

A dose of Health & Wellbeing

Your bitesize guide to a healthier lifestyle, from your school nursing team

March 2025

Read on for lots of information on how to keep your family healthy, from your school nursing team at Berkshire Healthcare.

Do you have a child in Reception?

Make sure you have completed your reception school health questionnaire.

This helps the school nurse identify any health concerns you have about your child and helps them plan services from any themes that emerge.

Please contact your child's school if you have not received a link to this.

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Thank you!



Helping your child through their SATs

SATS season can be a stressful time for some children. Here are some tips to help your child relax.

- Boost your child's confidence every day with positive words and compliments.
- Have unwind activities each day.
- Make sure they are getting a balanced diet.
- Make sure they are drinking at regular intervals – aim for 6-8 cups of water a day.
- Make sure they are getting enough sleep.
- Build in lots of physical activity and fresh air each day.
- Listen to your child's anxieties and worries, give lots of hugs, reassurance, and positive encouragement. Let them know the results of their tests have no impact on your relationship.
- If you are very concerned, reach out to a teacher as they will be able to support you both, or point you in the right direction.

For more helpful advice visit:

[Exams: Supporting your Child \(charliewaller.org\)](http://charliewaller.org)

[Help your child beat exam stress - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

How to talk to your child about events in the news without making them feel anxious

This short video gives some advice how to talk to your children about all the things that are going on in the world, as adults it can be hard sometimes to know how to handle these tricky conversations.

[How do I talk to my child about events in the news without making them anxious?](#)

Food portion sizes

A healthy diet is not just about what we eat but how much as well. It is often difficult with children to know how much is the right amount. Research has shown that if we are presented with more food on our plates, we will tend to eat more which can lead to an unhealthy weight gain.

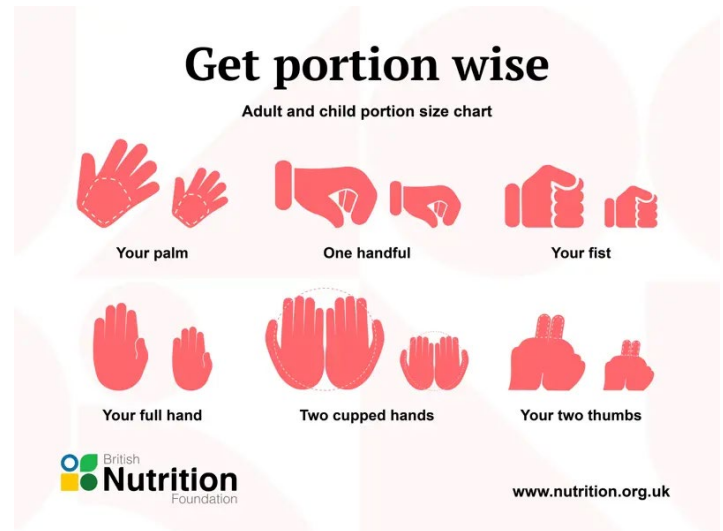
Children need a portion size for their age and size. Advice from the British Nutrition Foundation is:

- **Child-sized portions:** serve children portions in proportion to their size. To get an idea you could compare their hand size to yours to get an idea of how their portion size should compare. For example, when serving out pasta or rice, serve out the amount that would fit in two hands cupped together for you and your child and see the difference.
- **Start small:** start off with a smaller portion and see how your child feels. You can offer a second helping if they are still hungry. Use smaller plates and bowls for younger children to help keep portion sizes right for their size.
- **No pressure:** many parents want their children to 'clear the plate' but this is not helpful. Children need to be allowed to stop eating when full and learn to listen to their body's appetite signals. To avoid wasting food, start with a small portion.
- **Variety and balance:** offer a [variety and balance](#) of different foods from the main food groups. Offer vegetables with midday and evening meals – these can be on the side or as part of dishes like pasta bakes, curries or stews. Offer fruit first for pudding.
- **Smart snacks:** healthier snacks can provide important nutrients as well as satisfying hunger or treat cravings. For example, an oat cake with soft cheese, a piece of fruit, vegetables sticks, a slice of wholemeal toast with peanut butter, or natural yogurt with raisins.
- **Limit unhealthy treats:** foods high in fat, salt and sugar like chocolate, sweets, fried crisps and biscuits, should be eaten in small portions (around 100 calories) and not often. Check the calorie content of packaged snacks on the label and don't give adult sized portions of treat foods to children.

