GOLD in Birmingham
Growing Older with Learning Disabilities in Birmingham

Your Health

Booklet number 4 for adults who have learning disabilities
Check the blue boxes for local phone numbers in Birmingham where you can find out more

these are numbers for Birmingham City Council

these are numbers for the National Health Service
We all need to have good health.

This is even more important as you grow older.

In this 4th booklet in the series Growing Older with Learning Disability in Birmingham we will give you information to help you keep healthy.
### Growing Older with Learning Disability in Birmingham

**What’s in this book and where is it?**

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Healthy living

Eating and drinking

Eat healthy food, lots of fruit and vegetables. Fish and chicken. Baked potatoes with the skin on are very good for you. Grill your meat and fish instead of frying. Use oil instead of fat.

Get advice about healthy eating

📞 0121 465 8750 NHS

Drink lots of water. Drink 8 glasses a day. Water is good for your brain, your skin and your hair.

Drink less beer or wine.
Exercise

It is easier to exercise if you don’t smoke.
Get help from

0845 069 069

Exercise at least 3 times a week.
Get advice about healthy exercise

0121 465 8750

Walking is very good for you and it’s free.
Get together with some friends and walk together.
Find out where people are walking near you

0121 465 8750
Snacks, fast food and takeaways

What not to eat. Have them as a treat.

- fish and chips
- burger
- curry
- pizza
- biscuits
- cakes
- chocolate
- crisps

Much better to eat fruit and raw vegetables. You can eat them anytime. Any fruit or any raw vegetables you like.

- fruit
- celery sticks
- carrot sticks
- cabbages
It is important that you have health checks. These checks can tell your doctor or nurse a lot about your health. Do you have a Health Action Plan that tells you when your checks need to be done? You can have your health checked every year.

0121 465 8400 NHS

Some checks you may have

Your doctor or nurse may check your wee and poo

Your doctor or nurse may check your blood pressure
More checks you may have

- Your doctor or nurse may check your lungs
- Your doctor or nurse may check your heart
- Your doctor or nurse may check your blood
- Your doctor or nurse may check your weight
Trips, slips and falls

Trips, slips and falls are very common as you get older. You can talk to your doctor about this.
You can get more advice from our physiotherapy service

0121 465 8750 NHS

You can help stop this. Keeping active helps you to keep your bones strong. You can do:

- walking and sport
- gardening and housework
Other things you can do

Keep your windows clean so you can see better

Keep the lighting bright around your home so you can see better

Get out of bed and off chairs slowly so you don’t get dizzy

For more information and advice see our booklet Your Safety
Looking after your back

Your back is important. Look after it. Keep it warm.

You can do this by:

- swimming is very good exercise not just for your back but your whole body
- walking with your friends, on your own or in a club, walking a dog – yours or a friend's
- doing any sport you enjoy
- gardening or any kind of housework – but take it gently
Other things you can do

Always bend your knees when lifting anything off the floor.

Get help with really heavy things.

If you have pain in your back for more than 3 days go and see your doctor for advice and something to help take away the pain.
Looking after your eyes and ears

Eyes

Your eyes are important. Look after them.

Even if you are born with problems with your eyes or ears you should get them checked every year.

eye2eye are based in Birmingham. They can check your ears for you too. You can phone them on:

0121 465 8515 NHS

Eye tests don’t just check what you can see. An eye test looks at your whole eye health. There are special tests for people with learning disability.

Checks may be free. Please ask.
Ears

Your ears are important. Look after them.

Get your ears checked every year or at least every 2 years. This may be free. Please ask.

Do not use cotton buds to clean your ears.

Use a soft cloth.

If you aren’t sure ask your doctor or nurse.
When things go wrong

If you hurt your eyes you can go to accident and emergency at:
Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre
Dudley Road,
Birmingham,
West Midlands,
B18 7QH

0121 554 3801

If you hurt your ears you can visit the accident and emergency of your local hospital.

or

For help and advice

0845 4647

Looking after your mouth

Teeth

Your teeth are important. Look after them.

Make sure you:

- brush your teeth at least twice a day
- do not use a toothbrush that is too hard
- use toothpaste that has fluoride in it
- ask your dentist about flossing or other ways you can keep your teeth and gums healthy
- see your dentist at least 2 times a year
Looking after your feelings

Your feelings are important.

you may feel:

really sad and cry a lot

really confused and unsure about things

really scared about something

You can talk to someone you trust about these feelings.

