

# Your Health

 Health Partners

OCTOBER 2022  
NEWSLETTER

## STOPTOBER & WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY:

*Facts, advice and tips*



**T**he month of October has been linked to the national campaign to help people stop smoking since 2012 when Public Health England launched the Stoptober initiative. The science behind the campaign is that if you are able to give up smoking for 28 days in a row, you are five times as likely to quit permanently.

## STOPTOBER

### REASONS TO QUIT

There are many reasons to stop smoking, and many will be personal to the individual trying to quit, but here are a few important ones to consider...

- **Regaining control:** Quitting smoking can re-wire your brain and help break the cycle of addiction.
- **Happier heart:** Smoking is the leading cause of heart attacks and heart disease, but many of these heart risks can be reversed simply by quitting. Quitting can lower your blood pressure and heart rate almost immediately, and your risk of a heart attack declines within 24 hours.
- **Easier breathing:** Smoking related lung disease has no cure and scarring of the lungs is irreversible, which is why it is important to quit smoking as early as possible. Within two weeks of quitting, your breathing should have improved significantly.
- **Healthier bodies:** Quitting smoking can help enhance your immune system, strengthen your bones, reduce your belly fat, protect and improve your skin, sharpen your hearing and eyesight, improve your mouth tissue



### FACTS

- Smoking is the biggest preventable cause of cancer in the UK and worldwide.
- Harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke affect the entire body – not just our lungs – with links to causing at least 15 different types of cancers.
- There is no safe level of smoking – stopping completely is the best thing you can do for your health.

and brighten your teeth, improve your blood and blood flow (and therefore your muscles and overall healing abilities), as well as lower your risk of diabetes.

- **Decreased cancer risk:** Stopping smoking will prevent new DNA damage from happening and can even help repair the damage that has already been done. Quitting smoking immediately is the best way to lower your risk of getting cancer.





## A NOTE ON VAPING:

Vaping does have health risks, and so we would like to stress that stopping smoking without vaping is the optimum solution. Although some people find that vaping helps them cut down smoking and work towards stopping, we would encourage other nicotine replacement therapy.

## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BENEFIT FROM STOPPING SMOKING

Being smoke-free not only adds years to your life, it also greatly improves your chances of a disease-free, mobile, happier old age.

If you're a smoker, stopping smoking is the single most important step you can take to protect the health of your heart.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BODY WHEN YOU STOP SMOKING?


- **After 20 minutes:** Pulse rate returns to normal.
- **After 8 hours:** Nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in blood reduce by more than half and oxygen levels return to normal.
- **After 48 hours:** Carbon monoxide is eliminated from the body – lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris.

- **After 48 hours:** There is no nicotine in the body and the ability to taste and smell is improved.
- **After 72 hours:** Breathing becomes easier – bronchial tubes begin to relax and energy levels increase

And over the next few years, your circulation improves and your risk of heart disease and lung cancer drops.

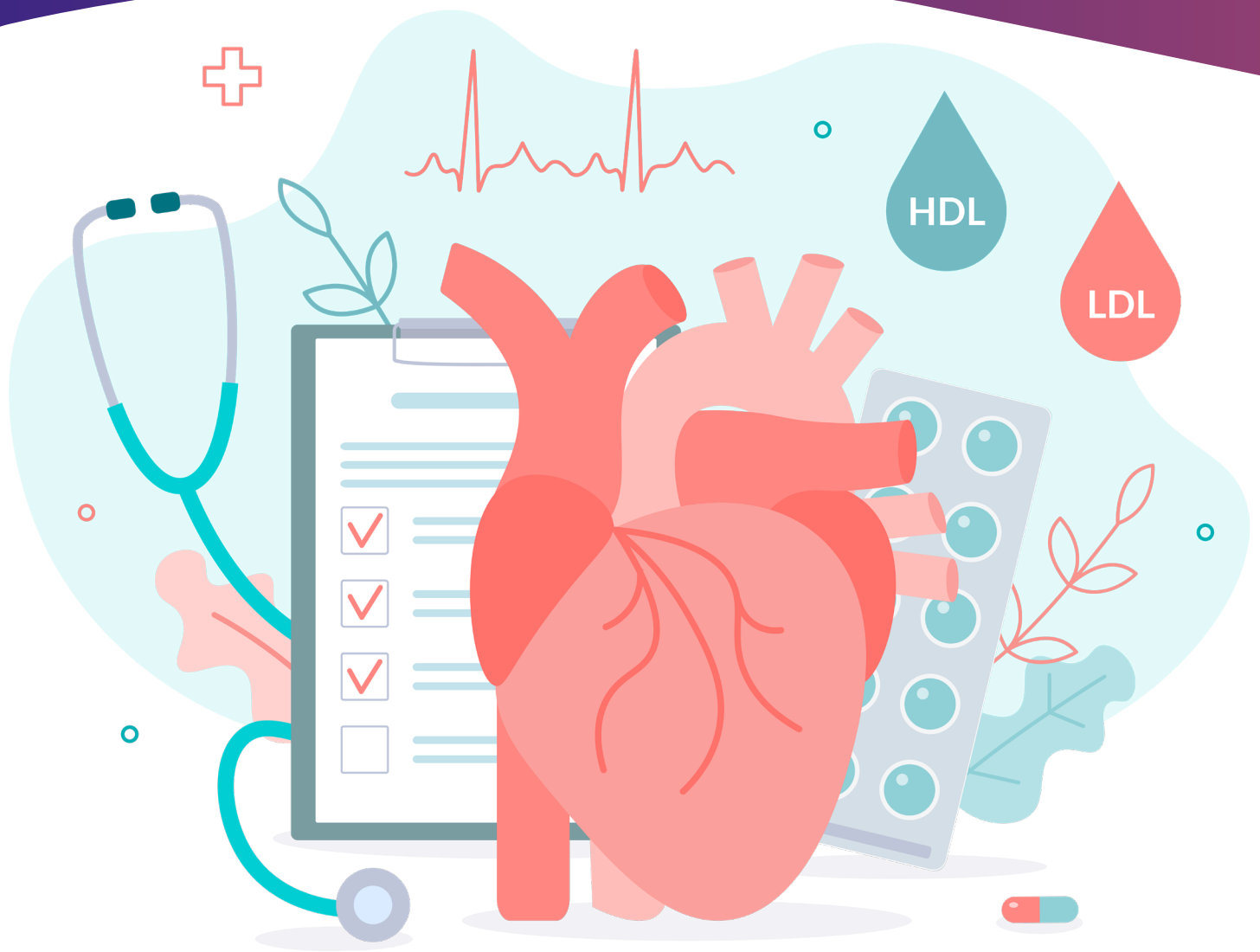
## HOW DO I STOP?

