

## Health Information

### Brain aneurysm

Only around 1 in 12,500 people have a ruptured brain aneurysm in England each year. Aneurysms can develop in places where the walls of a blood vessel are typically weaker, such as where they branch. This page from Headway UK has more information on the causes and symptoms of a brain (cerebral) aneurysm: <https://www.headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/individuals/types-of-brain-injury/brain-aneurysm/>

A brain aneurysm is more common in people over 40 but can affect anyone at any time. An unburst aneurysm can have symptoms such as:

- Loss of vision or double vision
- Pain around your eye
- Numbness or weakness on one side of your face
- Difficulty speaking or concentrating
- Headaches, loss of balance or problems with short-term memory

You should see a GP as soon as possible if you experience any of these symptoms. For more information, take a look at this helpful page from the Walton Centre: [https://www.thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk/uploadedfiles/leaflets/Brain Aneurysms and Screening 2021A.pdf](https://www.thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk/uploadedfiles/leaflets/Brain%20Aneurysms%20and%20Screening%202021A.pdf)

You can't always prevent brain aneurysms, but you can lower your risk by quitting smoking and reducing high blood pressure. A ruptured aneurysm is an extremely serious condition that requires emergency medical attention. The NHS website [provides more details on the treatment and diagnosis of an aneurysm](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/brain-aneurysm/): <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/brain-aneurysm/>

### Active 10

Did you know that walking briskly, even for one minute, counts as exercise? A brisk daily walk is a great excuse to get outside and improve your health. To help you on a journey to a healthier you, Public Health England is encouraging adults to download the free Active 10 app, which helps you complete at least ten minutes of brisk walking daily. You can download the app here: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/>

Adults should aim for 150 minutes of exercise a week. Active 10 is a walking tracker app that shows how much brisk walking you're doing and how you can do more. A daily walk can boost your energy, clear your head and lift your mood, as well as help with many health issues. Find out more about Active 10 here: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active10/home/>

A daily walk is great for your long-term health; it can reduce your risk of serious illnesses like heart disease, anxiety, depression, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers. Public Health England is encouraging adults to download the free Active 10 app to help you get active. <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active10/home/>

## Travel insurance

When travelling abroad, it's not uncommon for overseas medical bills to run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. Standard insurance policies may not be the right policy for you, depending on your circumstances and trip plans. You might need to purchase additional cover for:

- Older travellers
- Those with pre-existing medical conditions
- Adventure travellers/backpackers

The NHS website's 'fit for travel' guide has more tips to prepare you for your holiday abroad: <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/travel-insurance>

If you're planning on going abroad, check your travel insurance policy for COVID-19 exclusions; ensure your cover includes:

- Coronavirus medical and repatriation cover
- Coronavirus cancellation cover
- Scheduled airline failure

Money Saving Expert has more information on organising your trip abroad safely.

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/02/coronavirus-travel-help-and-your-rights/>

## EHIC

You can still use a UK-issued EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) after Brexit. If you already have an EHIC and are going away to an EU country for a brief time, you can use it until it expires. Once it's expired, the UK Global Health Insurance Card (UK GHIC) will replace the existing EHIC. Apply for a GHIC here: <https://www.gov.uk/global-health-insurance-card>

For most people, the UK Global Health Insurance Card (UK GHIC) will replace the existing European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Both are free of charge. Beware of unofficial websites as they may charge you a fee to apply. Check the Foreign Office country guides on GOV.UK for information on how to access treatment in the country you're visiting.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/colle...-norway-iceland-liechtenstein-and-switzerland>

You can use your European Health Insurance Card or UK Global Health Insurance Card to access medically necessary, state-provided healthcare when you're visiting an EU country. This includes things like:

- Emergency treatment and visits to A&E
- Treatment for prior health conditions
- Routine medical care
- Routine maternity care

- Oxygen therapy and kidney dialysis

EHIC or GHIC is not a substitute for travel insurance and, therefore, may not cover all health costs and never covers repatriation costs. Make sure you have travel insurance as well as your card.

