

WELLNESS

# WELLNESS

magazine

AUTUMN 2023

WELLNESS

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ESS

HEALTHIER MIND

HEALTHIER FOOD

HEALTHIER BODY

HEALTHIER WORLD

WELLNESS

# WELCOME TO OUR AUTUMN WELLNESS MAGAZINE



**As the end of summer beckons and the days start getting shorter, we're delighted to bring you our Autumn Wellness Magazine!**

Structured around the four pillars of our Wellness Commitment – **Healthier Food, Healthier Mind, Healthier Body** and **Healthier World** – this issue is full of useful information, advice and tips for looking after yourself and the environment.

It covers a wide range of subjects including plant-based eating, managing stress, self-care, heart health and how to enjoy a more sustainable Halloween. There are open and insightful pieces from some of our team members who talk about their own experiences, as well as an update from our first organic garden and a few great recipes to try.

We hope you enjoy reading!

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Ronnie Kelman'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Ronnie Kelman  
Managing Director - ESS Energy,  
Government & Infrastructure

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# EMBRACING PLANT-BASED LIFESTYLES:

## EXPLORING THE WORLD OF VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN DIETS

WORLD VEGETARIAN DAY: 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2023 | WORLD VEGAN DAY: 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

It is well known that we should aim to consume five portions of a combination of fruit and vegetables each day.

But with the focus on plant-based diets on the increase, are vegetarian or vegan diets healthier, and can we get all the nutrients we need without consuming meat?

Plant-based foods are low in saturated fat and tend to be a good source of fibre, as well as containing a variety of vitamins and minerals, so it's recommended that we incorporate these ingredients into our meals every day.

Fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds all help to promote a healthy diet which can reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and obesity.

In addition, fibre makes us feel fuller faster and for longer, meaning we

may eat less and snack less between meals which helps to cut calorie intake and weight gain. It promotes healthy digestion and can help to prevent constipation and other digestive issues.

Consuming a variety of plant foods can also contribute to a diverse and beneficial gut microbiome.

We should be able to gain all the nutrients we need from a plant-based diet, but it is important to plan carefully and ensure we are eating a wide variety of foods to achieve this. Some nutrients are more bioavailable in animal-based foods which means they are easier for the body to break down.

To support the absorption of plant-based nutrients, we can combine different foods. While green leafy vegetables are a great source of iron,

it is less bioavailable than the iron in red meat, however drinking an orange juice with your spinach will help as vitamin C promotes the iron absorption.

**TIP:**  
Why not have a glass of orange juice with your eggs Florentine at breakfast?



**TIP:**  
As with meat-based meals, it is important to ensure plant-based meals are balanced. Using the Vegetarian or Vegan Eatwell Guide will help.



While plant-based dining may sound healthier, this isn't always the case and there are additional variables to consider: What other ingredients are being used? Are there side dishes being added? How are the dishes being cooked?

Plant-based ingredients are often enhanced to make a meal and this is where hidden calories and fat can creep in. So, a plant-based burger may be lower in calories and fat and contain fibre, but you need to look at the toppings, sauces and accompaniments, as well as the cooking methods.

### **There are, of course, additional benefits to eating more plants.**

Many people choose vegetarian or vegan diets for ethical reasons. By avoiding meat and other animal products, individuals can reduce their contribution to animal suffering and support more compassionate and sustainable food systems.

The carbon footprint of plant-based dishes is generally significantly lower than for meat-based meals. Growing vegetables involves less energy consumption, fewer greenhouse gas emissions and lower land and water use compared to the production of meat.

To maximise the environmental benefit, consider whether the plant-based food is local or in season and how it has been produced which will also impact its carbon footprint.

From a nutrition perspective, consider the carbon footprint of the plant-based foods needed to equal the animal source. As milk, for example, is nutrient rich, the plant ingredients required to achieve the equivalent nutritional benefit may well have a higher carbon footprint than the milk itself. Using fortified plant-based products is a good solution to this.

Meat production, especially from ruminant animals like cows, generates a substantial carbon footprint due to various factors including:

- **Feed production:** Livestock require vast amounts of crops like corn and soybeans to be grown, harvested and transported which consumes substantial resources and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Methane emissions:** Ruminant animals produce methane during their digestive process, which is a potent greenhouse gas.

- **Manure management:** Handling and processing animal waste can lead to emissions of methane and nitrous oxide, both of which are potent greenhouse gases.
- **Transportation and processing:** The transportation, processing and refrigeration of meat products also contribute to the overall carbon footprint.

Vegetables generally have a lower carbon footprint because of:

- **Less land and water use:** Vegetables require less land and water to grow compared to animal-based products.
- **Fewer emissions:** The process of growing and harvesting vegetables typically generates fewer greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Lower energy consumption:** Vegetable production usually involves less energy-intensive processes than meat production.



### **Why not try Cancer Research UK's Veg Pledge to kick start a more plant-filled lifestyle?**

**Veg Pledge** is a commitment to adopt a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle for one month, by not consuming meat, poultry, fish and potentially other animal products such as dairy and eggs.

Individual motivations for taking the pledge can vary. As already discussed, they may relate to health considerations, ethical reasons or environmental concerns.

The challenge is flexible and can last for a week or a whole month, so why not give it a try?



## **SLOW COOKER CHICKPEA CURRY**

### **Ingredients:**

- 4 tablespoons mild curry paste
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into 2.5 cm cubes
- 500g small cauliflower florets
- 410g chickpeas
- 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 400ml vegetable stock
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 120ml coconut milk
- 500g lightly packed spinach leaves, chopped

### **Method:**

1. Heat the rapeseed oil in a large non-stick pan set over medium heat. Add the onion, apple and ginger, and cook until they are tender (7 to 8 minutes).
2. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds.
3. Stir in the curry paste and cook, stirring, for three minutes.
4. Transfer the onion mixture to a slow cooker.
5. Add the sweet potato, cauliflower, chickpeas, chopped tomatoes and vegetable broth to the slow cooker.
6. Cook on high for six hours, or until the vegetables are tender.
7. Stir in the coconut milk and spinach, heat and serve.

Veganuary.com

# BEAN TO CUP:

## COFFEE'S IMPACT ON OUR PLANET AND OUR HEALTH

ZERO WASTE WEEK: 4<sup>TH</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 | WORLD'S BIGGEST COFFEE MORNING: 31<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER  
RECYCLE WEEK: 16<sup>TH</sup>-22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2023 | UK COFFEE WEEK: 16<sup>TH</sup>-22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2023

Coffee is one of the most popular beverages worldwide. 80% of UK households purchase it<sup>1</sup> and we consume around 98 million cups per day<sup>3</sup>.



**Anne Simonnet**  
Sustainability Director -  
Compass One

Coffee is one of the world's most traded commodities, but its production can have significant impacts on the environment, biodiversity and the livelihoods of farmers and communities.

The growing or farming stage generates the most greenhouse gas emissions (59 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per cup of coffee, or 56% of the total carbon footprint). Coffee cultivation can lead to deforestation, habitat loss and soil degradation, especially when done through conventional methods. Its production can also be water intensive, with WWF estimating that, across all stages of coffee production, 140 litres of water are used for every cup.

Sustainable coffee production focuses on practices that minimise the environmental footprint, such as agroforestry, shade-grown coffee and organic farming, as well as efficient water management. These methods help to preserve biodiversity, protect ecosystems and reduce the use of harmful chemicals.

Coffee crops are also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns. Sustainable coffee initiatives often focus on building climate change resilience through techniques like reforestation, water conservation and using drought-resistant coffee varieties.

Around 125 million people worldwide depend on coffee for their livelihoods<sup>3</sup>. The price of coffee is volatile which can make this difficult for farmers and communities. Ensuring a minimum price protects farmers and communities from sudden price drops.

Sustainable coffee often carries Fairtrade certification, which ensures that farmers receive fair prices for their coffee beans, allowing them to invest in their communities and improve their living conditions. Fairtrade also promotes democratic decision-making within farmer cooperatives and ensures better labour conditions.

*'Working with certification bodies, such as Rainforest Alliance, is very important to ESS. It helps our customers identify sustainable coffee options by indicating that the coffee meets specific environmental and social criteria.'*

The waste aspects of coffee should also be considered. Sustainable coffee companies aim to reduce waste at various stages of the supply chain, including supplying reusable capsules or washable filters, using compostable or biodegradable packaging and finding innovative ways to repurpose coffee by-products. At home, buying coffee in bulk and using a cafetière can help to limit waste. Repurposing coffee grounds for compost or using them for other applications, like skincare products, can also help to reduce waste and provide additional benefits.

*'Coffee grounds add organic material to the soil, helping water retention, aeration and drainage. Leftover diluted coffee can create a liquid plant fertiliser too - simply mix two cups of brewed coffee grounds with five gallons of water in a bucket overnight.'*



By supporting sustainable coffee practices, the coffee industry and consumers can contribute to a more environmentally and socially considerate coffee supply chain. Choosing coffee that is both delicious and sustainable can create a positive impact on the planet and the lives of coffee farmers and their communities.

#### Tips for more sustainable coffee:

- Avoid using coffee pods or capsules
- Opt for local coffee where possible
- Only boil as much water as you need
- Choose ethical coffee that supports sustainable farming practices.

The impact of coffee on our bodies has been studied extensively and it has some scientifically supported health benefits when consumed in moderation:

#### Antioxidants:

Coffee is a rich source of antioxidants which help combat oxidative stress and reduce the damage caused by free radicals in the body.

#### Mental alertness and cognitive function:

Caffeine, the primary active compound in coffee, is a stimulant that can improve alertness, concentration and cognitive function. It may enhance memory, mood and overall mental performance.

#### Physical performance:

Caffeine can also enhance physical performance by stimulating the nervous system and increasing adrenaline levels.

#### Heart health:

Some studies suggest that moderate coffee intake may have a protective effect on the heart. Regular consumption has been associated with a lower risk of heart failure and a reduced risk of developing certain cardiovascular conditions.

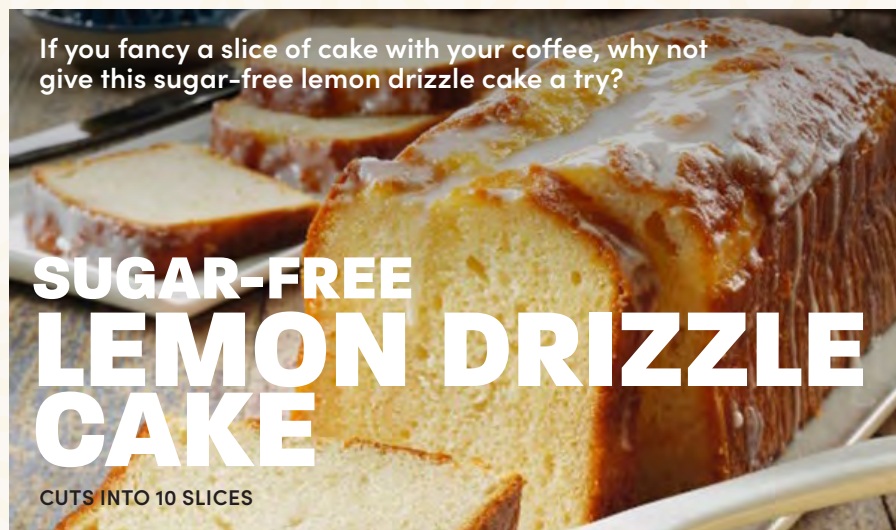
#### Depression and mood enhancement:

Some research indicates that moderate coffee consumption may be associated with a lower risk of depression and a positive impact on mood.

The health benefits of coffee are often associated with moderate consumption which is typically defined as three to four cups per day.

It is important to note that individual responses to coffee can vary and that excessive consumption of caffeine can have negative effects, such as increased heart rate, anxiety and disrupted sleep. People who are sensitive to caffeine or who have specific medical concerns or conditions should seek personalised advice from their healthcare provider before significantly increasing their coffee intake.

Overall, coffee can be a part of a healthy diet for many individuals. And let's not forget the social benefits that a cup of coffee with a friend can bring. Whether in person or virtually, a hot drink and a chat can work wonders to lift your spirits and improve your day!



#### Ingredients:

- 225g self-raising flour, sifted
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 225g xylitol
- 2 lemons, zest only
- 2 large eggs
- 125ml sunflower oil
- 1 tbsp milk
- 200g 0% fat Greek yogurt

#### Drizzle:

- 1 lemon, juice only
- 50g xylitol

#### Method:

- 1 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/ Gas 4. Grease and line a loaf tin.
- 2 Mix the flour, baking powder, xylitol and lemon zest in a large bowl.
- 3 Mix the eggs, sunflower oil, milk and yoghurt together in a separate bowl, then stir into flour mixture.
- 4 Spoon into tin and smooth the surface.
- 5 Transfer to the oven immediately. Bake on middle shelf for 1 hour to 1 hour 10 mins.
- 6 Check after 50 minutes, if cake is becoming too dark, cover loosely with foil.
- 7 Make the drizzle by heating lemon juice and xylitol. Stir over a low heat until the xylitol is dissolved.
- 8 Once the cake is cooked, remove from oven and pour over the drizzle.

