

PASSPORT TO GOOD HEALTH



**A GUIDE TO GENERAL HEALTH
FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

INTRODUCTION

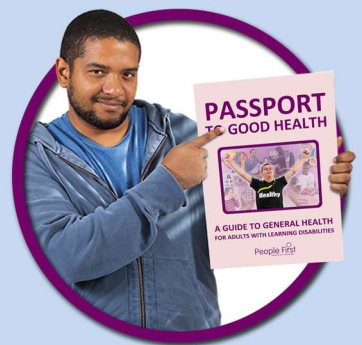
The purpose of this booklet is to help improve the general health of people with learning disabilities.



It can also be used to help those who support people with learning disabilities, including families, carers and staff.



In this booklet we will cover these topics:



- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **General Health**
- **Accessing Health Services**
- **Immunisations**
- **Screenings**
- **Chronic Diseases**
- **Learning Disability Annual Health Checks**
- **Useful Contacts**

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Health and Wellbeing is all about looking after your body and mind.



HEALTHY EATING

Eating food gives your body energy and keeps you healthy. It is important to eat the right foods. This is also known as a **Balanced Diet**.



Being overweight or underweight is not healthy, both can make you ill.



If you are overweight or underweight, it is important to talk to your **GP**.



Your **GP** can give you advice about eating healthily and how to have a **Balanced Diet**.



BEING ACTIVE

Being Active is an important part of keeping your body healthy. You should try to be active for 30 minutes every day. When **Being Active** it is important to start slowly if you are not used to it.



WHY NOT TRY THESE TOP TIPS TO BE MORE ACTIVE!



Use the stairs instead of the lift or escalator.



Use a shopping basket instead of a trolley.



Do some gardening.



Do some housework.



Get off the bus a stop earlier and walk.



Dance like nobody is watching!

MENTAL WELLBEING

Looking after you mind is just as important as looking after your body.

There are things that you can do to help keep your mind healthy:

CONNECT: Having people to talk to is important for you mental wellbeing.

Everybody needs to be able to share their feelings, thoughts and emotions with someone they trust. This could be your friends or family and it is just as important that you are there for them too.



Think about who you like to share your feelings, thoughts and emotions with and write their names here!



KEEP LEARNING: Doing something you have never done before is important for your mental wellbeing.



It can help to keep your mind active, make you feel more confident and help you to realise that you can do anything if you put your mind to it.



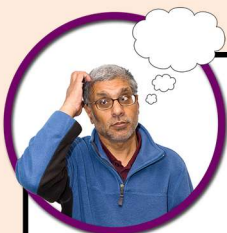
Think about something new you'd like to try and write it here!



TAKE NOTICE: Paying attention to your body and how you are feeling is very important for your mental wellbeing.



Take notice of the world around you and take the time to be thankful for the little things in life such as the changing seasons and the nature around you.



Think about what you are thankful for and write it here!



GENERAL HEALTH

It is important that you look after your whole body to keep you healthy. There are services in the community that can help you with this.

You can get help to access these services from your family, friends, support workers or community nurses.



MOUTH CARE

It is important for your health and happiness that you look after your mouth including teeth, gums and tongue.



It is very important to brush your teeth when you get up in the morning and before you go to bed at night.



You should make sure you register with a **Dentist**.



Your **Dentist** will tell you the right way to look after your mouth, teeth and gums.



You should **Visit the Dentist Every Six Months** to check that your whole mouth is healthy.



EYE CARE

People with learning disabilities are more likely to have eyesight problems than other people.

An **Optician** is an eye doctor who will do your eye tests.

It is important to have an **Eye Test Every 2 Years**, or more often if the **Optician** tells you to.

Reasonable Adjustments can be made to help you during your eye test. This could be using pictures instead of letters.

If you need glasses, the **Optician** can help choose the right ones for you.

If your eyesight gets worse, you must go back to see the **Optician**. You may need to be referred to the hospital about your eyes.



EAR CARE

It is important to look after your ears.