For further information visit: [Portion sizes | British Nutrition Foundation](#)

Portion size measures using your child's hands:

- **Breakfast cereal (flakes, puffs etc):**
About 3 medium handfuls
- **Baked potato:**
About the size of their fist
- **Dried pasta shapes/rice:**
About 2 handfuls
- **Cooked pasta, rice, noodles:**
About the amount that would fit in two hands cupped together
- **Cooked chicken breast or fish fillet:**
About the size of their hand
- **Cooked red meat:**
About the size of their palm
- **Hard cheese:**
About the size of two thumbs



Understanding vegetable portions

To help understand vegetable portions and exactly what counts as one of the 5 portions of fruit & veg a day, visit [Understanding Portions - Simply Veg](#). You can also download a rainbow reward chart to encourage kids to eat a wider variety of vegetables.

Fussy eating

Children being fussy about what they eat and not wanting to taste new or unfamiliar foods is part of normal development and lots of children go through this phase. A new food takes 14-20 times to be accepted.

- Try to create a meal environment that is relaxed, your child will pick up on your anxiety and stress.
- Try & eat together and have a family meal where you all eat the same food, and they see you enjoying this
- Have regular meal and snack times
- Be patient and increase the range gradually

For further information and to download a booklet with tips and ideas how to help your child visit:

[Fussy eating | Children Young People and Families Online Resource](#)

Hay fever (allergic rhinitis)

We are now getting into hay fever season in the UK (this is usually from the end of March until end of September), symptoms can develop at any age. Hay fever is an allergic reaction where the body's immune system reacts to allergens that are in the air. Contact with an allergen causes the body to respond by releasing a chemical called histamine which is what causes symptoms such as:

- Itchy eyes
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Runny nose

There are two types of hay fever:

Seasonal	Perennial
Symptoms usually occur between March and September	Symptoms all year round
When pollen counts are high	Related to household allergens
Pollen from trees, plants, weeds or all 3	Pets, dust, mould spores

It is helpful to know which type causes your child's symptoms. To help manage their symptoms:

- Wear wrap-around sunglasses to prevent pollen from entering the eyes.
- Use a petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) around nostrils to stop pollen from going up the nose.
- Keep windows and doors shut to keep pollen out.
- Shower at the end of every day to remove pollen from their hair and body.
- Stay indoors when possible if pollen count very high.
- Make sure your home is hoovered regularly and dusted with a damp cloth.
- Add pollen filters to the car air vents.
- Avoid drying clothes outside as pollen can be blown onto them.
- Stay away from cigarette smoke as this can make symptoms worse.
- Avoid cut grass, especially playing on it.
- Avoid having fresh flowers in the home.

[Hay Fever | Allergy UK | National Charity](#)

[Hay fever - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Asthma

Asthma is a very common medical condition but it's important to make sure it is properly controlled to prevent problems and/or a severe asthma attack which could be life threatening. It is really important that:

- Your child has an asthma care plan in school.
- Your child attends an annual asthma review.
- You know what your child's triggers are.
- You check your child is using their inhalers as directed.
- You regularly check your child's inhaler technique [How to use your inhaler | Asthma + Lung UK](#)
- You recognise if a reliever inhaler is being overused (using 2 or more per year is an indicator of poorly controlled asthma) – a sign your child's asthma is not under control so further medical attention is required.
- You make sure your home is smoke free.

You can seek support if your home is damp or cold: [Helpline | Asthma + Lung UK](#)

Bedwetting

Bedwetting, otherwise known as enuresis, affects approximately half a million children and teenagers in the UK. It can be embarrassing to talk about which can delay people from asking for help. But it's nothing to be ashamed of and it's important to get help if you need it.

The [ERIC website](#) offers support and advice for young people with a bowel or bladder condition.

Did you know that drinking well and staying hydrated can affect bed wetting? [Find out more in our blog.](#)

Please follow the advice on the Eric website. If you still need support after following the recommended advice, our school nurses run enuresis (bedwetting) clinics. You can find our contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Early language development workshops **online**

Does your child struggle to pay attention to you?
Do they struggle to use words to communicate?
Do they have only a limited number of words or
only use short phrases?

If you're a **parent** or
carer or work with
children aged 0-5, our
workshops will give you
lots of **everyday**
strategies to support
their **communication**
development in the
all-important early years.