# SUGAR EXPLAINED

WORLD DIABETES DAY: 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023



world diabetes day

**There has been lots of bad press about sugar, with the government pushing industry to reduce the sugar in products.**

Diabetes is a condition caused by high blood sugar levels, so it could be easy to blame this on sugar consumption. However, type 1 diabetes is not caused by sugar in your diet.

Type 2 diabetes is more complex. Whilst sugar does not directly cause it, being overweight can and this is often as a result of excess calories in the diet which can come from sugar.

Read on to find out more about sugar.



## What are sugars?

Sugars are a type of carbohydrate which provide an important source of energy in the diet (4 kcal per gram). They are broken down by the body into glucose, which is absorbed quickly and supply fuel for our brain and muscles.

There are two main forms of sugar in our diets:

- 1 Natural sugars** found in milk, unsweetened dairy products and whole fruits and vegetables.
- 2 Free sugars** which are added to foods and drinks such as cakes, sweets and sauces as well as honey, syrups, fruit juices and smoothies.

Sugars in fruit juices and smoothies are free sugars because the blending process releases the natural sugar trapped in the cell structure of whole fruits and vegetables. This makes the sugar more available for faster absorption in the body.

## How much?

Including some sugar in moderation, as part of a healthy and balanced diet is fine, however, many of us are eating too much! Eating too much sugar can make you gain weight and can cause tooth decay.

Some foods which contain natural sugars also provide a range of nutrients which are beneficial to our health.

For example, milk is a great source of protein, calcium, B vitamins and iodine, and fruit contains a variety of vitamins,

phytonutrients and fibre – it is foods and drinks which contain free sugars we need to cut down on in our diets.

The government recommends that free sugars should make up no more than 5% of the energy (calories) we get from food and drink each day. This is about 30g (7 teaspoons) of free sugars per day for adults.

## Tips to reduce your free sugar intake

- Read nutrition and ingredient labels to check if sugar is added to a food. Use the traffic light colour coding and find out the total amount of sugars a portion of the food provides.
- Follow the Eatwell Guide to help you eat a healthy and balanced diet.
- Base your meals on starchy carbohydrate foods such as bread, pasta, rice, potatoes and grains.
- Eat at least five portions of fruit and/or vegetables per day.
- Limit foods which are high in free sugars such as fizzy drinks, confectionary and desserts.
- Swap drinks that contain added sugar for 'diet' or 'no added sugar' alternatives.
- Choose tins of fruit in juice rather than syrup.



## SUGAR MYTH BUSTING

<p>Eating too much sugar causes tooth decay.</p> 	<p><b>TRUE!</b></p> <p>Regularly eating foods that contain sugars can cause tooth decay. To minimise damage to teeth, consume sugary foods less often and, where possible, at mealtimes. Also make sure you always brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.</p>
<p>Sugar is fattening.</p> 	<p><b>FALSE!</b></p> <p>Sugar is a carbohydrate and provides 4 kcal per gram, less than half the calories of fat. However, often sugary foods are also energy dense. Eating too much of any food may lead to weight gain.</p>
<p>Honey, maple syrup and brown sugar are healthier than white sugar.</p>	<p><b>FALSE!</b></p> <p>There are no significant nutritional differences between honey, maple syrup, brown and white sugar, so replacing one for another won't make any difference to your calorie intake or dental health. These are all considered to be free sugars which we should aim to be eating less of.</p>
<p>Eating too much sugar causes type 2 diabetes.</p>	<p><b>FALSE!</b></p> <p>Sugar does not cause diabetes. There are lots of factors which can increase our risk of developing insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. These include being overweight, poor diet and physical inactivity.</p>
<p>Fruit juices and smoothies are bad.</p> 	<p><b>FALSE!</b></p> <p>Fruit juices and smoothies can be an important source of vitamins and minerals and sometimes fibre. We can still include these in our diet, however, it's important to stick to the recommended portion sizes of 150ml per day – about half a small glass!</p>

## WHAT ABOUT SWEETENERS?

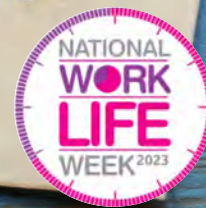
Sugar contains 4 kcal per gram, while sweeteners contain few or no calories. Sweeteners can play an important role in helping to reduce calorie intakes and assisting in weight management. Examples include aspartame, saccharin, stevia and sucralose.

All low-calorie sweeteners are monitored by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and undergo rigorous safety testing before being approved for consumption. As part of the approval process, an Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) level is set. It's highly unlikely that your diet will ever exceed the levels set.





# TIPS FOR MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE



**NATIONAL WORK LIFE WEEK: 2<sup>ND</sup>-6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**Achieving work-life balance is often easier said than done.**

Sometimes we may feel we have a good balance between our work commitments and home life, while at other times one may begin to dominate. Achieving a healthy work-life balance is important for maintaining overall wellbeing and preventing burnout.

Read on for some tips on how to get the balance right and to find out how some of our colleagues achieve this within their daily lives.

- **Prioritise:** Determine your priorities and set clear boundaries between your work and personal life. Understand what truly matters to you in both areas.
- **Manage your time:** Create schedules, set specific work hours and allocate time to personal activities. There are lots of tools and apps that can help you to achieve this. Having a family calendar may be a good place to start.
- **Communicate:** Clearly communicate your boundaries and availability to colleagues, managers and family.
- **Unplug:** Disconnect from work-related activities during your designated personal time. Turn off work-related notifications and avoid checking emails or taking work calls outside of work hours.
- **Self-Care:** Prioritise self-care activities such as exercise, hobbies, spending time with loved ones and practicing relaxation techniques. Taking care of your physical and mental wellbeing contributes to a healthier work-life balance.
- **Work flexibly where appropriate:** Explore flexible working options, such as remote working, flexible hours or compressed work weeks if your role and employer allow this. These arrangements can help you better manage your time and responsibilities.
- **Delegate and/or outsource:** Where possible, delegate suitable tasks both at work and at home.
- **Set realistic expectations:** Strive for excellence in your work but set realistic expectations for yourself. Understand that you may not always be able to accomplish everything and that is okay.
- **Take regular breaks:** This will allow you to rest and recharge which can help to improve your focus and productivity.
- **Reflect and adjust:** Regularly assess your work-life balance and make adjustments as needed. Be open to changes in your routines or develop strategies to better align with your evolving priorities.

Remember that achieving the perfect balance can be challenging and may look different at various stages of your life or during specific circumstances. It is important to find a balance that works for you and that supports your overall wellbeing and happiness.

# KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

HEALTHIER BODY

HEALTHIER MIND

**Matt Windridge, Head of Retail, tell us how he deals with the requirements of his job while making time for his wife, three daughters and a beagle.**

I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as Head of Retail since I joined in January. I work with a great team, get to do different things each day and have lots of challenges to get involved in. As much as I love these points about my job, none of it would matter if I wasn't able to balance work with a busy home life.

I'm married to Victoria and in March we had a daughter, Lydia, to go alongside Evie who is 16 and our two-year-old beagle. I also have another daughter, Ellie, who is 20 and lives with her boyfriend. With a busy home life, dog walks, nappy changes and negotiating with teenagers, I needed a job that enabled me to balance work and home!

I'm lucky that my role allows me to be there when the business needs me, but also work different hours so I can help Victoria. I manage this by working at different times. I usually start work at 05:00 and then stop to do dog walks and sort breakfasts out. I also have set times for working.

If I'm staying over on a site visit, I tend to work at the hotel until 21:00 or 22:00 which enables me to have some family time when I'm back home. I think this benefits me, my family and Compass as I'm happy – I get to work hard, do the things that are important to me and spend quality time with my family which, ultimately, is why we all work.



Before I was with Vic (ten years ago now), I was a single parent for five years so I have a really close relationship with Ellie and Evie. We still do lots together, even though they are older now, and I would never want a job where I lost that... although Evie made me do a 10k mud run at the weekend and halfway through I can definitely say I would rather have been at work!



## TIME IS THE MOST VALUABLE THING



**Stephanie Culpitt**  
Internal Recruiter (South) -  
Compass One

Having a healthy work-life balance is extremely important to me.

I recently became a nan for the first time and love spending time with my granddaughter. It's important for me to juggle and prioritise my workload to ensure that my time outside of work, especially with my granddaughter, isn't impacted.

My role involves a lot of home working, so it is of the utmost importance to ensure that the balance between work and home life is maintained.

For me, work-life balance is an important aspect of a healthy work environment. To maintain it, I ensure I take breaks during my working day. I take time away from my screen and may go for a walk to enable me to refresh and reflect. Not only does this improve my mental health, but it

makes me more efficient, productive and motivated. Having this balance also helps to reduce any stress and prevents me from feeling isolated, particularly when working from home. I feel that this flexibility enables me to achieve better results.



Where possible, I set boundaries, especially outside working hours, where I can truly unplug. This means I'm much happier in my job role and feel valued and able to value others more. Overall, getting the right balance improves my wellbeing both at work and at home.

# GROW YOUR MO FOR MOVEMBER

## SUPPORTING MEN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

MOVEMBER: NOVEMBER 2023

Movember is an annual event that takes place during November with the goal of raising awareness and funds for men's health issues, particularly prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental health and suicide prevention.



HEALTHIER MIND

HEALTHIER BODY

During Movember, men are encouraged to grow and groom their moustaches. Women can participate by encouraging the men in their lives, as well as raising awareness and funds themselves.

The Movember movement began in 2003 in Australia when a group of friends decided to grow moustaches for charity to raise awareness about men's health. Since then, it has grown into a major international campaign with people taking part from around the world.

Participants and supporters engage in various activities to promote the cause, including fundraising events, social media campaigns and educational initiatives. The funds raised go towards research, support programs and projects focused on men's health issues, aiming to improve early detection, diagnosis and treatment, as well as providing mental health support.

Movember plays a crucial role in addressing the health challenges that affect men, while also fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among participants worldwide.

Check out <https://uk.movember.com/> for more information.

# BELOW THE BELT: THE FIGHT AGAINST PROSTATE AND TESTICULAR CANCER

## PROSTATE CANCER

The prostate is a walnut-sized gland located just below the bladder and in front of the rectum in men. It forms part of the male reproductive system, producing a fluid that nourishes and helps to transport sperm.

Prostate cancer occurs when cells in the gland start to grow uncontrollably, forming a malignant tumor. If not detected and treated early, these cancerous cells can spread to other parts of the body. The cancer tends to grow slowly and often remains confined to the prostate gland, meaning it may not become life-threatening in many cases.

Whilst the exact cause of prostate cancer is not fully understood, risk factors include:

- Age (it is more common in older men)
- Family history of the disease
- Race (African American men have a higher risk)
- Certain genetic mutations.

Early-stage prostate cancer may not show any symptoms, but as the disease progresses men may experience symptoms such as:

- Difficulty urinating
- Weak or interrupted urine flow
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Erectile dysfunction
- Pelvic pain.

If any of these symptoms are present, it is important to see a doctor for a proper evaluation.

Regular check-ups and early detection are essential for better treatment outcomes as prostate cancer can be more effectively treated when detected in its early stages.

**Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in men, with 52,000 men being diagnosed in the UK each year and one in eight men being diagnosed in their lifetime.**

## TESTICULAR CANCER

The testicles are the male reproductive glands responsible for producing sperm and the hormone testosterone. Testosterone is crucial for male development during puberty and continues to impact everyday life. It can contribute to overall physical and mental wellbeing as it can impact energy levels and mood, and also helps to maintain bone density and muscle mass.

**Testicular cancer is unusual compared with other cancers because it tends to affect younger men.**

Testicular cancer is one of the most curable forms of cancer and has one of the highest survival rates, especially when diagnosed and treated early. In many cases, treatment can still be effective even if the cancer has spread.

The exact causes of testicular are unknown, but certain risk factors may increase the likelihood of its development:

- Undescended testicles at birth (cryptorchidism)
- Family history of testicular cancer
- Previous history of testicular cancer (increased risk in the other testicle)
- Abnormal testicular development.

It is also more common in young white men.

### Symptoms:

- A lump or swelling in one or both testicles
- Pain or discomfort in the testicles or scrotum
- Heaviness or aching in the lower abdomen or groin area
- Changes in the size or shape of the testicles
- Back pain (if the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes or other parts of the body).

Regular self-examination of the testicles is essential for early detection, and any concerning symptoms should be evaluated promptly by a healthcare professional.