Hearing loss means finding it hard to hear or not being able to hear at all.

Hearing loss can happen suddenly, or your hearing may slowly get worse over time.

Some signs of hearing loss are:

- Not being able to hear other people clearly.
- Needing to have music or the TV on very loud.
- Earache.
- Noises in your ears like ringing or buzzing.

If you lose your hearing in one or both of your ears, see your GP as soon as possible. They may refer you to see an **Audiologist** at the hospital. This is an ear doctor.



FOOT CARE

It is important to look after your feet.

Foot problems can affect your whole body and can lead to other problems like back pain.

Some people may need extra help with looking after their feet, e.g. people with Diabetes.

Your doctor may refer you to a foot specialist. This is called a **Chiropodist**.

It is important to look after your feet by washing them every day, making sure they are dry, wearing clean socks and wearing shoes that fit properly.

You should go and see your doctor if you have painful feet or any other foot problems.



ACCESSING HEALTH SERVICES

There are a number of different health services available as part of the NHS:

GP PRACTICE

Your **GP Practice** will help you with all of your health needs. This includes **Physical and Mental Health**.

You may see a doctor or the practice nurse. They are aware of your medical history.

Everyone should be registered with a **GP Practice**.

Your **GP Practice** is the first place you should contact about your health. You need to make an appointment to see someone at your **GP Practice**.



PHARMACIST (CHEMIST)

A **Pharmacist** is an expert in medicines.

Pharmacist's Shops are also known as **Chemists**. This is usually the place you get your medication from.

If you are feeling ill or have health issues, you can speak to your **Pharmacist**.

The **Pharmacist** can give you advice about any minor illness, medication and health issues such as sexual health or giving up smoking.



URGENT TREATMENT CENTRE (WALK IN CENTRE)

You can go to an **Urgent Treatment Centre** without having an appointment. These are also known as **Walk In Centres**.

You can go to a **Walk In Centre** if you are unwell and can't get an appointment at your **GP Practice**. This could be at evenings and weekends.

You should visit a **Walk In Centre** for things that are **Not an Emergency**.

The **Walk In Centre** may send you to the hospital if they think you need more treatment.

If you are not sure where to go you can contact **NHS 111** for advice.



HOSPITAL SERVICES

Hospitals provide different services and treatments:



ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY (A&E)

An **A&E Department** deals with medical emergencies. This could be things like chest pain, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding or head injury.



The **A&E Department** will decide how serious your condition is when you arrive. This is called **Triage**.



You may be seen straight away or you may be asked to wait until they can treat you.



A&E Departments can get very busy and you may be waiting a long time.



INPATIENT CARE

Being an **Inpatient** means that you have to stay in **Hospital Overnight**. This could be for an operation, tests or medical treatment.

You could become an **Inpatient**:

- If your condition needs further treatment after you have been in **A&E**.
- It has been planned with you by a **Hospital Clinic**.



OUTPATIENT CARE

Being an **Outpatient** means you have to go to **Hospital** for an appointment or treatment but do not need to stay overnight.

You should get a letter from the **Hospital** that includes everything you need to know.

At the end of your appointment or treatment, the **Hospital** will tell you if you need to come back.

The **Hospital** will also write to your **GP Practice** to tell them about your care. You should also get a copy of this letter.



IMMUNISATIONS

THE FLU

Every year lots of people get **The Flu**. People with a learning disability are more likely to be very ill if they get **The Flu**.

The best way to avoid getting **The Flu** is to have a **Flu Vaccine** every year. This is also called **The Flu Jab**.

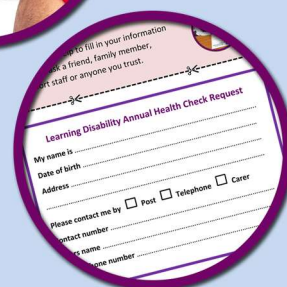
People with a learning disability are entitled to have a **Free Flu Jab**. Your **GP Practice** will contact you to arrange an appointment.

If you are scared of needles, tell your **GP Practice**. You may be able to have the vaccine as a spray in your nose instead.

