



# Health & Wellbeing Newsletter

## Long Term Health Conditions service

### Put a Spring in your step

With winter behind us and better weather hopefully on the way, what better time than to get out and about to sample some of Bromley's fabulous outdoor spaces?

In this Spring edition of the Bromley Well Newsletter, we examine the proven health benefits of regular walking - and discuss the best methods of maximising your strolls to achieve the very best effect.

We also look into the ways you can get fit within the borough *without* parting with your hard-earned cash, which is something we can all definitely appreciate in the current financial climate!

Also in this issue, we list some of the little-known early signs of a heart attack as the NHS launches a new campaign to raise public awareness.

And we publish an article by an expert on HIV, who explores the changing face of the illness since it first gained notoriety during the 1980s.

We hope you enjoy our Newsletter. Keep well!

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For the latest information about Covid -19 testing & vaccinations see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | London Borough of Bromley](#)

## Fitness for free in Bromley



Bromley's extensive outdoor spaces offer a fabulous opportunity to **get fit for free!**

Bromley is London's greenest borough with over 160 parks, 52 allotments and 21 outdoor sports facilities. Find out more about your local parks at [www.bromleyparks.co.uk](http://www.bromleyparks.co.uk)

**Walking is one of the best ways.** Just ten minutes a day at a brisk pace can be beneficial. Brisk walking is simply walking quicker than usual at a pace that gets your heart pumping. Find out more ways you can kickstart a healthier you at [Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) Also see page 3 for our tips on Mindful walking!

### **Evidence has shown that physical activity:**

- Keeps our heart healthy
- Helps us maintain a healthy weight
- Improves sleep
- Can enhance our emotional wellbeing and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety

Do you know that being active can help you prevent and manage long term health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease?

## Did you know that May is National Walking Month?



When it's Spring and everything looks green, walking becomes easier and fun. Physical activity is hailed as the "wonder drug." Let's walk more for our health. Check out some of the ideas below for getting out and about.

### A step in the right direction!

Using Mindfulness has been shown to have many benefits for our health and wellbeing. It can reduce stress, improve quality of sleep, and help us to be kinder to ourselves. There are lots of ways to practice mindfulness - including while you're walking!

Being mindful means rather than being inside our heads, we look around and notice what we see, hear and sense. You can practice mindful walking on any length walk, even if only for a couple of minutes. It can bring a new experience and enjoyment to your stroll.

### Tips to make your walk more mindful:

- **Observe** – Become aware of the physical sensations of walking, take a moment to notice and observe how it feels.
- **Notice** – What is going on around you? What can you see? It might be people, cars, trees, shapes and even colours.
- **Listen** – Turn your attentions to sound. What can you hear around you - people talking, birds, traffic?
- **Feel** – Notice any physical sensations or feelings, maybe warm sunshine or a cool breeze, or maybe just the sensation of your foot on the ground.
- **Come Back** - Thoughts will intrude, you can just notice them and bring your attention back to your walking. Use the rhythm of your walking as a base for your awareness, a place you can mentally return to once you realise your mind has wandered off.

Contact the Long Term Health Conditions Team for more information on  
**07985 444210 / 07399202313** Email [enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk)  
[www.bromleywell.org.uk](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk)

## Health and Wellbeing Support

Bromley Well Lifestyle Support Workers offer a programme of eight FREE weekly workshops for local residents with long term health conditions. These are aimed at supporting wellbeing through self-care in areas such as healthy eating, exercise, sleep & mindfulness, medication, managing pain, stress & anxiety.

Get in touch for further information and to reserve your place. You can attend as many or as few workshops during the programme as you wish.

This is a great chance to meet others and share your experiences over a cup of tea/ coffee either face to face or online from the comfort of your own home. We hope you can join us!

### Self-care techniques can help you:

- Eat well & drink sensibly
- Keep physically active
- Get good quality sleep
  - Manage your pain
- Reduce stress and anxiety

Bromley Well's **Fibromyalgia Support Group** is held every fortnight on a Friday. Check out all of our events at [www.bromleywell.org.uk](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk)

Our **Lifestyle Support Workers** also facilitate a number of **online peer support groups with activities and guest speakers.**

### What our clients say :

"The programme is very empowering"

"Inspired me to make some positive lifestyle changes for the better"

**For more details of the programme Please see page 6 !**

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## Heart attack..know the early signs

FEWER than half of us know the early symptoms of a heart attack, research has found.

Most recognise the link with chest pain, but many are unaware that sweating and pain in other parts of the body can also be crucial signals – and could help with a life-saving early diagnosis.

Now NHS England has launched a nationwide campaign to help prevent heart attack deaths in the UK. The initiative aims to alert Brits to the tell-tale signs and encourage them to dial 999 as soon as they experience the early symptoms.

With more than 800,000 of us visiting hospital every year due to heart attacks, experts say catching the episode early helps prevent deaths. In fact, early treatment has been found to increase the survival rate from seven in 10 patients to nine in 10.

Despite this, the [NHS found](#) that less than 50 per cent of Brits knew the early symptoms of a heart attack when questioned.

While early signs can vary, most patients experience squeezing sensations across the chest. Those experiencing the initial stages of a heart attack will be conscious and breathing.