**Whilst testicular cancer is relatively rare compared to other types of cancer, it is one of the most common cancers in men between the ages of 15 and 35.**

# SUICIDE

## SHINING A LIGHT ON THE SHADOWS

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY: 10<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023  
WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY: 10<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023

INTERNATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS DAY:  
18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023  
MOVEMBER: NOVEMBER 2023

Since 2010, men aged 45 to 64 years have had the highest age-specific suicide rates<sup>3</sup>

Men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women in the UK

Approximately 135 people suffer intense grief or are otherwise affected by each suicide

**For every suicide, 25 people make a suicide attempt and many more have serious thoughts of suicide.**

Suicide is defined as the act of intentionally causing one's own death. It is a difficult topic to discuss or think about but one that is important to raise. In 2021, more than 48,000 people died by suicide – that's one death every 11 minutes.<sup>1</sup>

There are many factors that can increase an individual's risk of taking their own life. These may include past or present abuse, financial pressures or depression. Equally, there are many ways to support suicide prevention and promoting awareness of these is an important way to help reduce the number of people affected.

Everyone is different and we all cope with life in different ways, however Samaritans have put together a list of behaviours to look out for if you are worried that someone may be having suicidal thoughts:

- Appearing restless and agitated
- Appearing angry and aggressive
- Being tearful
- Being tired or lacking in energy.

The language we use around someone we are worried about is key in helping them to feel supported and not threatened. We need them to feel comfortable enough to open up, while not triggering anything that may make the situation worse, such as judgemental statements like 'you aren't thinking of doing something silly are you?'. Often, just being there to listen and care can help.

Starting a conversation about suicide can be daunting, but the tips below may be useful:

- Find a time when there are no distractions.
- Allow sufficient time to talk and be patient which will help to build trust and encourage the person to open up.
- Avoid giving your opinion on the situation, just listen and base your questions on what they have said.
- Use open questions, rather than questions that just require a yes or no answer.
- Use non-judgemental language.
- If you are worried about someone, ask if they are feeling suicidal – according to Mind UK, research has shown that speaking openly about suicide decreases the likelihood of the person acting on their feelings.

If you, or someone you know, is struggling with suicidal thoughts, seeking immediate help from a professional or crisis helpline is essential. Don't hesitate to reach out for support as there are people who care and who want to help.

## FURTHER SUPPORT

Click on the links below for further support and information:

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://mhfaengland.org/>

SAMARITANS

mind



MHFA England

# A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE ON SUICIDE

**Mental health and wellbeing were never an area of concern or focus for me, although looking back on my life experiences, especially associated with my career, I should have expected some kind of impact on my mind health.**



**Allan Errington**  
HSEQ Manager – ESS  
Energy, Government  
& Infrastructure

I want to share my story, not as some kind

of mission statement, or as part of any short-term popularisation of mental health, often portrayed as the new trend in occupational health studies. I want to highlight the fact that every case of mental health or wellbeing needs to be looked at individually, that there is a person behind the statistics and that identifying mind issues in either yourself or other individuals can be extremely difficult, if not impossible at times.

I will start with a little background to my work life. I started my career in kitchens at the age of 15, as a trainee chef in hotels for four years. It was a stressful lifestyle: working six days per week predominantly on breakfast, lunch and dinner shifts, and spending the remaining day of the week dedicated to eight hours of college attendance.

During this time, my intake of alcohol was excessive to say the least, and the culture of working hard and playing hard was rife in the industry (this was the 1980s).

Because I was young, nothing affected me: I had no thoughts of how my lifestyle was affecting my mental state, and therefore some kind of invincibility complex was forged. This was compounded when I was in a major car accident as the front seat passenger of a fatal collision. I was 17 at the time.

I eventually went offshore, as a chef manager in the offshore industry, working a rotation of three weeks on and three weeks off and working for the organisation in project roles during my time off. I was following my earlier habit of working too many hours with little time off, which I now know had a serious impact on my family, never mind me.

Following the loss of my father in 2002, I moved into a role in West Africa as operations director. I had not given any time towards grieving and threw myself into working in one of the most dangerous areas at that time.

Looking back on everything in detail, I am sure you can see that my lifestyle, on the face of it, was only leading one way... although I did not recognise any of this as an issue and had always been the person that everyone thought was the funny one, the happiest in his work, not someone that may be suffering from any mental issues. Why would they, they did not know my background and never saw past the laughs and smiles.

My unsuccessful suicide came in 2009.

I am not going to dwell on the mechanics of what I did, it's fair to say I am lucky to be alive, although I did not see that at the time.

That is the thing about depression, when you are truly suffering, none of the usual techniques of signposting for help, counselling, professional help are of any use, because you are ill. Your mind is not working the way you would expect. In my case, I could not see past the darkness, for quite some time.

The good news... I bet you are pleased there is a brighter side! Once I did reach out for help, attended counselling and landed on a balanced medication regime, the results were life changing.

Depression, in its numerous forms, is difficult to live with and even more difficult to detect. Some of the brightest personalities could be hiding a multitude of issues. This is why we must keep talking and focus on both physical and mental wellbeing. A holistic approach is required to ensure we can provide a working environment where our people can thrive, safely.

My message now is an incredibly positive one. I have lived with depression for nearly 15 years since being diagnosed... I am not sure if I was suffering well before the point when I chose to end my life.

I have a balanced wellbeing regime; I enjoy my life out of work and concentrate on my family and loved ones, with only a positive impact on my performance at work.

It is possible to live with mental illness and perform well, we just need to continually focus on all aspects of health and wellbeing, be kind to one another and look out for each other. The concept of See Care Share is not a glib corporate statement, it is based on doing the right thing for us and those around us.

We need to remove the stigma and change the way we look at mind health. If your body is in pain, you seek medical advice and treat with medication, the same applies to our mind health.

*Stay safe.*



# MINDFUL MOMENTS

## DEPRESSION

We all have times when our mood is low and we are feeling sad or miserable about life.

Usually, these feelings pass in due course. But if the feelings are interfering with your life and don't go away after a couple of weeks, or if they come back repeatedly for a few days at a time, it could be a sign that you are experiencing depression.

### How does depression impact me and my work?

Depression can make you feel down, tearful, restless, empty, numb, isolated, lacking in self-confidence and worthless. It can have physical symptoms too, such as aches and pains.

Depression may also affect the way you behave. It can cause you to avoid activities you usually enjoy, make decisions and remembering things difficult, lead to constant feelings of tiredness and decrease or increase appetite.

### How can I help myself and others?

#### Helping yourself:

Experiencing depression can be very difficult. If you are suffering, speak to your GP about the help available. Some people may find the tips below useful but remember that different things work for different people at different times – only do what you feel comfortable with and don't put too much pressure on yourself.

#### Helping others:

The support of friends and family can play an important role in helping people to recover from depression.

Encourage anyone suffering to speak to their GP, be open about depression, keep in touch, don't be critical or judgemental and try to keep a balance between helping and supporting them to do things for themselves.

Don't forget to take care of yourself as it could put a strain on your wellbeing too.

### Tips to deal with depression

#### Talk to someone you trust:

This may be difficult, but many people find sharing their experiences can help them feel better.

#### Try mindfulness:

Some studies show that practicing mindfulness can help to manage depression.

#### Look after your physical health:

Try to get good sleep, eat regularly, maintain personal hygiene and avoid recreational drugs and alcohol.

#### Keep active:

Any movement, such as taking the stairs, will be beneficial. Getting outdoors for a walk may also help.

#### Keep a mood diary:

Recording changes in your mood may help you notice activities, places or people that make you feel better or worse.

#### Practice self-care:

Looking after yourself, such as doing something you enjoy, can help support your recovery and improve your quality of life.

### SUPPORT AVAILABLE:



[mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk), a mental health charity to make sure no one has to face a mental health problem alone.



[depressionuk.org.uk](http://depressionuk.org.uk), a self-help organisation made up of individuals and local groups.

**SAMARITANS**

Call **116 123** for 24-hour emotional support for anyone feeling down or struggling to cope.

# FEELING STRESSED?

## LAST YEAR 74% OF UK ADULTS REPORTED FEELING OVERWHELMED AND UNABLE TO COPE DUE TO STRESS<sup>1</sup>

NATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS DAY: 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

Stress can negatively impact our mental, emotional and physical health and can lead to anxiety, depression, heart disease, insomnia, and even digestive problems.

That said, sometimes a little stress or pressure can help us to get things done – it is about finding the right balance for you.

Stress in simple terms means pressure or strain. Life constantly subjects us to pressures and stressors. Stress is the response to one or more stressors.

### Examples of Stressors

- Relationship conflicts
- New or increasing work responsibilities
- Extra demands on your time
- Financial strain
- Loss of a loved one
- Health problems
- Moving to a new location
- Exposure to one or more traumatic incidents.

### Stress can be:

- Physical, for example difficulty breathing, panic attacks, blurred eyesight or sore eyes, sleep problems, fatigue, muscle aches, headaches, chest pains, high blood pressure, indigestion or heartburn.
- Emotional and psychological, for example feeling overwhelmed, anxious or experiencing atypical changes in mood such as feeling irritable or depressed.

The long-term physical and mental effects of stress can be detrimental to our health, therefore it is important to be aware of the signs and symptoms.

### Symptoms of Stress

- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in appetite
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased susceptibility to illness

### The Science of Stress Explained

Stress is a natural response that our bodies and minds experience when we perceive a demand or threat. As referenced above, it can be caused by various triggers. When we encounter stress, our bodies release stress hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, which activate the 'fight-or-flight' response and trigger a cascade of physiological changes.

These changes include increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, heightened senses and enhanced energy mobilisation. These bodily changes prepare us to either confront the stressor or flee from it.

In the UK, work related stress, anxiety and depression is the cause of 13.7 million lost working days, costing £28.3 billion/year<sup>2</sup>

### Stress can be categorised into two types – acute stress and chronic stress.

Acute stress is short-term and typically occurs in response to immediate challenges or threats. It can be beneficial in certain situations, such as when it helps us to perform well in a competitive situation or respond quickly to emergencies.

Chronic stress, on the other hand, is long-term stress that persists over an extended period. It can result from ongoing pressures, such as work-related stress, financial difficulties, relationship problems or chronic health conditions. Chronic stress can have detrimental effects on both physical and mental health if not properly managed.

The impact of chronic stress or stress that is constant and lasts over an extended period can be significant. Prolonged exposure to stress hormones can lead to various health problems, including cardiovascular issues, a weakened immune system, digestive disorders, sleep disturbances and mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. Chronic stress has also been associated with an increased risk of developing chronic conditions like obesity, diabetes and certain types of cancer.

Work causes stress in 23% of adults<sup>3</sup>

74% of people feel so stressed that they become overwhelmed or are unable to cope<sup>4,5</sup>

46% of people say that stress results in unhealthy eating patterns<sup>4,5</sup>

# TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

Firstly, we need to recognise and accept that we are stressed; if we don't do this, we will continue to risk health issues linked with stress. Once we have accepted that we are stressed, we can start taking steps to relieve this.

## Tip #1 Breathe

This may sound obvious, but controlling your breath can really help you to calm down and put things into perspective, as well as giving your brain a generous helping of oxygen.

Take a slow deep breath through your nose, hold for five seconds and slowly exhale through your mouth. Repeat five times. This will also help you to re-focus and concentrate on the present moment, particularly if you are feeling overwhelmed.

## Tip #2 Take time out of your busy day and allow yourself time to unwind before bed

Music can help to relax and calm the mind, especially soothing, repetitive music like you would hear in a spa or meditation.

Reading a fiction book may also help you to distance yourself from daily stresses, however you should try to avoid reading things on digital screens.

## Tip #3 Aim for good quality sleep!

Sleep is vital to how effective we are during the day. Poor sleep leads to stress, stress can lead to insomnia and insomnia leads to poor sleep – it's a vicious cycle. We should all aim to get between seven and nine hours sleep each night. It is important to get into a good sleep cycle and having a regular bedtime routine is a key part of this.

Winding down before bed by reading, listening to music or watching TV, aiming to go to bed at the same time every night and ensuring your bedroom is at a comfortable temperature, quiet and dark will all help.



## Tip #4 Fit regular exercise into your routine

We all know we should be exercising regularly, but did you know that this can help to manage stress?

Exercise can lower stress hormones, such as cortisol, and improve sleep quality which can also decrease stress and anxiety. Endorphins or 'happy hormones' are released when we exercise which helps to lift our mood.

And it doesn't need to be high intensity. A brisk walk will do the trick in most cases and is a great way to clear your head!



## Tip #5 Talk to someone

There is some truth in the saying 'a problem shared is a problem halved'!

Often, we can get caught up in our own lives and over think things. If you feel overwhelmed, it helps to talk to someone, whether a family member, a friend or someone you don't know.

They can help you to see things from a different perspective and to prioritise what's important. Making a list of priorities with them will also help.



### DID YOU KNOW...

**Stress can actually be beneficial, and this is called 'eustress'.**

Whereas stress and distress can have a negative impact, eustress can make us feel more motivated and focused, give us more energy and enable us to perform better.