Family carers and support workers can also have the **Free Flu Jab** so they don't pass the Flu on to you.

You can also get the **Flu Jab** at a **Chemists**.

You can use the tear off slip at the back of this booklet to ask for a **Flu Jab** if you have not had an invitation from your **GP Practice**.



PNEUMONIA

Pneumonia is a type of chest infection which makes it harder for you to breathe.

Most people with **Pneumonia** can be cured but it can be life-threatening. People with other health conditions may be more at risk.

There is a vaccine available for people who are at a higher risk from **Pneumonia**.

The **Pneumonia Vaccine** is an injection, sometime called a **Pneumonia Jab**, and it is free for those who need it.

You only have the **Pneumonia Jab** once.

OTHER VACCINATIONS

There are also **Other Vaccinations** available, including Covid-19 and Tetanus.

It is important that you keep up to date with information about all **Vaccinations**.

Speak to your **GP Practice** to find out how to get **Other Vaccinations**.



SCREENINGS

At some time in your life you will be invited to go for tests to see if you have cancer or other conditions, this is called **Screening**.

All screening is free from the NHS. There are different types of **Screenings** available:



BREAST SCREENING

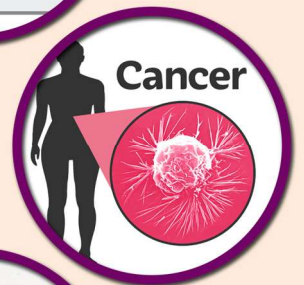
Breast Screening is a test to find breast cancer in **Women Aged Between 50 and 71**. This is called a **Mammogram**.



Women will be invited for a **Mammogram Every 3 Years**.



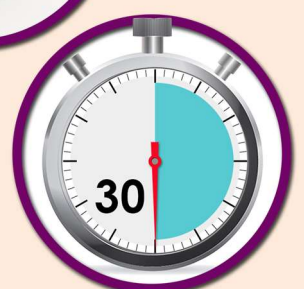
A **Mammogram** can find changes to the cells inside your breasts that are too small to see or feel. Breast cancer starts when these cells grow and get bigger and can become a tumour (lump).



When you go for a **Mammogram** you will have pictures taken of the inside of your breast.



The **Mammogram** only takes a few minutes. You will be at the screening centre for about **30 Minutes**.



You will be sent a **Letter Within 2 Weeks** with the results.

If you are nervous you can arrange a visit to your local breast screening unit before the test.

BOWEL SCREENING

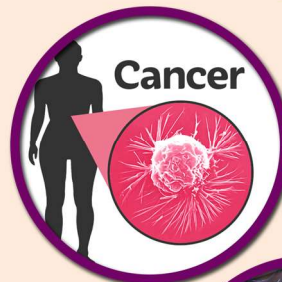
Bowel Screening is a test for **Both Men and Women Aged Over 60** and helps find cancer at an early stage. Your bowel connects your stomach (tummy) to your bottom. The bowel takes away waste your body does not need. This is called poo.

You will be sent a **Bowel Screening Test** to do yourself at home. It comes in a box with a letter explaining what you need to do.

You can do the **Bowel Screening Test** on your own or you can ask someone to help you.

To do the **Bowel Screening Test**, you need to collect a small amount of your poo. The kit will have an envelope to send the test back once you have done it.

You should get a **Letter Within 2 Weeks** with your results.



CERVICAL SCREENING (SMEAR TEST)

Cervical Screening is a test for **Women Aged Between 25 and 64** to find changes to the cells of the cervix that could lead to cancer. This is also called a **Smear Test**.

You will be invited for a **Smear Test Every 3 or 5 Years**, depending on your age.

