

# Health news

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Web sites:  
[www.ebpct.nhs.uk](http://www.ebpct.nhs.uk)  
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Keeping you in touch with your local NHS

## To live ten years longer

### make the small changes that really matter

#### A message from your cycling Director of Public Health, Dr Richard Mendelsohn

**K**eeping yourself healthy is a bit like having a personal health bank, a place where you can put something aside for the future - in health terms that is.

Let me explain what I mean. I believe that we are all born with a certain 'health potential'.

Indeed, we now know that, whilst a few conditions are determined exclusively by our genes, many health problems arise as a result of the way our own genes, our environment and our lifestyles mix.

In other words, what we do in our



everyday life matters, because a healthy lifestyle gives each one of us the opportunity to fulfil our health potential.

A healthy lifestyle is an investment in the future and can add years to life as well as adding life to years.

Fortunately, saving in your own health bank account is a lot more fun than having to save in your own savings account. For a start, you don't have to wait too long to feel the benefits, whether you're giving up smoking or starting to become physically fitter.

Also, there are local services to help you start adding to your personal health account, and this support can be invaluable in getting started and keeping you going.

Such services include our stop smoking clinics, or our newly launched telephone-based service for those with long-term conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, or our *Expert Patient Programme* (Tel: 0800 032 6016). Or you could join one of the many walking clubs now available.

Whatever you choose to do, there's

a bonus. Well, two bonuses in a way. You'll meet other people striving to do the same as you, which is always a great source of help. Secondly, after a while you won't even notice you are doing some saving because it becomes second nature.

Ah! I hear you say...it's easy to think about but hard to do. How do I get started and keep myself going?

This is where making the *small* changes that really matter comes in. I believe the best motivator is success itself. So if we put many small additions into our personal health account, the total soon starts to add up.

The trick is to pat ourselves on the back for making a small change. In my book, there is nothing like setting yourself a small goal and then achieving it. So I hope you enjoy this edition of *Health News*. It is packed with top tips on how to keep adding to your own health bank. Please read it through and give it a go.... pick on just one thing to begin with and start making the small changes that really matter.



## Joining forces to create a healthier future

The Government recently announced that the number of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in England would reduce from 303 to 152. It means that, from 1st October, Eastern Birmingham PCT and North Birmingham PCT will join forces to become Birmingham East and North PCT.

The aim of these changes is to provide more money for frontline services and improve the range and quality of patient care.

To prepare for a possible merger, Eastern and North Birmingham PCTs have been working together more closely in many areas since May of last year.

Commenting on the news that the merger will now definitely go ahead, Sophia Christie, currently Chief Executive for both PCTs, said: "We

are delighted that the joint work carried out by our PCTs can now move ahead through this merger. It means we can continue to build on the strong partnerships we already have within the communities of Eastern and North Birmingham."

She added: "Working alongside other health services in the area and with Birmingham City Council, we shall aim to ensure that local people have access to the services they need."

As a result of the merger, PCT management and administrative costs will be reduced. *Health News* can report that by 2007, it is expected that as much as £1.5 million will be redirected to patient services.

You will not need to change your doctor, dentist, optometrist or pharmacist because of this reorganisation. However, the new



Primary Care Trust will be striving to ensure that NHS patients generally benefit from more choice and more personalised care. Future priorities include:

- enabling you to lead a healthier and independent life;
- providing services that are more convenient and easier to access;
- providing better support for people with ongoing health needs;
- moving services from hospitals into local communities, wherever it is safe and economic to do so.

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# How we're tackling infant mortality

This page tells you about the steps being taken by your local health services in Eastern and North Birmingham to reduce the number of children who die in their first year of life and to improve local children's overall health and well-being.

## Breastfeeding

To encourage women to give their babies the best start in life, we have set up a peer counsellor support programme and we are working with other agencies to raise awareness of the importance of breastfeeding. We are also working towards implementing UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative Best Practice Standards and to promote healthy infant feeding.