If you feel really happy. That’s great. Keep on smiling.
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Other things to help you

If you don’t have friends or family to help you make difficult medical and housing decisions you can speak to an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate [IMCA].

📞 0121 321 2377

More serious cases may be able to speak to an Independent Mental Health Advocate [IMHA].

📞 0121 506 2858 open 9am to 5pm
or 0800 953 0045 all day, every day

For more information you can speak to the psychology team:

📞 0121 465 8650

The Samaritans are there to listen to you. You will be talking to someone you don’t know. They will not tell anyone about your call unless you say it is OK.

📞 0121 666 6644
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Special areas of your body

As you get older you should look for lumps and bumps that aren’t usually there. You can do this yourself or ask your doctor or nurse.

Look for lumps and bumps in other areas. You can do this yourself or ask your doctor or nurse.

Do not be afraid to talk to your doctor or nurse about these things. This is their job. They will listen to you.
Everyone has these special checks - it’s called ‘screening’. They are special checks that test for cancer.

A smear test will tell your doctor or nurse how healthy you are ‘down there’. This test should be done every 2 years.

Ask your doctor or nurse if you are unsure.

If you are 50 years or older you will have this test. It’s called a mammogram. It takes an x-ray of the inside of your breast so the doctors can see if anything is wrong.

Ask your doctor or nurse if you are unsure.

Men can check themselves while in the shower or bath. Tell someone straight away if you notice anything different. If you are aged 16 to 35 years old you should check at least once a month.

Ask your doctor or nurse if you are unsure.
As women grow older they will go through what is called the menopause [the ‘change’]. This is when you stop having your period. This usually begins to happen when you are about 48 years old or older. It can happen to younger women.

Things that may happen:

you may miss having a period or notice that you aren’t buying pads or tampons so often. Check with your doctor or nurse to make sure you are not pregnant

your waist may start to get bigger

you may feel really hot. This can happen day or night, summer or winter.

All this is \textbf{normal} and happens to most women.

Men do not go through the ‘change’. No wonder he’s smiling!
Diabetes

You can easily be tested for this. You will have to give the nurse a sample of your wee. The nurse will test it for you.

If you have diabetes you might have to take tablets every day

or

you might learn how to give it to yourself

Your doctor or nurse might have to do a blood test. Blood tests can tell your doctor or nurse a lot about your health.
Dysphagia

Finding it hard to swallow food and drink can be for lots of reasons. This is called Dysphagia.

For help and advice:

0121 465 8755

or speak to your doctor or nurse

Dementia

Dementia is an illness that makes people forget things. If you have a problem remembering things get help and advice from:

0121 465 8650

or speak to your doctor or nurse

The Government have written a plan about dementia. We will let you know more on our website.
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Hints and tips

Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables. Do some exercise.

Give up smoking.

Don’t forget your health check every year and the special checks that need to be done.

Brush your teeth 2 times a day and shower or bath at least once a day. Don’t forget to see your dentist 2 times a year.

Use a sunscreen when you go out in the sun.

Ask your doctor, nurse or dentist to tell you things in easy words.
Phone numbers

To find out more about My Hospital Book and a Health Action Plan speak to the Health Facilitation Team

0121 465 8400 NHS

Health Facilitators can help you with health

To find out more about healthy eating and exercise:

0121 465 8750 NHS

For help to give up smoking:

0800 169 0 169 NHS
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More phone numbers

You can speak to the psychology team about your feelings:

📞 0121 465 8650 NHS

If you have things to say about services in Birmingham you can tell the Partnership Board.

📞 0121 675 6631

Web site

Please visit the Birmingham Learning Disability Partnership Board website. There is information about services, the Partnership Board, its sub groups and the work they are doing.

www.tellusmore.org
Our thanks for their help go to the people of Hockley Day Centre:

Not everyone wanted to be in the picture but we have said who everyone was that helped us.

Diane Price, John Greeney, Michael Stevens, Julie Anne Smith, Shaheed Chucha, Carol Hewitt and Anthony Reid
Growing Older with Learning Disability in Birmingham

My notes

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Thanks and acknowledgements for their help in producing this booklet go to:

Dr Sunny Kalsy
Consultant Clinical Psychologist
0121 465 8650

Claire Robinson
Older Adult Specialist Nurse
0121 465 8750/8200

Linda Jackson
Learning Disability Partnership Board Co-ordinator
0121 675 6631
My information:

My doctor

My nurse

My dentist

Useful information can also be found on the Birmingham Learning Disability Partnership Board web site:

www.tellusmore.org