissors which help to develop the action required for cutting.

5 Bathtime play

Use different-sized cups to fill and pour out. Find sponges or squeaky rubber toys to squeeze. Bath crayons and shaving foam are also good fun (and messy!).

6 Sand play

Like bathtime, use cups to fill and pour out. Scoop and dig with spoons. Draw pictures and build things. If you're inside, kinetic sand is a great alternative.

7 Threading

Thread different sizes of pasta or beads onto strings, laces and pipe cleaners. Practise tying knots and bows in the string.

8 Construction toys

Play games which need lots of pushing and pulling with fingers. This might include building bricks – any toys which need small pieces connected or built.

Get support



If you think your child has significant difficulties with their movement or ability to undertake everyday tasks, please call our physiotherapy and occupational therapy helpline, which is available on 07917 3931969 between 9am-12pm on Wednesdays. For more information about local services for children visit cchp.nhs.uk

Community services in partnership

People in Bristol and surrounding areas are set to benefit from more seamless community services in the future, following a new partnership between Bristol Community Health and North Somerset Community Partnership (NSCP).

The two organisations will merge later this year, subject to a successful joint bid for the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire adults' community healthcare contract. The news follows the local clinical commissioning group's decision to appoint a single provider to run the service from April 2020.

Julia Clarke, chief executive of Bristol Community Health, said: "Merging with NSCP puts us in the best possible position to win this tender, for the benefit of local people and staff who want to see local healthcare delivered by local not-for-profit providers. Put simply, we are stronger together."

Learn more



We'll keep you informed about the partnership in future editions of BetterYou. In the meantime, stay up to date on the news pages of our website, briscomhealth.org.uk, search Briscomhealth on Twitter and Facebook, or call 0117 440 9000.

£50,000 funding for local projects

Groups that bring children and older people together, nurture young people, provide peer support for new mums, and help homeless people are just some of the local projects which have been awarded grants by Bristol Community Health and North Somerset Community Partnership (NSCP) this year.

The total amount donated to 22 projects this year was £50,000.

"What unites these initiatives is a drive to help local people to become happier and healthier," said Matthew Areskog, Bristol Community Health's head of patient and public empowerment.

"We're so excited to hear about the progress these brilliant projects make this year, and how they'll make a real difference to local people," he said.



Tuberculosis: learning the signs

Dedicated to raising awareness about TB in the community, our specialist nurses were out and about in Easton in February. Our Health Links interpreters were on hand to help too.

Get support



Health Links offers interpreting for people accessing healthcare. Get in touch on 0117 902 7115 or healthlinks@nhs.net



Win: spa package and dinner for 2

Enter our competition to win a twilight soak plus a meal at Thermae Bath Spa

The prize A Twilight package for two: an atmospheric evening in the heart of Bath at Thermae Bath Spa. Watch the gradual change in light as you bathe in the warm, mineral-rich waters and enjoy the spa facilities. You'll also have a light meal in the Springs Café & Restaurant. Available Monday to Friday from 5pm.

How to enter Go to www.bit.ly/bath-spa-prize and answer a few questions about BetterYou – that's it!

By when? Midnight Friday 17 May, 2019



The prize is a Twilight For Two voucher at Thermae Bath Spa, Hot Bath St, Bath BA1 1SJ. The winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries and will be contacted by Tuesday 21 May, 2019. If they cannot be contacted by 28 May, we reserve the right to choose an alternative winner. Only one entry per person. Prize is non-transferable with no cash alternative. Competition not open to employees of Bristol Community Health. Terms and conditions specific to the prize will be given to the winner.

Who are we?

Bristol Community Health is your local provider of NHS-funded community health services, which include diabetes care, physiotherapy, dermatology, community nursing, children's speech and language therapy, health visiting, tackling loneliness, prison healthcare and much more. We are not for profit and 100% owned by our employees. All of our surpluses are reinvested back into services for the good of our community.



News in brief

Pressure ulcer innovation

Our wound care service, which supports people with slow-healing wounds, has been shortlisted for a 2019 Journal of Wound Care Award in innovation.

Stepping up: development for BAME staff

Congratulations to our first graduates of the Stepping Up programme, which provides opportunities to develop talented people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

First birthday for SPA

It's now been a year since we launched single point of access (SPA), the first 24-hour community referral service in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. It's a telephone and digital referral centre which gives patients quicker and easier access to our healthcare services.



**Bristol
Community
Health**

Want to find out more about our services and how to access them? Interested in working with us? Visit briscomhealth.org.uk. Need this newsletter in another format or language? Get in touch.

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