### The NHS lists three other common early signs:

- Pain in other parts of the body – it may feel as if the pain is spreading from your chest to your arms (usually the left is affected but it can affect both sides), jaw, neck, back and tummy
- An overwhelming sense of anxiety (similar to having a panic attack)
- Sweating

### Other symptoms include:

- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- Coughing or wheezing



### What causes a heart attack?

Heart attacks are triggered when the supply of blood to the heart becomes blocked, starving the muscle of oxygen and potentially causing serious damage.

Cardiac arrest, however, is when the sufferer's heart suddenly stops beating. It can happen quickly and without warning, with the person immediately losing consciousness. A heart attack can often lead to cardiac arrest if early treatment is not sought.

Source: NHS website

# Health & Wellbeing Programme



**Eight weeks of FREE sessions for Bromley residents!**

## Week 1: Good Health & Self-Care

- Learn about Bromley Well and how we can support you.
- Understand what good health means to you.
- Know how to adopt healthy habits.

## Week 2: Eating Well

- Know the latest, research-based recommendations for healthy eating.
- Understand the importance of eating well for our bodies and our minds.
- Get tips for weight management.

## Week 3: Physical Activity

- Learn why physical activity is known as “The Wonder Drug”.
- Identify simple, effective ways to build physical activity into your life.

## Week 4: Sleep & Mindfulness

- Learn how sleep benefits our bodies and our minds and receive tips on getting a good night’s sleep.
- Learn how mindfulness can help us manage stress and experience a mindfulness exercise.

## Week 5 Stress Busting

- Understand the pain cycle and how pain impacts on your life.
- Learn techniques and strategies to help you manage your stress.
- Know where to go for further support.

## Week 6 Pain Management

- Understand the pain cycle and how pain impacts on your life.
- Learn techniques and strategies to help you manage your pain.
- Know where to go for further support.

## Week 7: Ensuring good medical care

- Understand medication adherence and why it is important for our health.
- Learn how to communicate effectively with healthcare professionals.

## Week 8: Planning for the future

- Think about what self-care changes you would like to make.
- Know how to set achievable goals to help you make those changes.

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# HIV Then.... and Now

By SARAH BARBER, Clinical Nurse Specialist HIV at Bromley Healthcare

Over the past year, TV and media coverage of HIV in dramas like "It's a Sin" (available on All 4) and documentaries like "Positive" (Sky TV) has reminded us that Covid is not the only pandemic faced by the world in recent times.

Emerging in the 1980s, a new and lethal virus was killing young people. Little was understood about it and fear gripped us all. Many will recall the TV adverts and leaflets of the era with tombstones and icebergs and the tagline "AIDS: Don't die of ignorance".

We lost Freddie Mercury and many others to this disease - and the fact it was sexually transmittable meant stigma and ignorance around its transmission turned a simple virus into a social disease and new phenomenon.

With no effective treatment, and those living with HIV facing social ostracism, it was friends, peers and family who stepped up and established organisations and charities to provide acceptance, support, advice and care.

Organisations such as the Terrence Higgins Trust emerged from this era and they have continued to be fundamental in responding to the needs of people living with HIV. It was a unique time and perhaps much was learned in terms of service user involvement, equality and the important role of third sector organisations in delivering care

Things have changed since then. By the mid-90s, medicines had emerged and we discovered HIV could be managed and controlled using effective anti-retroviral therapy.



Today HIV is a chronic manageable condition and those diagnosed promptly and treated effectively can expect a normal life. Not only do we use anti-HIV medication to control the virus and maintain health, we have found that in doing so people with HIV also become uninfected and cannot pass the virus on (U=U, undetectable=untransmittable).

Understanding this has enabled the use of HIV drugs to prevent as well as treat HIV. The new aim is to achieve zero new HIV transmissions by 2030. This will require regular testing, effective use of treatments and ongoing support to people living with HIV. Tests can be obtained free online via this link [Sexual Health London • SHL.UK](https://www.shl.uk/). Alternatively via a sexual health clinic or GP. Stigma persists and this can present a huge challenge for the mental wellbeing of those living with HIV. It is beholden on society to better educate themselves about HIV, challenge poor attitudes and change this.

**Despite the difficulties, the vibe in HIV care at the moment is good. There are challenges ahead but if everyone works together a brighter future awaits us. For more information about HIV and useful links, check out the new [Bromley Well HIV factsheet](#).**

## Forthcoming Events

### World Hypertension Day: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022

This theme again this year is **“Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer”**

Hypertension (high blood pressure) may not present with any symptoms, but if untreated, may increase the risk of serious problems such as heart attacks and strokes. More than 1 in 4 adults in the UK have high blood pressure, although many won't realise it.

To find out what your blood pressure is you can get it checked at:

- your GP Surgery
- some pharmacies
- as part of your NHS Health Check
- at home using a blood pressure machine



You can find more information about high blood pressure and its signs and symptoms at the NHS UK website: [High blood pressure \(hypertension\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)  
[www.whleague.org](http://www.whleague.org)



### World No-Tobacco Day: Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022

Need help and information on quitting? Get in touch or look at our stop smoking factsheet, available on our website  
[www.bromleywell.org.uk](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk)

**Bromley Well** Supporting health, wellbeing and independence. Please see our website [www.Bromleywell.org.uk](http://www.Bromleywell.org.uk) or call our free phone number **0808 278 7898**  
 Email: [spa@bromleywell.org.uk](mailto:spa@bromleywell.org.uk)

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