There is more support now than ever before. You can find help through your doctor or local surgery, the NHS (which runs a free Stop Smoking service), your pharmacist or you can speak to your OH provider.

Alternatively, get support online – there are many useful websites out there providing advice and support, but a good starting point is the NHS. 

## Sources:

<https://thestoptober.co.uk/>  
<https://smokefree.gov/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/>



## CHOLESTEROL AWARENESS

October is National Cholesterol Month run by the charity Heart UK with the aim of raising awareness of cholesterol and cholesterol levels.

### WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?


Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in cells of the body. Your body needs some cholesterol to make hormones, vitamin D and substances that help you to digest foods. Your body makes all the cholesterol it needs; however, it is also found in some of the foods you eat.

A cholesterol test is a blood sample that will provide a full “lipid profile”. In other words, it will measure the levels of all the different blood fats: total cholesterol,

LDL- cholesterol, HDL-cholesterol and triglyceride concentration.

### NUTRITION AND CHOLESTEROL

Avoiding fats altogether is not the way to go. A small amount of fat is an essential part of a healthy balanced diet. However, eating too much saturated fat is linked to high cholesterol, which can lead to cardiovascular disease.

Exercise helps increase levels of HDL, or “good cholesterol”, and watching what you eat also helps. To help lower your cholesterol, you can make some healthy swaps, cutting down on foods high in saturated fat and replacing them with unsaturated fats. 

## HELPFUL FOOD TIPS

- **Monounsaturated foods:** Have these in small amounts to maintain healthy cholesterol levels – examples include avocados, olives, oils and fats, nuts (cashew, hazel, peanuts).
- **Polyunsaturated foods:** Have these in small amounts to maintain healthy cholesterol levels – examples include fish, oils and fats, nuts and seeds.
- **Saturated fats:** swap these out for unsaturated fats, avoiding (or minimising) foods such as processed meats, hard cheeses, whole milk, cream, butter and lard.
- **Trans fats:** avoid these wherever possible, such as foods that are fried, fast-food and takeaways, hard margarines and unhealthy snacks such as sugary biscuits.





## WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Whilst the pandemic has, and continues to, take its toll on our mental health, the ability to reconnect through World Mental Health Day 2022 provides us with a chance to increase our efforts to protect and improve mental health. Across the world it is estimated that one in eight people globally were living with a mental disorder prior to the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a global crisis for mental health, fuelling short- and long-term stresses and undermining the mental health of millions. Estimates put the rise in both anxiety and depressive disorders at more than 25% during the first year of the pandemic. At the same time, mental health services have been severely disrupted and the treatment gap for mental health conditions has widened.

World Mental Health Day is an opportunity to say no to stigma and discrimination, collectively. Let's ensure mental health is valued, promoted and protected, where everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy mental health and to exercise their human rights and where everyone can access the mental health care they need.

If you are suffering from mental health issues that are causing you concern, speak with your GP or call 116 123 to speak with a Samaritan. If you feel suicidal or are in immediate danger, ring 999. Find out more about mental health here: [www.nhs.uk/mental-health](http://www.nhs.uk/mental-health) or [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

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**Sources:** *NHS, WHO.*



## HOW CAN YOU DEAL WITH MENTAL HEALTH AS AN INDIVIDUAL?

- **Talk about it.** Try talking to a friend or relative who you trust and respect and who is a good listener. They may have had the same problem themselves or know someone else who has.
- **Self-help groups.** These are a good way of getting in touch with people who have similar problems and can understand what you are going through. As well as having the chance to talk, you may be able to find out how other people have coped.
- **Self-help books.** This works well for many people. Most of the books use the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
- **Physical activity.** Studies have shown that doing physical activity can improve mental health, releasing endorphins that can improve mood naturally and creating an opportunity for release of pent-up cortisol and adrenaline which help us manage stress. Being physically active also gives our brains something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times.



- **Learning to relax.** It can be really helpful to learn some special ways of relaxing. You can learn these through groups, with professionals, but there are also many books and self-help materials you can use to teach yourself. It's a good idea to practice relaxation regularly, not just at times of crisis. 



At Health Partners we offer a full range of tailored health and wellbeing services.

**Our thinking is innovative.** We constantly develop new responses and tools designed to address the health and wellbeing challenges that face your business and people.

**Our commitment is total.** We invest in our services, creating new ones and keeping in step with every client. We constantly explore new ways of working and make no compromises in the quality of our services.

**Simply put, we are here to help people be their best.**