# HOW TO FUEL YOURSELF EFFECTIVELY WHEN STRESSED

NATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS DAY: 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

## Stress and eating patterns are closely linked.

Stress can have a significant impact on our eating behaviours and can lead to changes in our appetite, food choices and overall eating patterns. These may include:

### Emotional eating

During times of stress, some individuals may turn to food as a way to cope with their emotions. This can lead to overeating or consuming unhealthy comfort foods such as sweets and chocolate as a means of feeling better.

### Appetite changes

Stress can disrupt the normal regulation of appetite hormones. Some people may experience a decrease in appetite when stressed while others may have an increased appetite and crave certain unhealthy foods.

### Unhealthy food choices

When feeling stressed, people often reach for convenience foods which are higher in fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt and typically low in nutritional value. Over time, this can lead to weight gain through consuming excess calories and increase the risk of type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke.

### Disrupted meal patterns

High levels of stress can disrupt regular meal patterns, leading to irregular eating habits, skipped meals or excessive snacking throughout the day. This inconsistency can further impact hunger cues and make it challenging to maintain a balanced diet.

### Chronic stress and weight management

Prolonged or chronic stress can disrupt the body's hormonal balance, particularly cortisol, which is known as the stress hormone. Elevated cortisol levels can contribute to weight gain, especially around the abdominal area, making weight management more difficult. It also increases appetite and may cause cravings of sweet, fatty or salty foods which provide excess calories.

### So, how can we combat the effects stress can have on our diet?

Try giving the tips below a go:

- Kick-start your day with breakfast and don't skip it.
- Make a conscious effort to allocate time in your schedule to take a lunch break away from your desk.

- Aim to base your meals around starchy carbohydrates, in particular wholegrains such as brown bread, pasta and rice. This will help to keep you fuller for longer and provide a more constant supply of energy to prevent the 'dip' and minimise the urge to snack on sugary or fatty treats.
- Snack on nuts, fruit and dried fruit, but allow yourself the occasional treat which is fine in moderation.
- Portion out your meals and plan snacks if you can.
- Aim to maintain hydration by drinking little and often throughout the day. Choose drinks with no added sugar such as water and squash. We are made up of 70% water so staying hydrated is essential for our physical and mental performance and we are approximately 2% dehydrated before we even feel thirsty.

# HOW WE MANAGE STRESS



**Lisa Adams**

Lead Personnel Logistics Coordinator – ESS Energy, Government & Infrastructure

Whenever I start to feel stressed at work, it's important for me to take

a step away from whatever activity is causing the stress, take deep breaths and get a moment of calm. I like to look at the activity, break it down into smaller actions and prioritise them – it can help to write them down in a list. If you feel overwhelmed, it can be helpful to speak with your colleagues or friends and, if necessary, your supervisor and let them know how you are feeling – they might be able to reassure you or support you.

Above all, don't keep it bottled up inside – stay calm, take a break and talk to people about how you feel.



**Steph Wright**

Marketing Manager – ESS

Whilst it's not everyone's go to stress management method, I tend to deal with stress

by going to very early morning gym classes, as it sets me up for the day.

Sometimes I go for a short 15-minute walk to get out if I'm having an exceptionally busy day, or working from home all day, just to refresh and regroup. Small bite size resets are just as helpful – a little bit of self-care goes a long way!

Stress is different things to different people and can manifest in many different ways – I think it's about finding what suits you!



**Bre Kirk**

Brand Standards & Training Manager – Compass One

Lifting weights or going for a run improves my mood, raises my self

esteem and helps me sleep great – all of which support me in navigating life's challenges.

I have a fairly packed schedule which can sometimes feel overwhelming. Regular exercise helps manage my stress levels so that I can focus better at work and stay present with friends and family, contributing to a better work-life balance.



**Christine Wheat**

Officers' Mess Supervisor – ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace

I believe that stress comes in various forms and I'm quite lucky as

I don't suffer too badly with it. I find the easiest way to deal with stress is to take ten minutes to myself and think about all the people who are less fortunate and therefore have a more stressful life than I have.

I do a lot of charity work with a great group of people and I have found this helps me immensely. One of our biggest charities is for sick children, and I count myself very lucky that I don't have to deal with the level of stress suffered by those families.

# STAND TOGETHER AGAINST BULLYING

MAKE A  
**NOISE**  
ABOUT  
BULLYING

HEALTHIER MIND

HEALTHIER BODY

ANTI-BULLYING WEEK: 13<sup>TH</sup>-17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

This year's theme is 'make a noise about bullying', so why not check in on your loved ones and help to increase awareness around the harm that bullying can do?

## What is bullying?

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

It is important to remember that anyone can be a victim of bullying. It is not limited to the school playground and can happen in our personal lives and in the workplace. There are many different types of bullying, including verbal, physical, social and cyberbullying.

## Spotting the signs of bullying

Bullying is now more prevalent than ever due to the rise of cyberbullying through the internet and social media. This can mean victims feel unable to escape, even at home, making it very important to spot the signs that someone may be being bullied. These can include:

### Emotional and Behavioural Signs

- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Changes in eating patterns
- Frequent tears or anger
- Mood swings
- Often feeling unwell in the morning and not wanting to go to school or work
- Becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Refusing to talk about what is wrong
- Performance being negatively affected
- Often being alone or excluded from groups.

## Physical Signs

- Unexplained injuries
- Missing or damaged belongings
- Changes in weight and/or appearance.

As well as being able to spot the signs of someone who may be being bullied, it's also incredibly important that we understand what bullying is and that we call out this behaviour as unacceptable when we see it.

Many of us are not sure how to handle bullying due to the fear that reporting the issue could make things worse. If you are being bullied, or you feel that someone else is, you can call the National Bullying Helpline for advice.

**National Bullying Helpline:**  
0300 323 0169

**Stop Bullying | National Centre Against Bullying (ncab.org.au)**

# HELL'S KITCHENS

HEALTHIER MIND

To say the kitchens I grew up in and learnt my trade in were 'colourful' is an understatement!



**Jay Averill**  
Regional Executive Chef – ESS  
Defence, Marine & Aerospace

At the time, it was accepted that being a chef meant you were open to all kinds of 'banter' – shouting, swearing, finger pointing and demeaning others were commonplace. It took a lot of character and a thick skin to get me through some shifts!

However, times have now changed for the better as kitchen leads and

those who work in kitchens are much more aware of other people's needs, wellbeing and mental health.

Chefs are now more responsible in ensuring kitchens are no longer hostile environments. We aim to look out for each other, communicate with dignity and respect and act quickly to resolve issues within the team.

I choose to take the time to listen to my chefs and encourage and support them. I've always found that this means my chef brigade works more

effectively, people enjoy coming to work, absence is lower and retention rates are higher.

If someone does feel like bullying is impacting their work or they witness unacceptable behaviours towards others, I would urge them to speak up.

Kitchens are very pressurised environments, with many deadlines to meet. Manage your time well, treat others in the way you wish to be treated and be mindful and considerate to the team around you.

# KindnESS



WORLD KINDNESS DAY: 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

In November we celebrate World Kindness Day, but shouldn't kindness just be the norm in our everyday lives – such as sending an uplifting text, letting someone merge into traffic, sharing a compliment with a co-worker or making someone a cuppa?



In this day and age, no one is immune to stress.



### Victoria Martin

Group Manager – ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace

What if I told you I could offer you a solution to reduce stress and worry,

enhance your mood, increase your productivity and even reduce wrinkles?

I present to you the beautifully packaged, one-dose required, low-cost treatment of... Kindness! Please do not underestimate the power and strength of kindness, both within your workplace or personal life.

A little bit of science behind the concept of kindness...

- ♥ It can reduce blood pressure
- ♥ It can increase motivation and endurance
- ♥ It can reduce pain and stress
- ♥ It can strengthen your immune system.

A smile offers a mood boost and aids the reduction of cortisol by releasing endorphins. In fact, trials have proven that kindness can make you live longer!

### How To Promote Kindness

Consider what values are important to you, then advocate and live by these.

Communication is the spine to the book and can be verbal or non-verbal. Make eye contact, be present in the moment of engagement, be mindful of tone in verbal and written interactions, actively listen and offer constructive responses.

Supportive behaviours are integral within our work and home environments.

Share your skills and do not be afraid to ask for support – providing or receiving assistance can act as a huge mood booster for both parties! It also plants the seeds of collaboration which can grow to produce kinder environments for the future.

Advocating kindness provides positive outcomes, including improved engagement, inclusivity, empathy, respect for one another and the feeling of safety. In the workplace, these experiences translate to retaining great people and providing excellent service for customers.



“Kindness is always in stock.”



“Always be a little kinder than necessary.”



## Why not take the two-minute kindness challenge below?

### Step #1

#### Close your eyes.

Think of someone that makes you smile and repay the emotion by reaching out.

### Step #2

#### Call this person or send them a text message.

If your reason to smile is a loyal pet, give them an extra tickle!

### Step #3

#### Let the person know that they are your reason for smiling today!

# THE ART OF SELF CARE

## NURTURING YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL

SELF CARE WEEK: 13<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

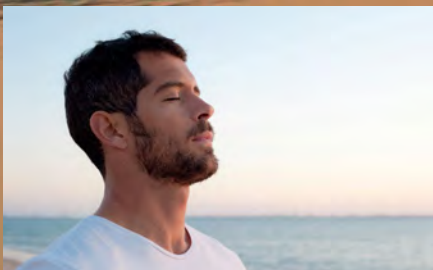


### Prioritising you – the power of self-care

Self-care refers to the intentional practice of taking care of your own physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

It involves making time for activities and practices that promote relaxation and rejuvenation, reduce stress and foster a positive relationship with yourself.

Self-care is essential for maintaining overall health and preventing burnout in our fast-paced and demanding lives.



#### Self-care practices include:

- **Physical:** Engaging in regular exercise, getting enough sleep, eating a balanced and nutritious diet and taking time for relaxation and leisure activities.
- **Emotional:** Identifying and expressing emotions, seeking support from friends or loved ones, journaling and engaging in activities that bring joy and fulfilment.
- **Mental:** Practicing mindfulness and meditation, engaging in hobbies or activities that challenge the mind and setting boundaries to manage stress and avoid overwhelm.
- **Social:** Nurturing positive relationships, spending time with loved ones and participating in social activities that bring joy and a sense of connection.
- **Spiritual:** Exploring and connecting with personal beliefs, values or practices that provide a sense of purpose and meaning.
- **Intellectual:** Expanding your knowledge and curiosity by exploring new subjects or pursuing hobbies and interests that challenge and inspire you.
- **Environmental:** Creating a comfortable and organised living and working space, spending time in nature and being mindful of your environmental impact.
- **Setting boundaries:** Learning to say 'no' when necessary and prioritising personal needs and wellbeing.
- **Unplugging from technology:** Taking breaks from screens and social media to reduce stress and improve focus.
- **Engaging in hobbies:** Pursuing activities that bring joy and relaxation, such as reading, painting, gardening or playing a musical instrument. If you are struggling to think of ideas, try to remember what you used to enjoy doing when you were younger, or think of the activities you have always wanted to try but have never got round to.





Self-care is not a 'one size fits all' concept and the practices can be unique to each individual – it is essential to find what works best for you. Consistently incorporating self-care into your routine can have significant positive effects on your physical and mental health, leading to increased overall wellbeing and a more balanced and fulfilling life. Taking time for self-care is not selfish, but rather a way to ensure you have the capacity and energy to be present and supportive to others in your life.



# NUTRITION AND HYDRATION FOR EXERCISE

NATIONAL FITNESS DAY: 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023

While we know that sports drinks like Lucozade Sport and Powerade can be beneficial for running a marathon or taking part in a triathlon, in recent years similar products have been developed and marketed for gym goers and those participating in exercise classes.

This can result in confusion over the need to take on energy or fluid during exercise. As a rule, you don't need to think about taking fuel on board for any physical activity lasting under 60 minutes. A healthy, balanced diet and appropriate hydration should be enough. For anything lasting longer than this, you may want to start considering your energy and hydration strategy – this also depends on the intensity and duration of your exercise, as well as your end goal.

## Carbohydrate

This is the body's main source of energy. It provides 4kcal/g of food and is broken down most efficiently to produce energy. There are two forms:

### Starchy carbohydrates:

These are the body's preferred source of energy and provide slow releasing energy. They also provide fibre and B vitamins which help release the energy from carbohydrates and aid our digestive health. Foods include pasta, rice, potatoes and grains. The wholegrain varieties provide more fibre and release energy even more slowly.

### Sugary carbohydrates:

These provide an instant boost of energy, but also lead to a slump which is why we need our starchy carbohydrates. Foods include fruits and confectionery products. It is important to note that fruit also provides vitamins and minerals which can benefit health, whereas confectionery provides no other nutritional benefit and leads to the consumption of excess calories which can result in weight gain over time.