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/he...-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>

## **Vitamin D supplements**

Vitamin D helps to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body. A lack of Vitamin D can lead to bone deformities such as rickets or bone pain caused by osteomalacia. People should be able to make all the Vitamin D they need from sunlight. However, factors such as the recent lockdown and wearing sun cream may have prevented you from absorbing enough Vitamin D, and you might want to consider taking a supplement to ensure your body gets enough Vitamin D. Find out more on this helpful page from the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>

Vitamin D is in foods such as:

- Oily fish (salmon, sardines, herring and mackerel)
- Red meat
- Liver
- Egg yolks
- Fortified foods

It's not always sufficient to get Vitamin D from food alone though. Taking a Vitamin D supplement is a great option, especially as you may have been indoors more than usual this year. You can find out more information on the British Nutrition Foundation website:

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/helpingyoueatwell/vitamind.html>

According to national surveys in the UK, across the population, approximately 1 in 5 people have low Vitamin D levels. Taking a Vitamin D supplement can help, especially as you may have been indoors more than usual this year. A daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of Vitamin D is recommended to ensure you stay healthy. The Government website explains in more detail how to ensure you get the right amount of Vitamin D in your diet:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publi...vitamin-d-supplements-how-to-take-them-safely>

## **Organ donation**

English organ donation law has changed. All adults in England are now considered potential organ donors, unless they choose to opt out or are in one of the excluded groups. This is commonly referred to as an 'opt-out' system. This page gives you more information on how the system works and what it means to be an organ donor: <https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/what-we-do/transplantation-services/organ-donation-and-transplantation/>

Every day, thousands of people's lives are saved or improved thanks to the generosity of donors. Sadly, though, there's still an urgent need for donations. If you've opted out, you can reconsider and register to donate on the NHS website: <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register-to-donate/>

Anyone, at any age, can become an organ donor. If you're younger than 18 years old, you need to have the consent of a parent or guardian. Each year, hundreds of opportunities for transplants are missed because families aren't sure what to do. It's really important that those closest to you, such as family and friends, understand and support your choice. To find out more about organ donation, take a look at this page from the NHS website: <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/helping-you-to-decide/about-organ-donation/get-the-facts/>

## **Asthma**

Asthma is a long-term condition that affects your airways. In the UK, around 5.4 million people are currently receiving asthma treatment. That's one in every 12 adults and one in every 11 children. Common triggers include: house dust, chest infections, pollen, animal fur, tobacco smoke, cold air and exercise. If you think you could have asthma, contact your GP to get an assessment. For more information on symptoms, visit the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/>

If you have asthma, your airways are more 'sensitive' and become inflamed when they come into contact with something they don't like. Working in partnership with your GP means you'll get the best support and treatment for your asthma. Continuing conversations about symptoms, triggers and side effects can help to prevent the condition from worsening over time. Get some tips on managing your asthma from Asthma UK: <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/manage-your-asthma/>

An asthma review at least once a year is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care to ensure you stay well. This could prevent worsening asthma symptoms and avoid a potentially life-threatening asthma attack. A review is a great time to talk about any triggers or symptoms, update your written asthma action plan and check your inhaler technique. The NHS website provides more information on living with asthma: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/>

## **COPD**

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a common lung disease that makes breathing difficult. About 1.2 million people in the UK have been diagnosed with COPD, and many more have it without knowing. It mainly affects middle-aged or older adults who smoke and it tends to worsen over time. The NHS website provides more information on the symptoms, prevention and management of COPD: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-copd/>

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is made up of two lung conditions: chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The main symptoms of COPD are:

- Increased breathlessness
- A persistent chesty cough with phlegm – similar to that of a “smoker's cough”
- Frequent chest infections
- Persistent wheezing

If you've experienced these symptoms, contact your GP for an assessment.

If you're living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), creating a self-management plan with your GP can help you to understand your condition, but ensure they know of any changes in your

plan or symptoms. The British Lung Foundation provides more information on creating a self-management plan: <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/copd/your-copd-self-management-plan>

## **Meningitis catch-up**

The Meningitis B vaccine offers protection against meningococcal group B bacteria, a common cause of meningitis in young children in the UK. Babies aged eight weeks are to have the vaccine, followed by a second dose at 16 weeks and a booster at one year. Check with your GP if your children have had the vaccine to ensure protection.

If you're starting university or college, you should make sure you've already had the MenACWY vaccine. This vaccine protects against infections like meningitis and septicaemia, which can be deadly. If you haven't had the vaccination, or you aren't sure, please get in touch with us.

The MenACWY vaccine is routinely offered to teenagers in Years 9 and 10 at school. It protects against infections like meningitis and septicaemia. Students should make sure they contact their GP before starting university or college to have the MenACWY vaccine, if they haven't already had it. If that's not possible, they should have it as soon as possible, when beginning university.

NHS Wales: <http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/doityourself/vaccinations/ACWY/>

NHS Scotland: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/vaccines/meningitis-acwy-menacwy-vaccine>

NHS Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/menacwy-vaccination-programme-teenagers-and-students>

NHS England: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/men-acwy-vaccine/>