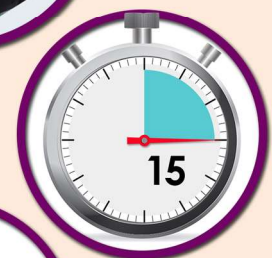
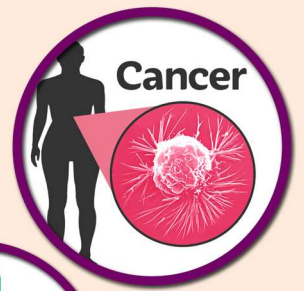
The cervix is inside your body at the top of your vagina. You cannot see it.

Your **GP Practice** should automatically ask you to come for a **Smear Test** when it is due.

Your **GP Practice** will send you a letter and you will need to make an appointment, this will usually be with the practice nurse.

The whole visit should take **15 Minutes** at the most. You will get a letter with your results as soon as they are ready.

It is important for all women to go for a smear test when they are invited.



ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM (AAA)

This is a free test for **Men Aged 65 or Older** to check if they have a health problem called an **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm**, this is also called **Triple A (AAA)** for short.

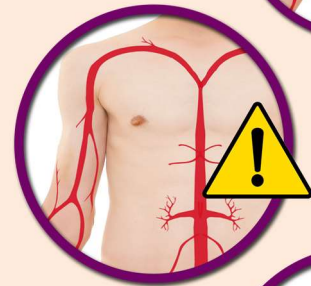
The **Aorta** is a big tube that takes blood from your heart and moves it around your body.

As some people get older this tube can get weak and swell up. This sort of swelling is called an **Aneurysm**.

The NHS have screening tests so they can find **Aneurysms** early and keep a check on them or treat them.

The test is done in a **Hospital** and takes less than **10 Minutes**.

You will get your results straight away. The hospital will also let your **GP Practice** know the results.



CHECKING YOURSELF

It is important that you get to know your own body so you can recognise if there are any changes.

If you notice a change to your body, no matter how small, it is really important that you tell somebody you trust or **Go to See Your GP.**

If you have trouble explaining any changes to your body mark them on the picture below:



**IT IS IMPORTANT TO SHARE ANY
CHANGES TO YOUR BODY WITH
YOUR GP OR SOMEONE YOU TRUST!**



CHRONIC DISEASES

A **Chronic Disease** is a health problem that needs ongoing treatment over several years or longer. They can usually be controlled with medication but not cured.



DIABETES

Diabetes is when your body does not make enough insulin or can't use the insulin it does produce properly.



Insulin is a hormone that moves blood sugar around your body to help give you energy.



Diabetes can happen to anyone. If you have **Diabetes**, you will always have it, but the right treatment will help you to stay well.



Some signs of **Diabetes** could be:

- Feeling thirsty.
- Going to the toilet a lot.
- Feeling tired.
- Feeling shaky or dizzy.
- Feeling sweaty.



There are two kinds of diabetes:

Type 1 Diabetes:

- Happens naturally, often in childhood.
- Not caused by being overweight.
- Treated with insulin.

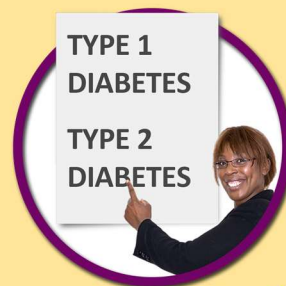
Type 2 Diabetes:

- Often caused by being overweight.
- Is usually treated by changing your diet and losing weight.

If you have **Diabetes**, you may feel unwell. This could be because your blood sugar is too high or too low. You may need a blood test to check your blood sugar.

It is important to have regular check-ups. You should see your doctor or nurse at least once a year for a full check-up.

You can tell the doctor or nurse if you have any problems with your **Diabetes**.



EPILEPSY

Epilepsy is a common condition that affects the brain and causes seizures.

Some people are born with **Epilepsy**.
Some people develop **Epilepsy** after they have an illness or infection.

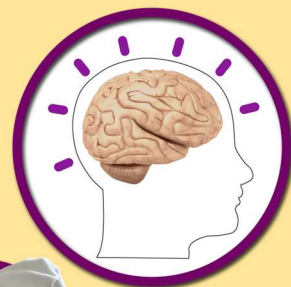
People use different words when they are talking about **Epilepsy**. Some people call it:

- Seizures.
- Fits.
- Funny turns.
- Petit mals.
- Grand mals.