Following the principles of the Eatwell Guide will provide you with all the energy, nutrients, vitamins and minerals you need to help fuel you through your day, regardless of your physical activity level.

As your energy intake increases or decreases, the portion size of each food group consumed should change in proportion, but starchy carbohydrates, for example, will always make up a third of your daily intake.

If you are participating in physical activity lasting longer than 60 minutes, you should pay attention to what you eat before, during and after. This will reduce tiredness, improve performance, speed up recovery and help you have the energy to train harder and longer! You don't need to use a specific sports product such as a gel – eating a high carbohydrate snack including fruit, dried fruit or a cereal bar containing fruit and nuts is a great option.



1. British Dietetic Association. Sport and exercise: food fact sheet. <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/sport-exercise-nutrition.html>

2. British Heart Foundation. Hydration and exercise: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/events/training-zone/nutrition-for-sporting-events/hydration-and-exercise>

## Hydration

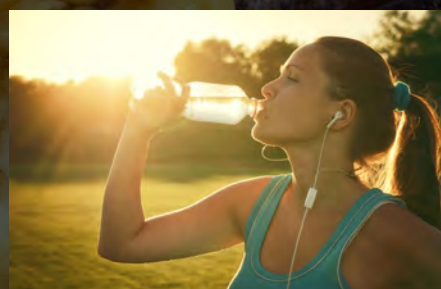
It is important that we maintain our hydration every day as it can really impact how we feel. Our bodies are made up of around 70% water and it is vital that we keep this fluid topped up as we lose it through sweat and urine.

We are approximately 2% dehydrated before we even feel thirsty which can already be affecting our performance. Fluids also form part of the Eatwell Guide. It is recommended that you

drink between 6-8 200ml glasses of fluid per day. A good idea to help keep fluid levels topped up is to drink little and often throughout the day. This may include water, low fat milk, low sugar or sugar free drinks such as tea and coffee. It is important to remember that unless you are drinking water or sugar free options, fluid contains calories which contribute to your daily amount.

As with energy, if participating in physical activity lasting for longer than 60 minutes you will need to think about your fluid requirements and ensure you are drinking enough to stay hydrated.

Monitoring the colour of your urine is a great way to ensure you are fully hydrated. The guide below will help you keep track.

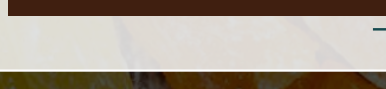
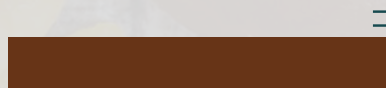
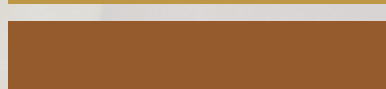
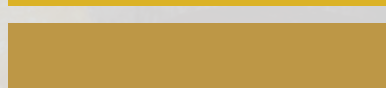
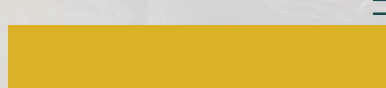
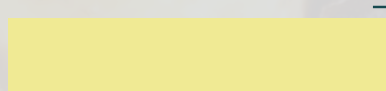


Exercise can take a wide variety of forms and the most important thing is to find an activity that you enjoy! The following article describes the positive impacts that an everyday activity like walking can have.

If you decide to take a walk that is longer than 60 minutes, you will need to think about topping up your fluid and energy levels. A bottle of water and a cereal bar, piece of fruit or dried fruit are all good options to help you refuel.

If you are planning on being out for much longer, take something more substantial, like a sandwich, and check if there is anywhere that you can top up your water.

If you are planning on taking part in a fitness event and would like some support, please contact [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk) where we can give you tailored nutrition advice to meet your training needs.



**Hydrated.** Aim to drink little and often to maintain good hydration.

### De-hydrated.

Your mental and physical performance at daily tasks will start to be impaired. You may feel more tired, lethargic and irritable. You **MUST** drink some fluid.

### Severely de-hydrated.

You really need to drink more fluid or your physical and mental performance will be extremely impaired to the extent you may collapse as your body cannot cope.

# MY STEPS CHALLENGE

Anyone who has spent any time with me over the past two years will no doubt have heard me going on about the benefits of walking!



**Louise Allsop**  
Communications Manager  
– ESS

I've done 10,000 steps every day since July 2021.

What started as a short-term challenge to myself has become a slight obsession, but one which has had an amazingly positive impact on my life!

Once upon a time I was a keen runner and I'm also a dog owner, so I was under the impression that I was relatively fit and active. But a Fitbit for my 42<sup>nd</sup> birthday showed me otherwise! It turns out that running a few half marathons in my twenties and walking a very lazy dog don't count for much, and I was surprised to find how little exercise I was actually doing.

So, I decided to make a change... it was the middle of summer and I told myself that I would do 10,000 steps



a day until Christmas. Six months seemed like long enough, especially as the days would only be getting colder and darker. I didn't expect the transformational effect it would have on me and that I'd still be going over two years later!

Firstly, it's improved my physical health. I very quickly felt fitter than I had in a long time, which was weird as I was only walking and it doesn't really feel like exercise! I lost weight without changing my diet, noticed my muscles becoming more toned and felt aches and pains that I'd had for a while start to disappear.

Mentally, it gives me the time to think and process or the space not to think at all. I can get a new perspective on things while I'm out for a walk. On workdays, I go at lunchtime whenever it's possible and I often find that something which seemed too difficult before I went out is much easier after a few thousand steps.

And there have been other benefits too! I've had some great chats with friends and family while out on a wander, Rosie the dog is loving the new sniffing opportunities and I've seen some fab scenery on the way. The highlights have included discovering new places close to home in the Cotswolds and finally making it up Mount Snowdon after 20 years of meaning to go.

On a recent trip to see my sister in Australia, we got up and out most mornings and spent time together before the day had even started.



I read somewhere that committing to a goal outstrips your willpower in the moment, and it's definitely true that the 10k target is the only thing that's got me out of the door on some days! Rather than deliberating over whether to go, I just make a plan for how it will fit into my day and do it. I've walked in the cold, in the rain and in the dark – I even did all my daily steps in Hong Kong Airport recently – but I know for sure that I'll feel much better after.

So, why not get your trainers on and give it a go? You could listen to music (90s dance is my soundtrack of choice), catch up on a podcast or, even better, get outside with someone else and combine the benefits of exercise and fresh air with the opportunity to catch up.

Happy walking!

# UNDER PRESSURE

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS WEEK: 4<sup>TH</sup>-10<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023

**Blood pressure refers to the force exerted by circulating blood against the walls of blood vessels, primarily the arteries, as the heart pumps blood throughout the body.**

It is commonly measured using two values: systolic pressure and diastolic pressure. The systolic pressure represents the pressure in the arteries when the heart contracts and pumps blood, while the diastolic pressure represents the pressure in the arteries when the heart is at rest between beats.

Blood pressure is typically measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg) and is expressed as a ratio of the systolic pressure over the diastolic pressure. For example, a blood pressure reading of 120/80mmg indicates a systolic pressure of 120 mmhg and a diastolic pressure of 80 mmhg. Blood pressure is an essential physiological parameter as it reflects the pressure within the circulatory system and provides information about the health and functions of the cardiovascular system. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a condition in which the force of blood

against the artery wall is consistently too high. It can put strain on the heart and blood vessels and increase the risk of various health problems such as heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Low blood pressure, or hypotension, occurs when the pressure in the arteries is abnormally low and can cause symptoms such as dizziness, fainting and fatigue.

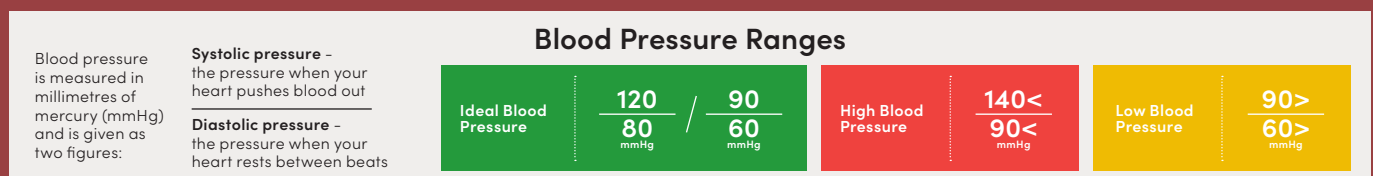
Maintaining healthy blood pressure levels is important for overall cardiovascular health. Lifestyle factors such as regular physical activity, a balanced diet, maintaining a healthy weight, managing stress, limiting alcohol consumption and avoiding tobacco use can help promote healthy blood pressure levels. In some cases, medication may be prescribed to manage high blood pressure. It is important to consult with a healthcare professional for

personalised advice and monitoring of blood pressure levels.

A diet high in salt is known to contribute to increased blood pressure. There is more salt in food than we realise – and that's without us even adding it to our food. The maximum recommended intake of salt per day is 6g. On average we consume an extra 2.5g.

#### Tips on how to reduce salt in your diet:

- Don't add salt when cooking and experiment with other herbs and spices to enhance the flavour.
- Opt for lower salt products – anything higher than 1.5 per 100g and 1.8 per portion is counted as high (red).
- Don't add salt at the table – try avoiding placing it on the table for others to add.
- Avoid cured foods such as bacon or choose lower salt options.



Taken from NHS UK ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

#### The different types of salt and their impact on health:

**Table salt** is the most common type of salt used in households and processed foods. It is heavily refined, often containing additives like anti-caking agents to prevent clumping. Excessive consumption of table salt has been linked to hypertension (high blood pressure), which is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

**Sea salt** is produced by evaporating seawater, leaving behind natural minerals and trace elements. It is minimally processed and may contain small amounts of beneficial minerals like magnesium, potassium and calcium. However, sea salt has the same sodium content as table salt, so its impact on blood pressure is similar.

**Himalayan pink salt** is mined from ancient salt deposits in the Himalayan

mountains and the salt gets its distinctive pink colour from trace minerals. Himalayan salt contains minerals like iron, potassium and magnesium, but the amounts are minimal compared to other dietary sources. Despite its mineral content, it still primarily consists of sodium chloride, so its effects on health are comparable to table salt.

**Kosher salt** has a coarser texture and larger flakes compared to table salt. It doesn't contain additives like iodine, making it a preferred option for some cooking applications. Nutritionally, it is nearly identical to table salt and should be consumed in moderation.

**Celtic sea salt** is hand-harvested from Brittany, France, and retains its moisture and mineral content. This form of salt contains trace minerals like magnesium,

calcium and potassium. However, the mineral content is relatively low, so it should not be considered a significant source of these nutrients.

While some types of salt may offer trace amounts of beneficial minerals, they are not substantial enough to have a major impact on health. The primary concern remains the high sodium content present in all types of salt. To promote better health, it's essential to limit overall salt intake and focus on a balanced diet rich in whole foods, fruits and vegetables. Individuals with specific health conditions, such as hypertension or kidney problems, should consult their healthcare provider regarding their salt intake.

# WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

NATIONAL CHOLESTEROL MONTH: OCTOBER 2023



National Cholesterol Month takes place each October and the campaign is designed to create awareness and increased understanding of cholesterol and the associated health implications.

The campaign encourages everyone to take control and find out more about their own cholesterol as well as learning all about how to keep a healthy balance.

Cholesterol is a fatty substance which is needed by the cells in our body. However, too much cholesterol in the blood can lead to a build-up in your arteries, putting you at increased risk of heart problems. High cholesterol is mainly caused by regularly eating foods that are high in saturated fat, not exercising enough, smoking and drinking alcohol.

It is so important to be aware of our cholesterol levels because high cholesterol does not tend to cause symptoms until it is too late.

The only way to find out your cholesterol levels is by having a blood test.

Eating a healthy, balanced diet that is low in saturated fat and high in fibre is a great way to keep your cholesterol levels healthy. Check out our recipe swaps below to help you and your loved ones maintain healthy cholesterol levels.

## There are two types of cholesterol:

**High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL):**  
AKA "Good" cholesterol: it removes other types of cholesterol from your bloodstream.

**Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL):**  
AKA "Bad" cholesterol: it contributes to the increase of fats in the arteries.

## Cholesterol : What the numbers mean

Type of Cholesterol	Healthy level (mmol/l)
Total cholesterol	5mmol/L or below
Total cholesterol to HDL cholesterol ratio	Below 6
HDL (good cholesterol)	1mmol/L or above for men or 1.2mmol/L or above for women
LDL (bad cholesterol)	4mmol/L or below

Taken from NHS UK ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))



## CHOLESTEROL FRIENDLY RECIPE SWAPS

Spaghetti Bolognese	→	Use 50% lentils and 50% reduced fat mince, as well as wholegrain spaghetti.
Bangers & Mash	→	Grill reduced fat sausages, mash potatoes with margarine, serve with vegetables.
Chicken Curry	→	Cook with vegetable oil, remove the skin from the chicken, use natural low-fat yoghurt instead of coconut milk, serve with brown rice.