Sign up on our website:



cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/slt



Scan me 

Sensory Processing workshops **online**

Does your child:

- Feel distressed by the way certain things feel?
- Become easily overwhelmed in busy or noisy places?
- Struggle to focus or sit still?

If you're a parent or carer or work with children and young people, our workshops will help you understand more about their sensory needs. We'll offer lots of simple strategies and advice to help.



Sign up on our website or scan the QR code:
cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/occupational-therapy



BH526b v1.2 Sep23 Sensory processing promo card

Sensory Processing online workshops

Is your child up to date with their immunisations?

Vaccines are free, they prevent children becoming ill from infectious diseases and have helped to save millions of lives globally.

You can check your child's red book (PCHR), speak to your GP, or phone our local child health service (0300 5611851) to check whether they have received all their immunisations. If your child was vaccinated outside of the UK, you'll need to provide evidence to your GP practice so that they can check whether your child needs any further vaccinations.



To find out more visit the [NHS Vaccinations website](#) and the [Berkshire Healthcare website](#).

Travel vaccinations

If you are going abroad your child might need some additional vaccines to their routine childhood ones. Some countries have serious diseases that you need protection against before you travel.

Your GP clinic should have a practice nurse who specialises in travel immunisations, or you will need to go to a private travel clinic.

For further information and advice visit: [Travel vaccinations - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/travel-vaccinations)

You can find out which vaccinations you need for the areas you'll be visiting here:

- [Travel Health Pro](#)
- [NHS Fit for Travel](#)

Take proof of any previous immunisations to the appointment. There may be a cost for some vaccines. Some countries require proof of vaccination for entry. Vaccines can take 6-8 weeks to build immunity so give yourself plenty of time.

Measles is still a concern

Measles is a highly infectious disease that can lead to serious problems like pneumonia, meningitis, and even long-term disability or death. Symptoms include a high fever, sore red watery eyes and a blotchy red-brown rash. It is easy to catch in when in close contact with others like at school. Measles is on the increase locally.

Please check in your child's red book to make sure they are up to date with 2 doses of the MMR vaccine. If they have missed either of these 2 doses, please book an appointment with your GP.

Find out more:

[MMR \(measles, mumps and rubella\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[MMR Vaccine \(Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine\) | Vaccine Knowledge Project \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk)



Sport In Mind

Less than 50% of children and young people aged 5-16 reach the government recommended 60 minutes of exercise per day, and rates of probable mental disorders in the same age group have increased to 1 in 6 children.

Get your child more active with Sport in Mind, the UK's leading mental health sports charity. They run physical activity sessions in your local area for children (they do separate sessions for adults as well) to promote mental wellbeing, improve physical health, combat isolation and empower people to move their lives forward in a positive direction.

[Find a session: Youth Community Sessions | Sport in Mind](#)

As well as activity sessions they also have [breathing cards](#) and [journals](#) which are packed with exciting activities, challenges and information to empower children and young people to make positive ongoing changes to their physical health and open discussions about mental health and wellbeing.

Know where to go if you need medical advice



Minor cuts and grazes
Bruises and minor sprains
Coughs and colds

Self Care

Stock your
medicine cabinet



Minor illnesses
Headache
Stomach upsets
Bites and stings

Pharmacy



Feeling unwell?
Unsure?
Anxious?
Need help?

NHS 111



Persistent symptoms
Chronic pain
Long term conditions

GP Advice

Out of Hours call 111



Choking
Chest pain
Blacking out
Serious blood loss

A&E or 999

Emergencies only



If you have a child aged 5-19 you can contact a member of the school nursing team by text message for confidential, anonymous help and advice.

We can offer advice and support on many topics like:

- Sleep
- Behaviour
- Bullying
- Parenting
- Healthy eating
- Bedwetting
- Dealing with medical conditions in school
- Emotional health and wellbeing

Text: 07312 263194

Open 9am - 4:30pm Mon-Fri
(excluding bank holidays)

How to contact your School Nursing team

We are available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.
There is reduced cover during school holidays

Bracknell Forest

0300 365 6000

BracknellForest.SN@berkshire.nhs.uk

Reading

0118 9047320

csnreading@berkshire.nhs.uk

Wokingham

0118 9047330

csnwokingham@berkshire.nhs.uk

West Berkshire

0118 9047325

csnwestberks@berkshire.nhs.uk

Visit our website

cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/school-nursing

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