If you have **Epilepsy** your doctor may give you medication to stop the seizures or make them happen less often.

It is important to take your medication in the way your doctor tells you to.

If you have **Epilepsy** you will have regular check-ups with your doctor.



HEART DISEASE

Heart Disease is a serious condition and is very common.

This is caused when the **Arteries** around the heart become blocked or narrowed meaning the heart must pump much harder. **Arteries** are the tubes that carry blood around your body.

The most common signs of **Heart Disease** are:

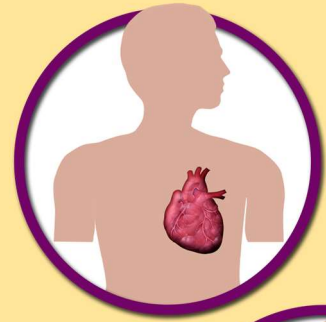
- Chest pains.
- Feeling breathless.
- Heart attacks.

Many people who have a heart condition do not know they have it until they begin to feel chest pains or have a heart attack.

You can lower your risk of **Heart Disease** by:

- Eating a healthy, balanced diet.
- Avoiding fatty and sugary food.
- Being physically active.
- Giving up smoking.

If you are worried about your heart, speak to your doctor.



ASTHMA

You can get **Asthma** at any age. You might get **Asthma** if it runs in your family.

Asthma affects your **Airways**. These are the tubes that take air in and out of your lungs.

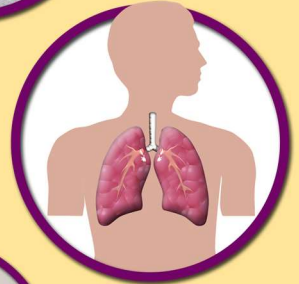
Signs that you are having an **Asthma Attack** could be:

- Coughing a lot.
- Wheezing, this is a noisy whistling sound in your chest when you breathe.
- Finding it hard to breathe.
- Your chest feeling tight.
- Needing to use your blue inhaler a lot (if you have one).

There are different type of medicines that can help your **Asthma**, these can be Inhalers or tablets.

Your **GP Practice** will give you the correct medication and advise you on how to take it.

If you have **Asthma**, your **GP Practice** will invite you to come for regular **Asthma Reviews**.



LEARNING DISABILITY

ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

People with a learning disability should be invited to see their doctor every year for a **Learning Disability Annual Health Check**.

People with a learning disability often have poorer physical and mental health than other people.

A **Learning Disability Annual Health Check** can improve people's health by spotting problems earlier.

A **Learning Disability Annual Health Check** is a head to toe check-up at your **GP Practice** which will identify health issues you may have.

These health checks are for **Anyone with a Learning Disability Over the Age of 14**. Your doctor should send you a letter to invite you for a **Learning Disability Annual Health Check** every year.

If you do not get a letter you can call your doctor to ask for one or use the tear off slip on the next page.

After your **Learning Disability Annual Health Check** your doctor will work with you to make a **Health Action Plan** for the next 12 months.

See our **Learning Disability Annual Health Checks Booklet** to find out more.



ASK YOUR GP FOR AN ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK

If you believe you have a learning disability and would like to have an **Annual Health Check** you can take this tear off slip and hand it in at your **GP Practice**.



If you need help to fill in your information you can ask a friend, family member, support staff or anyone you trust.



Learning Disability Annual Health Check Request

My name is

Date of birth

Address

.....

Please contact me by ☐ Post ☐ Telephone ☐ Carer

Contact number

Carers name

Carers phone number

If you need help to cut out the slip below you can ask a friend, family member, support staff or anyone you trust.



Once you've filled the slip in and cut it out, don't forget to hand it in at your **GP Practice** to request your **Annual Health Check**.



I believe I am a person with a learning disability, and I want a Learning Disability Annual Health Check.



I would also like to make sure that I am given the Flu vaccine as I consider myself to be vulnerable.