If you are worried about your cholesterol, book an appointment with your GP.

# BALANCE AND MODERATION



In June 2022 I called an ambulance for myself for the first time ever.



**Matt Moseley**

Regional Executive Chef – ESS  
Defence, Marine & Aerospace

I had got back from a week on the road and was sitting on the sofa, just before going to bed,

when both my arms suddenly went numb, then I had excruciating stabbing pains at varying points up my legs and arms. Then it hit. My chest tightened up as though there was someone sitting on it and the whole left side became so painful, I nearly passed out. I tried to convince myself for a couple of minutes that it would pass – this didn't happen.

The paramedics were quick and once they arrived it was only minutes before they confirmed I had had a heart attack, and from the ECG that I had had one in my sleep sometime the night before.

The most overwhelming feeling came over me and lasted for at least 12 hours – absolute fear. People say your life flashes before you which was not the case for me. It was instant fear that I was not going to be around for my family; that I would never see my wife and two kids again. I spent the first of three nights in hospital in tears and thinking that this was probably it.

Following scans and blood tests and lots of medication, my condition stabilised, and the consultants started to work on treatment.

I was released from hospital early the following week with a sweet shop of medication that I take to this day.

The cause was a poorly functioning valve on the left side of my heart: it was not pumping blood around my body at a required frequency or volume. Medicine now makes this function better and I am asymptomatic day-to-day.

My condition sits in the heart disease bracket, but fortunately I am no longer in heart failure.

This is likely to be a long-term condition for me and, thanks to my treatment, I should be able to live a relatively normal life. However, there are a few 'buts' to this.

- The overarching cause is still unknown and further investigation and procedures will likely still be needed in the future.
- A huge change of diet and a lot more exercise, albeit quite steady – no powerlifting or marathons here!
- As a chef I love all food – there is nothing I don't enjoy or at least try. My cooking and eating were all about maximum flavour and texture, which invariably means fats, salt and sugar – we have a problem! All of these were no-goes, as well as alcohol in significant quantity and caffeine.

The lifestyle changes are the fundamentally jarring aspects of my life now.

My initial thought was: *"my life is really not going to be very enjoyable"*.

For some time, through fear of imminent death, I stuck rigidly to a precise and, frankly, dull diet of fruit, vegetables, nuts and water – aware that this didn't have much longevity.

However, I've since learned **balance** and **moderation**: two words that certainly don't occur to a chef in their 30s or 40s, and I have to say this is when changes should be made.

I will drink red wine now. For six months I was terrified to even look at a wine bottle, but I'm over that now and averaging out a bottle of red wine across a week is not detrimental at all.

I have cut out butter entirely and use a cholesterol lowering spread – this has been a revelation for normal use as a spread and for cooking, along with olive oil.

I take the skin off the roast chicken and avoid the lovely crackling on a roast pork (I know, chefs... blasphemy!) as too much saturated fat in your diet can raise 'bad' LDL cholesterol in your blood, which can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Unfortunately, this is one to avoid.

I have raised my game massively with veggies and fruit, and now eat mostly a plant-forward diet, along with my whole family, who really enjoy aspects of this diet too. But, if I'm honest, I do still crave certain things on a regular basis, like Jaffa Cakes, Haribo gummies and Krispy Kreme doughnuts!

The key word here is **balance** – too much of anything enjoyable usually ain't great. Whether it be food, alcohol or going out, there needs to be balance!

This is no less true at work. I work with a great team of people, both in my region and in the culinary team – we all work very hard, we all go above and beyond. I guess that's just normal and people in the service industry usually do sacrifice their time and energy for others – it's what we do.

So, here's another 'but'...

**We need balance.**

Don't rush around and don't try to fit too much in. It usually devalues what you are doing anyway.

If you are on the road, consider hotels rather than travelling back home a considerable distance. Give yourself the time and space to stop working under pressure.

Planning is huge for me now. Giving each visit or meeting the time and space to get there and back in a manner that doesn't cause stress and anxiety is key, and it will usually be more productive.

When I was asked to write a few lines for this publication, I really didn't want to come across as whiny or that I was giving a lecture: these are just changes I have made to try and give my heart the best chance, alongside treatment and medication. I'm doing well and feeling better as time goes on.

My only real regret, if any, is that I didn't make these changes a decade ago.

Take care of your heart ... you've only got the one!

# DIARY OF A SERIAL QUITTER

## STOP TOBER

This year marks ten years since I last had a cigarette. During a recent check-up my doctor congratulated me for being a non-smoker... unfortunately I don't see myself that way.



**Tom Lannary**  
Marketing Director - ESS

I still can't call myself a non-smoker even though, I'm told, after ten years of not smoking, your lungs revert to the state they were in before you started smoking, and nicotine leaves your system in 72 hours.

I've constantly battled with trying to quit, and my current hiatus is just another press of the pause button, which in the past has varied from one day to three and a half years to my current stint of ten years.

Both my parents smoked, and I remember going to the newsagents to pick up cigarettes for them when I

was still in primary school! I didn't try my first cigarette until I was 15, but I was a quick learner and within a short while a short while I was a standard 20 cigarettes-a-day smoker, that could easily go to 40+ on a night out. By university I was a professional smoker at my worst on 60-a-day, buying them by the carton of 200.

It was also during this time that I first tried to quit. As smokers, we all knew the health issues around smoking, but we were young and invincible. The only issue for me was the cost. I'd even tried switching to rolling my own, but that took so long and I was spending just as much.

My first few attempts to quit were to go cold turkey, just set a time and stop.

Normally it would be after waking up with a thick cough and deciding today would be the day – but by the afternoon I would have succumbed and lit up.

I did manage to give up for a fortnight once, when I had a project that pretty much took up all my time and kept me distracted. However, once that project had finished, we celebrated with an evening at the pub and, true to form, I accepted the offer of a cigarette from a friend and I was back smoking.

And so, my yo-yo smoking habit was set. Sometimes I would smoke for several years without trying to quit, whilst other times I would try quitting two or three times in a single year.

### As for techniques...

Well, I've tried most of them:

- **Cut down** – a great idea that never lasted the day.
- **Hypnotherapy** – I may be too much of a control freak to let go: I couldn't relax.
- **Nicotine patches** – larger patches were great, but not the smaller ones ... I just wanted more nicotine!
- **Nicotine gum** – I found myself adding a stick of mint gum just to make it taste better.
- **Allen Carr stop smoking course** – it was a waste of time with me, but I have a friend who has used it to give up twice: this second time it's been eight years without a cigarette!
- **Champix tablets** – my partner tried three sessions without success. However, I have friends who swear by them and haven't had a cigarette for three to four years.
- **Nicorette spray** – similar to nicotine gum but you can get a mint flavoured version, so the taste is better. My partner used this method for giving up, eventually switching from Nicorette to a minty breath spray as a placebo; it's worked so far...
- **Bloody mindedness** – deciding that you are just going to do it, and warning everyone you know that you're probably going to be irritable and annoying for a little while. I was smoke free for three and a half years this way... The problem was that I believed I was a non-smoker, so one night I decided I could be a social smoker and 'just have one'. Of course, that one led to another... which led to a pack of 20... and there I was: a smoker again!

Which brings me to my latest attempt with e-cigarettes. The key for me was using it in the same way as if I was smoking. I would still go to the smoking shelter, I wouldn't smoke indoors and I found I was using it less and less. Six months later I found I hadn't used it for a month, but was still carrying it with me everywhere. Four years later I was still taking it with me if I knew I would be with smokers or in a stressful situation – I didn't use it, but it was there as a crutch.

I now dislike the smell of cigarettes and cigars and often think "did I smell like that?" when someone who has had a cigarette passes by.

Over my 30-year on and off smoking habit, at current prices, I've spent close to £200k on cigarettes. I've been lucky with my health so far, some of friends less so. For now, the pause button is pressed and hopefully it will stick.

## STOP TOBER

If you're thinking of quitting, why not use Stoptober as a reason to try?

And if you fail, keep trying – eventually you'll manage to press the pause button for a long time.



## WHAT ABOUT E-CIGARETTES?

There are lots of inaccuracies and misconceptions about e-cigarettes and vaping, often perpetuated through media reporting.

Despite the mixed messages we might be hearing about the safety of e-cigarettes, there is growing consensus around the evidence.

While the use of these products is not without some risk, when compared to smoking regular cigarettes, e-cigarettes are far less harmful. This view is supported by a number of bodies that are authorities when it comes to our health, including Cancer Research UK, Action on Smoking and Health, the British Medical Association and more.

There are almost three million e-cigarette users in England

Four out of ten smokers and ex-smokers wrongly think nicotine causes most tobacco smoking-related cancer

### Lets bust some of those vaping myths

#### 1. E-cigarettes aren't regulated and we don't know what is in them

The UK has some of the strictest regulation for e-cigarettes in the world. Under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations of 2016, e-cigarette products are subject to minimum standards of quality and safety, as well as packaging and labelling requirements to provide consumers with the information they need to make informed choices.

Four out of ten smokers and ex-smokers wrongly think nicotine causes most tobacco smoking-related cancer, when evidence shows that, although nicotine is the reason people become addicted, it actually carries minimal risk of harm to health. Not to mention that e-cigarette vapour does not contain tar or carbon monoxide, two of the most harmful elements in tobacco smoke. It does contain some chemicals found in tobacco smoke, but at much lower levels.

#### 2. E-cigarettes will encourage young people to start smoking

Public Health England's latest report found no evidence so far to support the concern that e-cigarettes are a route into smoking among young people. UK surveys show that young people are experimenting with e-cigarettes, but regular use is rare and confined almost entirely to those who already smoke. Meanwhile, smoking rates among young people in the UK continue to decline. In the years when adult and youth vaping in the UK were increasing, the numbers of young people believing that it was 'not ok' to smoke was increasing too.

#### 3. Exposure to e-cigarette vapour is harmful to bystanders

The evidence is clear that exposure to secondhand smoke is harmful, which is why the UK has laws prohibiting smoking cigarettes in enclosed public places and workplaces. These laws do not cover vaping because, unlike cigarettes, there is no side-stream vapour emitted by an e-cigarette into the atmosphere, just the exhaled aerosol. Public Health England's 2018 evidence review found that, to date, there have been no identified health risks of passive vaping to the health of bystanders. Though it's important to remember that people with asthma and other respiratory conditions can be sensitive to a range of environmental irritants, including pollen and cold air.

#### 4. E-cigarettes don't help you quit smoking

The first major UK clinical trial on the efficacy of e-cigarettes found that, when combined with expert face-to-face behavioural support, they were almost twice as effective at helping smokers to quit as other nicotine replacement treatments such as patches or gum.

In summary, e-cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes are not the same and shouldn't be treated as such. It's important that England's seven million smokers are aware of the differences and have accurate information to inform their health decisions. E-cigarettes aren't completely risk free but they carry a fraction of the risk of smoking and are helping thousands of smokers to quit and stay smokefree.

Clearing up some myths around e-cigarettes - UK Health Security Agency ([blog.gov.uk](https://www.blog.gov.uk))

# UNRAVELLING THE COMPLEXITIES OF BLOOD CANCER



## BLOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH: SEPTEMBER 2023

- Blood cancer is the fifth most common cancer in the UK, with over 40,000 people diagnosed each year.
- 1 in every 16 men and 1 in every 22 women will develop it at some point in their lives.
- Blood cancer is the most common type of childhood cancer.

### What is blood cancer?

Blood cancer is a term that is used to describe many different types of cancer that can affect your blood, bone marrow or lymphatic system. It happens when something goes wrong with the development of your blood cells.

### What are the different types of blood cancer?

There are several different types of blood cancer, including leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma, myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) and myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPN). They each have different symptoms, treatments and expected outcomes. Here is a brief overview of some of the most common types:

- Leukaemias are cancers that affect the blood cells, mainly the white blood cells and bone marrow. These cells often divide too quickly and don't develop properly, which compromises the immune system and the body's ability to fight infections.
- Lymphomas are rare types of blood cancer that affect the lymphatic system, an important part of the immune system that produces and transports white blood cells around the body and removes waste products from the blood.
- Myeloma (also referred to as multiple myeloma) is a blood cancer that affects a certain type of white blood cell called a plasma cell. These cells are made in the bone marrow and produce antibodies which help fight infection.

### What causes blood cancer?

Blood cancer is caused by changes (mutations) in the DNA within blood cells. This causes the blood cells to start behaving abnormally. In almost all cases, these changes are linked to things we can't control. They happen during a person's lifetime, so they are not genetic faults you can pass on.

### What can cause a mutation?

Because we continually need new cells, our DNA is continually replicating. Errors can occur during this process, leading to a mutation. Mutations can also occur through environmental means, for example exposure to tobacco smoke, harmful chemicals, radiation or UV light.

