

Bridge End Surgery Lifestyle Changes Advice



We would like to share with you some lifestyle changes which could improve your health. These changes can reduce the risk of you developing some diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes. It can also sometimes reduce the number of medications you may need if you have been diagnosed with a disease.

This is general advice and all the areas covered may not apply to you. If you are unsure of whether any of these changes would help you, please speak to a health care professional.

We hope you find this short information leaflet useful. Remember that even small changes can make a difference. Involve family and friends to help them reduce their risk of developing problems too.

LOOK AT YOUR DIET



Life is busy and it can be difficult to eat healthily all the time. Also, money may affect what you can buy. Even making SOME changes can help though. FRUIT and VEGETABLES canned in their own juice or water can be as nutritious as fresh and can often be cheaper. So can frozen food.

Try to reduce the amount of red meat you eat. Using things like beans, chickpeas and lentils in recipes can reduce the amount of meat you eat. It can also be cheaper.

Try to avoid Ultra-Processed Foods such as ready meals. These often have lots of ingredients listed and can be higher in sugar, fats and salt than homemade meals. Remember also that not all fat is bad! Foods that are labelled as high in fat can in fact be a healthy option. Examples are sunflower and olive oil, nuts (not coated or salted) and seeds. The NHS “Food Scanner” app allows you to scan barcodes and shows the sugar, fat and salt content of the product.

If you want to discuss weight management options you can speak to our Care Co-ordinator who can signpost you to the appropriate service. If you have diabetes, a BMI over 30, IBS or Coeliac disease, you can see our dietician. Reception can book you an appointment with her.

Advice on diet and portion control can be found on the NHS and British Heart Foundation websites.

INCREASE YOUR ACTIVITY LEVEL



This doesn't mean you have to go to the gym or start running (but if you want to do this then you can!) We know living in the Northeast of England doesn't always make doing things outdoors easy! Try to come up with a plan so if the weather is bad you can replace outside activity with something else. It can be more difficult to keep things going on the darker nights, so doing something with friends or family may help with motivation and make you feel safe.

Share how many steps you do each day to keep motivated. Increasing your activity in everyday life can help. You could park further away from where you want to be or get off the bus a couple of stops earlier. Use the stairs instead of the lift. Try leaving the car at home for short journeys. Not only is that good for you but also is good for the planet! Try to walk at a pace where you are feeling a bit short of breath but could still carry on a conversation.

The NHS Active 10 app can help you record this and also gives a lot of other health advice. Exercise information and videos are available on the NHS website. If you did want to take up running, the "Couch to 5K" app is a good start. There is a Park Run in Chester-Le-Street on a Saturday morning at Riverside Park that anyone can go along to.

If you have a condition that makes activity difficult you can still get help. Check out the website "We Are Undeatable" or ask us for advice.

STOP SMOKING



We know this is not always easy to do and sometimes the time needs to be right. Stopping smoking reduces the risk of disease for you and those around you. You can get over the counter preparations from pharmacies or get specialist help. We can make you an appointment with a **STOP SMOKING SPECIALIST** or you can ring Smokefree County Durham on 0800 772 0565

Did you know a 20 a day habit costs around £5325.35 a year?

KEEP YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKES WITHIN RECOMMENDED LIMITS



This currently is 14 units of alcohol a week for both women and men. You can find advice on what is a unit at [Alcohol Change UK](#).

KEEP YOUR SALT INTAKE WITHIN RECOMMENDED LIMITS



This is especially important if you have high blood pressure. Cutting down can reduce your blood pressure and could mean you take less medication.