USEFUL CONTACTS

GENERAL HEALTH

HEALTHWATCH

Healthwatch is here to help **YOU** get the best out of **YOUR** local health and social care services.

They can help you find the services you need, e.g. a **Dentist** or a **GP Practice**.

You can also tell them what you think about health or social care services.

There are many questions you might have about support you need. You can contact **Healthwatch** and they will try their best to help you.

Healthwatch Sefton:

Telephone: 0800 206 1304

Telephone: 0151 920 0726 ext. 240

Email: info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk

Healthwatch Liverpool:

Telephone: 0300 7777 007

Text / WhatsApp: 07842 552 878

Email: enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk



LEARNING DISABILITIES COMMUNITY TEAMS

The **Learning Disabilities Community Teams** have health facilitators whose job is to improve access to health care for people with learning disabilities.

They understand the barriers to health care for people with learning disabilities and make sure that they are supported with their health needs including accessing **Learning Disability Annual Health Checks**.

You can contact your local **Learning Disabilities Community Teams** at:

Sefton Learning Disabilities Community Team:

2nd Floor, The Hesketh Centre,
51-55 Albert Road, Southport, PR8 0LT

Telephone: 01704 383 030 or 01704 383 114

Liverpool Learning Disabilities Community Team:

Mersey Care NHS Trust Community Hub,
Falklands Approach, Norris Green, Liverpool,
L11 5BS

Telephone: 0151 737 4800



MENTAL HEALTH

TALKING MATTERS SEFTON

Talking Matters Sefton is a free, confidential service designed to help anyone aged over 16 in the South Sefton, Southport, and Formby areas to deal with common mental health difficulties.

Telephone: 0300 303 2708

Email: tms.referral@nhs.net



TALK LIVERPOOL

We are a free NHS service offering psychological therapies to adults in Liverpool who are feeling depressed or anxious.

Telephone: 0151 228 2300

Email:

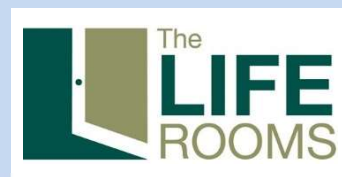
talkliverpool@merseycare.nhs.uk



GENERAL SUPPORT

THE LIFE ROOMS

We are a free NHS service who provide a safe and welcoming space to meet others, access opportunities and learn about community resources.



Telephone: 0151 478 6556
(Liverpool)



Telephone: 0151 330 6461
(Sefton South)



Telephone: 01704 383 198
(Sefton North)



URGENT CARE

NHS 111

People who need urgent NHS care across Sefton are being asked to contact **NHS 111** before going to a hospital accident and emergency department.

NHS 111 will direct people to the most appropriate health service which may include a **Walk In Centre, GP Practice, Pharmacist or Hospital.**

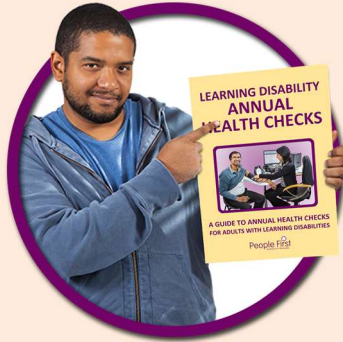
You can also contact **NHS 111** if you can't call your own **Dentist** or if you don't have a **Dentist.**

Telephone: 111

Website: 111.nhs.uk



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
LEARNING DISABILITY ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS
SEE OUR LEARNING DISABILITY
ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS BOOKLET**



**TO DOWNLOAD OUR OTHER BOOKLETS PLEASE VISIT
WWW.PEOPLEFIRSTMERSEYSIDE.CO.UK**

This booklet has been developed by **People First Merseyside** and was funded by **NHS England** in partnership with **South Sefton CCG**, **Southport and Formby CCG** and **Mersey Care**.

People First
Speaking out in Merseyside



NHS
England

NHS
South Sefton
Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS
Southport and Formby
Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS
Mersey Care
NHS Foundation Trust