### What are the symptoms of blood cancer?

People with blood cancer may experience a range of symptoms, some of the most common include:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Unexplained bruising or bleeding
- Lumps or swellings
- Shortness of breath/breathlessness
- Night sweats
- Recurrent, persistent or severe infections
- Unexplained fever (37.5°C or above)
- Rash or itchy skin
- Pain in bones, joints or abdomen
- Tiredness and fatigue
- Paleness (pallor).

### Who is at risk of blood cancer?

Anyone can suffer from blood cancer. Some types affect children, though the symptoms and treatment can be different for children and adults.

Although the reasons that someone develops blood cancer aren't known, there are factors that can affect an individual's risk:

- **Age** - The risk of blood cancer goes up as you get older, just under 40% of people diagnosed are aged 75 or over.
- **Sex** - Men have higher rates of blood cancer than women.
- **Family history** - If members of your family have had blood cancer you may be at increased risk.
- **Ethnicity** - Unfortunately, data about ethnicity in blood cancers is not routinely collected, meaning we don't really know the true relationship between blood cancer and ethnicity in the UK. Though rates of some blood cancers do appear to be slightly higher in men from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- **Radiation or chemical exposure** - This includes chemotherapy and radiation therapy as this increases the risk of DNA mutations.

It is important to note that many people with known risk factors don't get blood cancer and that many people who are diagnosed have none of these risk factors.

### The importance of donating blood

Giving blood saves lives. The blood you give is a lifeline in an emergency and for people who need long-term treatments. We need new blood donors from all backgrounds to ensure there is the right blood available for patients who need it.

In the UK, we need:

- Nearly 400 new donors a day to meet demand
- Around 135,000 new donors a year to replace those who can no longer donate
- 40,000 more black donors to meet growing demand for better-matched blood
- 30,000 new donors with priority blood types such as O negative every year
- More young people to start giving blood so we have enough blood in the future.

There are four main blood groups – A, B, AB and O. Your blood group is determined by the genes you inherit from your parents. Each group can be either positive or negative, meaning there are eight blood groups in total. Some blood types are more common than others. O positive and A positive are some of the most common blood types, with almost half of the UK population being type O (around 48%).

It would be easy to assume that blood donors with the more common blood types are not in demand, but the opposite is actually true as so many people require this type of blood. The rarest blood type is AB negative, with only one in 100 donors falling into this group. There are even blood group sub-types which can vary between individuals of different backgrounds. For example, more black donors are currently needed because of a rise in demand for some rare blood types that are more common in people of black heritage.

Thinking of becoming a blood donor? Head to: [blood.co.uk](http://blood.co.uk) to find out more.

# BREAST CANCER: ARE YOU BREAST AWARE?

HEALTHIER BODY

**OCT**  **BER**  
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH: OCTOBER 2023

## DID YOU KNOW...

1 woman is diagnosed every 10 minutes

1 in 7 women will get breast cancer

1 in 3 breast cancers are preventable

Men can get breast cancer too

Get to know your breasts and what is normal for you. This will help you to spot changes quickly.

### Potential breast cancer symptoms to look out for include:

- Change in size or shape
- Change in skin texture
- Lumps or lumpy areas
- Changes in your nipple
- Nipple discharge
- Pain or swelling in the breast area, including around your armpit.

Those who are menstruating should perform their breast checks seven to ten days after their period starts as breasts can be more tender and swollen during this time.

If you discover a persistent lump or any changes in your breast tissue, it is very important that you see a GP straight away. Though eight out of ten lumps are benign, all require evaluation to confirm they are not cancerous. It is important to note that these symptoms can also be caused by conditions other than breast cancer.

If breast cancer is suspected, a healthcare provider will typically conduct a thorough physical examination and order additional tests such as mammography, ultrasound or biopsy to confirm the diagnosis and determine the stage and characteristics of the cancer.

Early detection increases the success rate of treatment, therefore regular self-examination, clinical breast exams and mammograms are important.

### Reducing your risk of breast cancer

- 1 **Drink less alcohol** - It's best not to drink. If you drink, do so in moderation. Do not go beyond the UK government guidelines of 14 units of alcohol per week.
- 2 **Get active** - By being physically active, you can reduce your breast cancer risk by around 20%.
- 3 **Maintain a healthy weight.**
- 4 **Eat more fruit and veg.**
- 5 **Be aware of harmful chemicals** - Many chemicals in everyday products and the environment may affect your risk of breast cancer.

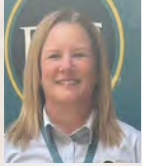
Head to [breastcanceruk.org.uk](https://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk) to learn more about reducing your risk, sign up for a monthly text reminder to check your breasts and more.

# MY MENOPAUSE JOURNEY

HEALTHIER BODY

HEALTHIER FOOD

WORLD MENOPAUSE DAY: 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023



**Deborah Crampton**  
General Manager - ESS  
Defence, Marine & Aerospace

I first noticed that things were changing in my mid-forties. My periods became less frequent and by the time I was 50 (2018) they had completely stopped for over two years.

My moods were up and down and I wasn't sleeping well, usually waking up around 03:00 and not being able to go back to sleep. I have suffered with anxiety for years but, along with my menopausal symptoms, this increased and I would cry at the drop of a hat.

My memory was awful. Brain fog is so hard to explain – having been someone who could remember names and numbers easily, this started to worry me and my first thought was Alzheimer's or dementia as it became so bad. My husband would tell me about things, like appointments or days

out, and I would completely forget. As the brain fog got worse, I often questioned my ability to do my job.

I also had heart palpitations, vertigo, hair loss, joint pain and struggled to learn new tasks.

18 months ago, having spoken to others within the business, I was advised to watch the documentary with Davina McCall about her menopause journey – I would recommend it to any woman thinking they may be going through this. It was a revelation. I decided that enough was enough and rang my doctor. We went through all my symptoms and how I was feeling generally, and it was decided it was time to look at taking HRT.

My doctor prescribed the Elleste Duet tablet as a starting point. Although it has taken close to a year to feel the effects, I have to say it has been

a game changer for me. It doesn't stop the symptoms completely, but it lessens them. The brain fog started to lift, my moods improved and I sleep so much better now, to the point that most nights I manage seven to eight hours.

My husband has even read up on the menopause to understand what I am going through and, quite frankly, deserves a medal some days!

Fast forward 18 months and the fact I'm writing this is almost a healing process. I don't think we talk about this subject enough, but it is getting better – there are more and more articles and features on TV etc., but I think writing a personal account will help me and hopefully others within the ESS community.

Having a starting point will help massively, and you really don't have to suffer in silence.

## NUTRITION AND THE MENOPAUSE

Due to hormonal changes, those who have been through the menopause tend to be at greater risk of osteoporosis (a condition where bones become weakened) and heart disease.

**The following lifestyle changes may help to reduce menopausal symptoms, maintain bone density and reduce risk of heart disease:**

- Limit alcohol and caffeine as these can make hot flushes worse.
- Aim for two to three portions of calcium rich foods (dairy products, green leafy vegetables, plant-based milk with added calcium, and fish where you eat the bones) each day to help maintain bone health.
- Eat a heart healthy diet by including more unsaturated fats and reducing saturated fat intake:
  - Reduce red and processed meat consumption.
  - Eat more healthy fats from foods such as nuts, seeds, oily fish, avocados and plant oils.
  - Reduce intake of butter and coconut oil and instead opt for olive or vegetable oil.
- Eat at least five different varieties of fruit and vegetables each day.
  - One portion of fruit and veg is about 80g or one cupped handful.
  - Frozen, tinned and dried tend to be cheaper and also count towards your five-a-day!
- Some people find that eating foods containing plant oestrogens two to three times a day (e.g. soya milk, tofu, edamame beans and linseeds) can help to relieve menopausal symptoms.



### Oestrogen is one of the main female hormones.

Oestrogen levels vary throughout the menstrual cycle and fall after the menopause. Phytoestrogens (plant oestrogens) occur naturally in plants.

They have a similar chemical structure to our body's oestrogen, but they do not necessarily behave in the same way.

# LOOKING AFTER YOUR BONES

WORLD OSTEOPOROSIS DAY: 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023

## What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a condition where bones become thinner and more porous. As a result, their strength is reduced and they are more likely to break.

## Who is likely to develop the condition?

More than three million people are affected by osteoporosis in the UK. The condition affects men and women, but it most commonly occurs in post-menopausal women as falling oestrogen levels can lead to a rapid decrease in bone density. Women are at even greater risk of developing osteoporosis if they have:

- An early menopause (before the age of 45)
- A hysterectomy (removal of the womb) before the age of 45, particularly when the ovaries are also removed
- Absent periods for more than six months as a result of over-exercising or restrictive dieting.



## How can osteoporosis be prevented?

Some of the factors influencing our risk of osteoporosis are out of our control, but there are things we can do to minimise the risk. Our bones develop their strength during childhood and early adulthood. The first 30 years are crucial to make sure we have enough calcium and other minerals to support our bones for the rest of our lives. Our bones stop growing in length around our late teens, but the total amount of bone tissue we have, our bone density, continues to increase slowly until our late twenties. Around the age of 35, we gradually start to lose bone.

### Top tips for bone health

- Aim to eat a healthy, balanced diet, including at least five different fruits and vegetables a day.
- Aim to eat two to three portions of protein per day such as meat, fish, eggs, beans, lentils or tofu.
- Aim to do weight-bearing exercise, such as walking or running, daily as this can help to strengthen the bones in the lower part of the body.
- Aim to eat a variety of foods containing calcium, such as low-fat dairy products, green leafy vegetables and soya-based foods.

## What about vitamin D?

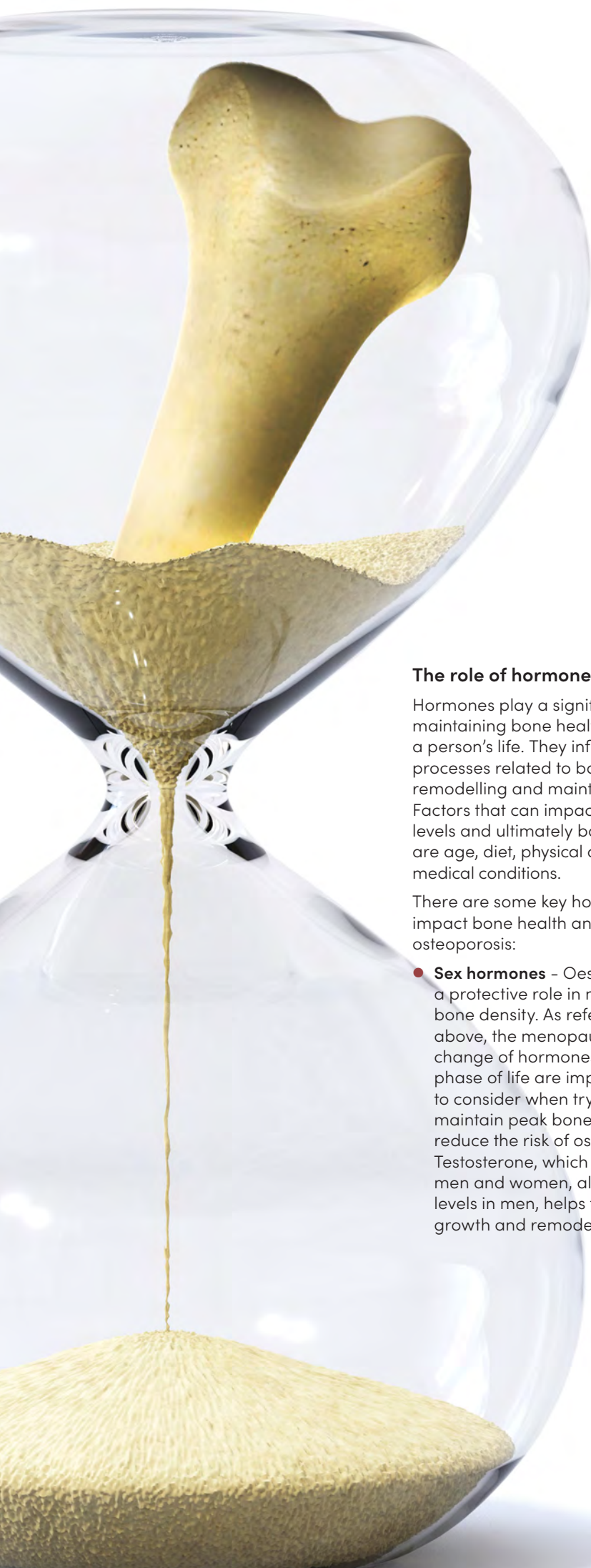
Vitamin D is important for our bone health. Between late March/early April to the end of September, most people can make all the vitamin D they need through sunlight on their skin and eating a balanced diet.

All adults should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D during the autumn and winter months.

People over the age of 65, those with darker skin and those who have limited exposure to sunlight should also consider taking a vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms per day all year round.

