

For information, advice and support about your wellbeing please contact:

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Supporting your wellbeing

There are plenty of suggestions on the PHE webpage, some of our favorites include:

Think about your new daily routine: Life is changing for us all for a while. Whether you are staying at home or social distancing, you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine. Think about how you can adapt and create positive new routines.

Do things you enjoy: When you are anxious, lonely or low you may do things that you usually enjoy less often, or not at all. Focussing on your favourite hobby, learning something new or simply taking time to relax indoors should give you some relief from anxious thoughts and feelings and can boost your mood. If you can't do the things you normally enjoy because you are staying at home, try to think about how you could adapt them, or try something new. There are lots of free tutorials and courses online and people are coming up with innovative online solutions like online pub quizzes and streamed live music concerts.

e.g.

The Watershed cinema in Bristol have kindly provided a link with free 3 month access to the film streaming platform MUBI. Every day they hand pick a new film, so you always have 30 films to choose from to watch. This film platform often broadcasts some of the lesser known films, particularly foreign films. <https://mubi.com/watershed>

Download an Artist Pack- 'Art is Where the Home is'

Stay inspired with **Firstsite's** artist created activity packs, featuring contributions from UK artists including Grayson Perry, Antony Gormley, Sarah Lucas, Gillian Wearing, Idris Khan, Richard Wentworth, Cornelia Parker, Jeremy Deller, Vanley Burke, Mark Wallinger and more.

'Art is Where the Home is' gives ideas about how to get creative at home. Anyone can have a go- there are no specialist materials needed and it's completely free to download. <https://firstsite.uk/art-is-where-the-home-is/>

Ever fancied having a go at ballet? Have a look at The Ballet coach's YouTube channel there are lots of simple ballet move tutorials 'for Grandma and Grampa'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtCchbevJk0>

Working with parents to deliver aspects of Health Education

As we head further into the Summer Term, many schools would usually be thinking about the teaching and learning of sex education. At the moment there is no real indication about when schools will begin to open, and so the question is, what (if anything) to send home for parents to home-teach their children in this subject area.

There is a lot of material in relationships and sex education that relies on teacher-led discussion in the safe classroom learning environment that has been built up throughout the year. The general thinking from PSHE specialists is that many lessons may not best suit a one-to-one home learning environment. Taking that on board, whilst also wanting to support children in year 6 to prepare for the physical and emotional changes this phase in their life can bring, we have put together a handbook for parents and carers to discuss some of the aspects of growing up and moving on. If you like the handbook, please do add it to your home learning resources - or you may want to use the handbook to prepare your own version for parents to access.

Either way the content is aligned to the new [Primary Health Education](#) guidance (P34-35) which will be statutory from this September in all schools.

The handbook can be [accessed here](#).



In addition to this there have also been 3 newsletters for PSHE leads during school closures. The next issue will focus on Relationships, Sex and Health Education – specifically offering suggestions to secondary schools to consider the learning their new year 7s may need, especially as they will probably miss this important learning in terms 5 and 6 of their primary education.

The Science Bit...

Let's Talk About Sleep, by Victoria Nunn, Nutritional Therapist vikinunnnutrition@outlook.com

For our body to function optimally we need adequate sleep. Research shows that those that have less than the recommended 7 hours are 3 times more likely to develop an infection compared to those who have 8 or more. This is because our immune system does most of its work when we are asleep.

But does it matter when you sleep? Our body has a natural sleep-wake cycle known as the circadian rhythm. This means going to bed when our sleep hormone melatonin is released (after sunset) and waking when its levels dip and are taken over by cortisol (after sunrise). Furthermore, research shows that melatonin has an anti-inflammatory action and exhibits immune-modulatory effects. This means it's not only key to keeping us well but fundamental to recovery after a hard day's work.

During Lockdown, there is a lot of uncertainty and it's only natural to feel anxious or stressed. This could affect sleep, making it difficult to get to or to stay asleep. This creates a domino effect as insufficient sleep only adds to levels of stress and the effectiveness of the immune system is partially suppressed by stress hormones (such as cortisol mentioned above). If we can support a healthy stress response, we can not only ensure a good immune response but ensure a good sleep-wake pattern too.

There are lots of things we can do to put sleep back on the agenda and make it the top of priority.

Let's talk about sleep hygiene:

- **As much as possible maintain regular sleep hours.** Yes, we know how tempting it is to watch that extra episode of (*insert favourite boxset*), but most of us need 7-9 hours especially if we need to fight off infection.
- **Wind down.** Avoid the blue light of screens 1 hour before bed. After sunset, it's a great idea to remove blue light from screens. If it's not possible to turn these off and pick-up a paperback or run a bath, use a programme to remove the blue from your screen. Some electronics have this built in or programmes such as F.lux do it for you. Remember, darkness releases melatonin and that helps us to sleep.
- **Rest and digest.** Your digestive system needs your sleeping hours to do some important work. Giving it a fasting period, allows it time to do this. Support digestion by finishing eating large meals 2 hours before bed. If you are still chomping at the bit before bed, have a small snack of carbohydrate and protein 45 minutes before hitting the sack: Skyr yogurt with a drizzle of honey, a couple of oat cakes with some almond butter or a protein shake made with oat milk are great pre-snooze options.
- **Environment.** The bedroom should be a sanctuary. Not a cinema. Ideally not an office...at least not at night. It should be a cool, clean, dark environment, free from noise. Consider blackout blinds or curtains, keep it cool: around 18°C and put electronics on airplane mode or store in another room.
- **Exercise.** Good news! Keeping active and maintaining a training regime can dramatically reduce stress as it releases the feel-good hormone serotonin. On top and as a result of this it can improve sleep quality and quantity. Where possible avoid demanding physical activity three hours before bed as too much too late may lead to the release of stress hormone cortisol which will keep you alert and stop melatonin doing its job in helping you fall asleep.

And finally, a few nutritional bio-hacks to promote a good night's zzzzz and feelings of calm.

Magnesium. This mineral does hundreds of jobs in our body, but it also promotes the relaxation of our muscles. Foods: spinach and dark leafy greens, pumpkin seeds, legumes, tuna, almonds and dark chocolate (think upwards of 70% cocoa) all contain high levels of magnesium.

Amino acids: L-tryptophan and L-theonine. L-tryptophan is an essential amino acid present in protein that is used by the body to make our happy hormone serotonin, the neurotransmitter essential for healthy sleep. Making sure you include quality protein in your diet, especially the last meal of the day will support healthy sleep and relaxation. L-theonine or L-*tea-onine* as I like to call it is an amino acid that is especially high in tea. It's what gives that feeling of a big hug when you have a cuppa. Green tea has the highest amounts although opt for caffeine free versions to avoid the stimulating effect later in the afternoon/evening.