

# PATIENT NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2021

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#### New Year, New You

At the turn of the year, many of us will start to think about the changes we'd like to make in the coming months. With almost a year of social distancing and restrictions, some of us have got fitter and lost weight. For others, they've lost fitness or gained weight. If that's you and you'd like to do something about it, why not consider the NHS weight loss plan? It's a free 12-week plan, and with over 7 million downloads, you'll be in good company.

Additionally, if you're trying to lose weight, a low-fat diet could help you. Fat is higher in calories than protein or carbohydrate per gram, so changing what you eat can make a big difference over time. If you have Type 2 Diabetes, losing weight can make a huge difference to your overall health.



Restrictions have meant that, for many of us, we haven't exercised how and where we normally would. If you're missing out on the gym, the NHS has a brilliant suite of fitness videos for you to follow at home. From aerobic to strength training, there's something for everyone.



<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/start-the-nhs-weight-loss-plan/>  
<https://www.diabetes.co.uk/diet/low-fat-diet.html>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>

## Dry January

If you think you might be drinking a bit more alcohol than you should, you might want to consider some of the tips the NHS has to offer to help you cut down. Alcohol can have a negative impact on your health and well-being. For others, just cutting down won't be enough.

You might have decided to cut alcohol out of your life completely. For some people, it's not a lifestyle choice; it's a necessity. 'Drink Aware' has advice about removing alcohol from your life safely. This is particularly important if you're drinking heavily on a regular basis. If you think you might be dependent on alcohol and could use some support, please ask to speak to one of the GPs; we're always here to help support positive changes.

If you think a temporary change in alcohol consumption might be just the ticket as a reset after the festive season, Alcohol Change UK has 'Dry January' lined up for you. With participants reporting benefits such as saving money and improved sleep, there's never been a better time to take a break.



<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/tips-on-cutting-down-alcohol/>  
<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice...nking/how-to-stop-drinking-alcohol-completely>  
<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/dry-january>

## Blood donation

Blood donation is a vital part of life-saving treatments for many people each year. Blood donation sessions are continuing despite coronavirus restrictions, and if you haven't considered donating before, now might be the time to think about signing up. To sign up, you need to be aged between 17 and 66, unless you've donated blood before.



In a progressive change, from the summer of 2021, gay men who have had the same partner for more than three months will be able to give blood.

Giving blood isn't the only way you can help. If you're over 17 and have had coronavirus (a positive test or symptoms), you might be able to donate plasma to help people who are seriously unwell with COVID-19. If this is something you might consider, then contact NHS Blood and Transplant; you can see the details on the link provided below:

<https://www.blood.co.uk/> <https://www.blood.co.uk/who-can-give-blood/men-who-have-sex-with-men/>  
<https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/how-you-can-help/convalescent-plasma-clinical-trial/>

## **Brew Monday (20th January)**

Shorter darker days can have a negative impact on mental health and resilience. For many of us, 2020 was a long, challenging year! Sometimes just hearing a friendly voice is all you need when you're feeling down. Why not reach out to friends and relatives who might be finding things difficult? Even if we can't meet easily for a cuppa, you can arrange to have a virtual cuppa and put the world to rights together. After all, they do say that a problem shared is a problem halved.



Sometimes, you get a little niggles that someone you know isn't on top form, but you can't quite put your finger on what's worrying you. The Samaritans have a little tips leaflet to help and support you in identifying whether someone is finding life challenging, and ways to open up a conversation with them.

<https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/brew-monday/>  
<https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/brew-monday/brew-monday-downloadable-resources/>

## **Sugar Awareness Week**

We know that the Christmas celebrations are over for another year, and given the restrictions we're all living under, Christmas might have looked a bit different this time. How much sugar did you eat, though? Most of us won't have given that a second thought. Even reasonably modest portions through the day can add up to a bumper sugar rush. If you take a look at this average Christmas Day guide to sugar, produced by Bupa, you might be surprised to see just how much sugar your body has had to deal with during a 24-hour period.



Healthline and the NHS have useful guides to help you cut down on sugar in your diet.

We've talked about the amount of sugar in your diet, but does it matter what type of sugar you eat? Yes, it does! The Harvard Medical School has some handy information to help you make informed choices about sugar.

<https://www.bupa.co.uk/dental/dental-care/news/sugar-on-christmas-day>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/sugar-detox-symptoms>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-cut-down-on-sugar-in-your-diet/>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/stay...gar-habit-and-help-your-health-in-the-process>