Vitamin D is also found in a small number of foods, including oily fish (such as salmon, sardines, herring and mackerel), red meat, liver, egg yolks and fortified foods (such as some fat spreads and breakfast cereals).





### The role of hormones in bone health

Hormones play a significant role in maintaining bone health throughout a person's life. They influence various processes related to bone formation, remodelling and maintenance. Factors that can impact hormone levels and ultimately bone health are age, diet, physical activity and medical conditions.

There are some key hormones that impact bone health and the risk of osteoporosis:

- **Sex hormones** - Oestrogen plays a protective role in maintaining bone density. As referenced above, the menopause and the change of hormones during this phase of life are important factors to consider when trying to maintain peak bone mass and reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Testosterone, which is present in men and women, although in higher levels in men, helps to promote bone growth and remodelling.
- **Calcitonin** - Produced by the thyroid gland and helps to regulate calcium levels in the blood. Calcitonin reduces the activity of osteoclasts which are the cells responsible for breaking down bone tissues, helping to maintain bone density by reducing excessive bone resorption.
- **Growth hormone** - Produced by the pituitary gland. Stimulates bone growth and helps maintain bone mass in adulthood.
- **Cortisol** - We associate cortisol with stress, however chronic high levels can also impact bone loss by inhibiting bone formation and promoting bone resorption.
- **Parathyroid hormone (PTH)** - Plays an important role in calcium homeostasis by stimulating the release of calcium from the bones when levels are low in the blood. Excessive PTH can lead to loss of bone density and hardness so it's important that the levels remain optimal.

#### Homeostasis

These are the processes our bodies use to maintain internal stability while external conditions are changing.

For more information, head to the **NHS website**.

# A HEALTHIER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE HALLOWEEN

HALLOWEEN: 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2023

Who doesn't love a treat once in a while?



**Lisa-Marie Huggins**  
Senior Nutritionist

At this time of the year, when the multipack sweets and chocolates or autumnal flavoured cakes and bakes surround us wherever we go, it can be hard to make the healthier choice... Lisa-Marie Huggins shares some ideas for healthier, more sustainable Halloween treats as well as her top tips for using leftover pumpkin seeds.

The following snacks use healthier ingredients and less packaging than traditional Halloween confectionery. Why not get the kids involved in making them to keep them entertained during October half term?

#### Toffee Apples

Chop up apple slices and dunk them in melted toffees, drizzle in dark chocolate or spread them with peanut butter.

#### Halloween Stuffed Peppers

Scoop out a pepper, cut eyes and a mouth then fill with your favourite fillings like chilli, risotto or vegetable couscous.

#### Pumpkin Hummus

Roast some pumpkin and blend it with chickpeas to make a hummus.

#### Ghost Banana Ice Lollies

Cut bananas in half, add a lollipop stick and freeze then drizzle with chocolate and sprinkle with nuts, seeds or dried fruit.

#### Clementine Pumpkins

Peel a clementine and place a small stick of celery or cucumber in the centre to make it look like a pumpkin!



Pumpkin seeds can be a great source of fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals. So, next time you carve out a pumpkin, don't throw them away and instead try roasting them for a delicious snack or to sprinkle over salads and soups.

- Rinse your seeds to remove the leftover pumpkin flesh.
- Pour over boiled water and let the seeds soak for 5 minutes, then drain and dry on a kitchen towel.
- Spread the seeds over a lined baking tray with a drizzle of oil, herbs and spices (paprika, oregano, chilli flakes and cumin all work well). You could even sprinkle a little sugar or a drizzle of honey for a sweeter flavour!
- Bake for 8-10 minutes at 180°C until crispy and golden.
- You can store the seeds in an airtight container or jar for up to a week.





While sustainability might not seem like an obvious consideration for Halloween, the event can have an environmental impact.



**Anne Simonnet**, Sustainability Director for Compass One, commented that: *"Halloween is the most wasteful time of year*

*with tonnes of costumes, sweets and decorations being produced that mostly end up in landfill - seven million costumes are thrown out each year in the UK and 2,000 tonnes of plastic waste, equivalent to 83m bottles, will be generated from Halloween costumes (Hubbub study). Instead of buying your sweets and treats pre-packed, try making your own this year."*



If you are planning a Halloween event, why not try out some of the following ideas to make the event more sustainable?

#### **Eco-friendly costumes**

Instead of buying brand new costumes that may end up in landfill after one use, consider creating homemade costumes or swapping with friends and family. Reusing and repurposing old clothes and accessories or looking for charity shop bargains can lead to unique and eco-friendly outfits.

#### **Sustainable decorations**

Opt for decorations that can be reused year after year rather than disposable ones. Make decorations using recycled materials and choose energy-efficient LED lights to save electricity. After Halloween, store the decorations properly to keep them in good condition for future use.

#### **Green treats**

Opt for Fairtrade chocolates or snacks with minimal packaging. Consider giving out unwrapped treats to reduce single-use wrappers.

#### **Compost pumpkins**

If you carve pumpkins for decoration, be sure to compost them after Halloween. Pumpkins can add valuable nutrients to the soil instead of clogging up landfills.



#### **Eco-friendly party food**

Consider serving local and sustainable food and beverages to reduce the carbon footprint of the event. Use reusable tableware and avoid single-use plastics.

#### **Transport**

Encourage walking or cycling for trick-or-treating rather than driving from house to house. Not only is this more sustainable, but it adds to the fun and community spirit.

#### **Donate and recycle**

After Halloween, consider donating costumes and decorations that are still in good condition to charity shops. Recycle any materials that can be recycled instead of throwing them away.

#### **Remember, small changes can make a big difference when it comes to sustainability.**

By adopting more mindful practices during Halloween, we can enjoy the day while being kinder to the environment.

## **DID YOU KNOW...**

Halloween costumes are sold at such low prices because the materials used are cheap, and often produced using exploitative labour practices in very poor countries where forced, child and bonded labour is common.

# PLANT HARVEST GROW

Hello from the Defence Academy Market Garden!



**Janet Thomas**  
Head Gardener - ESS Defence,  
Marine & Aerospace

Let me introduce myself as this is my first Wellbeing Magazine

feature! My name is Janet and I work for ESS as the Head Gardener at the organic market garden located at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Shrivenham.

The garden is approximately an acre in size and we grow a variety of fruit, vegetables and salad items which are used in a restaurant on site called 'Grass Roots'. The garden is Soil Association certified Organic, and we practice sustainable, no dig horticulture. We make and use our own compost and natural fertilisers, harvest rainwater for the plants from our polytunnel roof and encourage natural predators like frogs and toads to keep our pests under control. We also have two hives of honeybees which have been great at keeping our garden pollinated over the summer.

Late summer is definitely one of my favourite times of year. As a gardener, a forager, and an all-round lover of the great outdoors, I can't think of any better time to enjoy nature and all its edible abundance.

Even though the nights are starting to draw in and it's starting to feel a bit 'back-endish', the days are still pleasantly warm and, if you're anything like me, the temptation to get outside and enjoy the fresh air is too much to resist.

The benefits of spending time outside amongst nature are well documented, especially the positive effect that it has on our wellbeing and mental health. So, what better time to get outside to do some gardening or take a walk?

I love walking in the countryside at this time of year and seeing the hedgerows laden with shiny blackberries, juicy plums and the apples weighing down the branches of trees, tempting me to pick them as I pass by.

Late summer is also a very busy time in the veg gardener's calendar!



The summer crops need to be harvested and, in some cases, when we have gluts of certain produce, we need to find ways to preserve and store it.

Over the last few months, I have been harvesting an abundance of onions, carrots, celeriac, lettuce, tomatoes, melons, peppers, and beetroot to name but a few.

If I have a glut of produce from my own garden, I like making vegetable soups, pasta sauces and veggie chillis which I freeze in jars and containers in handy portions to use for a quick and healthy lunch or a fast mid-week dinner when I'm short on time.

This is such a great way of enjoying your produce and all the benefits of garden-fresh vegetables long after they are finished in the garden.



There are also plenty of things that we can sow now to keep us going through the autumn and even winter and into early spring.

If you are new to growing veg, now is as good a time as any to start. Not only will you get the health benefits from being outside and working with nature, but you'll be rewarded with tasty and nutritious home grown food and with the added benefit of zero food miles, so it's not only good for you, but good for the environment as well!

You really don't need lots of expensive equipment or a huge amount of space. Vegetables can be grown in containers on a balcony, in pots on windowsills, or if you have a bit more space in beds or containers in the garden.

To get started you'll need a trowel, a watering can or hose pipe, some compost, seeds or plugs and some pots or grow bags. If you really want to get into growing your own, raised beds are a great idea and a bit easier on the back if bending down low is a problem. They are of course a bit of an initial expense, but if you keep at it the rewards will outweigh this quite quickly. Pallet collars make great raised bed as shown in the picture.



Another option is to contact your local council and get your name down for an allotment, in some areas the rent is incredibly cheap. Here are a few good things to start growing now and some advice on how to do it.

#### Lettuce

Seeds can be sown very thinly, directly into finely tilled soil and then thinned out when they are big enough. However, I personally prefer to sow a few seeds in a small tray or container of soil. When they are big enough I prick them out and pot them on until they are big enough to go into the ground.

#### Beetroot

Another seed that can be sown directly at this time of year. I make a small indentation in the soil and drop three or four seeds in each, cover back over with soil and water in.

#### Coriander

Sow finely on compost and cover with a thin layer of fine compost. Water in.

#### Autumn carrots

Make a shallow trench in fine soil and sprinkle carrot seeds finely in a line, cover over with compost and water in.

*Happy growing!*



## CURRIED PARSNIP SOUP

#### Ingredients:

- 50g onions
- 500g parsnips
- 100g carrots
- 10g mild curry powder
- 1 ltr vegetable stock
- 20ml oil

#### Method:

- 1 Peel and finely dice the onion. Wash the carrots and parsnips – do not peel. Roughly chop both and put to one side.
- 2 Heat the oil in a pot and gently fry the onions until tender. Add the chopped carrots and parsnips and gently cook off for approximately 10 minutes.

- 3 Add the curry powder and stir through. Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the stock and then bring to the boil.
- 4 Cook for 15-20 mins on a gentle simmer.
- 5 Once cooked, pour into a blender and puree until smooth.
- 6 Return to your pot and adjust the consistency with the remaining stock.
- 7 Reheat and serve.

Why not add a spoonful of fresh, low-fat natural yoghurt?

# COOKING WITH LEFTOVERS

HEALTHIER FOOD

HEALTHIER WORLD

ZERO WASTE WEEK: 4<sup>TH</sup>–8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 | RECYCLE WEEK: 16<sup>TH</sup> – 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2023

If food waste were a country, it would have the third-biggest carbon footprint after the USA and China. Therefore, it's important that we do all we can to minimise the amount of food being thrown away.



## Scott Freeman

Culinary Director –  
ESS Defence, Marine  
& Aerospace

I'm often asked by friends "what is your speciality meal" and, to be honest, I would say it is making a meal out of barely anything in my fridge!

I consider myself a master at this, predominantly out of necessity as I always forget to go food shopping and then open the fridge to see not much on the shelves.

Being disorganised in this way comes with some benefits in that my weekly shop is quite cheap, but it does mean that I often have to get creative with dinners using the bare minimum of ingredients, and my 'leftover veggie massaman curry' hits the spot every time.

## Ingredients

- Half a bag of frozen vegan Quorn pieces
- ¼ of a butternut squash
- A thumb sized piece of fresh ginger
- A thumb sized piece of fresh turmeric (can be substituted for 1 teaspoon dried turmeric)
- 3 tablespoons massaman curry paste
- 25ml sunflower oil
- ½ bag of fresh kale
- ½ bulb of garlic (I used Thai pickled garlic on this occasion)
- A few ends of spring onions
- 500ml oat milk
- Sugar and vegan fish sauce to taste
- Brown rice to serve

## Method

- 1 Peel and dice the butternut squash into 2cm pieces, bake in a hot oven until soft and set aside.
- 2 Peel and grate the fresh ginger and turmeric. Peel and crush the garlic cloves. Slice the spring onions and then fry this all in the oil in a small saucepan until fragrant.
- 3 Add the massaman curry paste and allow to cook for 2 more minutes.
- 4 Add the vegan Quorn pieces and the kale and continue to cook on a medium heat for 3 more minutes.
- 5 Slowly add the oat milk to the pan, stirring in well to incorporate everything together. Bring to a simmer and add the cooked butternut squash.
- 6 Give everything a taste at this stage and add a small amount of sugar and the vegan fish sauce to taste.
- 7 Serve with brown rice and enjoy.

WELLNESS

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Also follow us at **WeAreESS** on Instagram and TikTok.



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nutrition, health & wellbeing.  
So drop us an email and we will  
get back to you as soon as possible.



Leanne King BSc(Hons), PGCE, RNutr  
ESS HEAD OF NUTRITION & WELLBEING

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