## Reducing Teenage Pregnancies

Babies born to young parents are at an increased risk of having poor health. To reduce this risk, the following support and advice is available to teenagers in Eastern and North Birmingham:

- **Here 4 U** Young People's Clinics - Firs and Bromford Community Centre, **0121 748 7857**; Harvey Road Clinic, **0121 465 1859**; Youth Information Shop, Poolway Shopping Centre, **0121 783 1772**; Connexions, High St, Erdington, **0121 248 8700**
- **Free emergency hormonal contraception** provided for women

aged 21 years and under at a number of local pharmacies - **0121 255 4500**

- **Sex and relationship education sessions** in schools

## Support for young parents

To help young parents cope with the demands on them, there are:

- **Parenting courses** delivered by the NHS in partnership with other agencies
- **Clubs for new mothers**, where they can receive information and advice, as well as meeting other mothers dealing with the same day to day issues as



themselves

- **Texting services** to enable us to keep in touch with young mothers

## Stop smoking support

Smoking during pregnancy is directly linked to low birth-weight (i.e., babies born weighing less than 2,500 grams).

Low birth weight babies have an increased risk of ill health and death during the first year of life, as well as throughout childhood.

That is why we have developed programmes to help parents stop smoking and to stay stopped - **0800 7312654 (Eastern) 0800 389 2808 (North)**.

## Why good antenatal care is important for your baby

Attending antenatal appointments throughout your pregnancy helps to ensure that your baby is doing well and that you are also maintaining your own health. So exactly what does antenatal care involve?

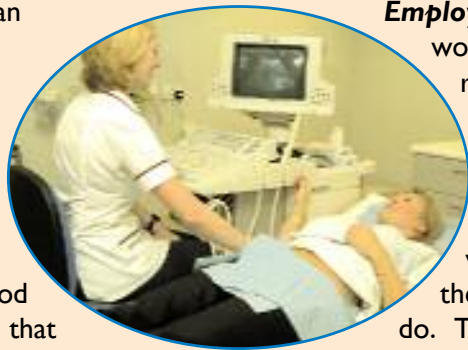
**Well-being check** - On a regular basis you will have an appointment with a midwife either in hospital or at a clinic in your local community.

The midwife may check your weight, blood pressure, blood and urine to ensure that any changes or pregnancy-related illnesses that can affect you or the baby are picked up early, and that treatment is provided.

You'll also get advice about how to stop smoking, what food to eat and how physically active you should be.

**Ultrasound scans** - Scans show any

conditions affecting the growth and development of your baby while it is still in the womb. This helps the midwives and doctors to plan the best possible care for you and your baby during your pregnancy and at the birth.



**Employment** - If you're working, you have the right to paid time off for your antenatal appointments. At your appointments with the midwife you will be asked about the kind of work you do. This is to make sure you are aware of anything that you are doing that could affect your baby.

**Social support and benefits advice** - Your midwife will also be able to point you in the right direction in order for you to be able to claim any social security and other benefits.

## Why breastfeeding is best for your baby's health

**Off to a good start in life** - The milk produced during the first 72 hours after birth - known as *colostrum* - gives babies a good start by strengthening and developing their immune systems.

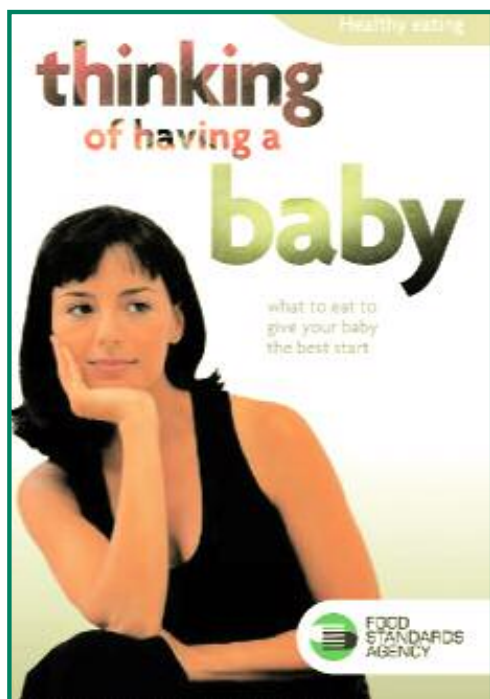
**It's a complete food** - Both the Department of Health and the World Health Organisation recommend breastfeeding (with no other food or drink) for around the first six months of your baby's life.

**The health benefits are long lasting** - Babies who are breastfed have lower rates of chest, ear and urine infections; fewer illnesses such as diarrhoea and a reduced risk of: vomiting; fewer respiratory conditions like wheezing; and a reduced risk of eczema, diabetes in childhood and obesity while they are young.

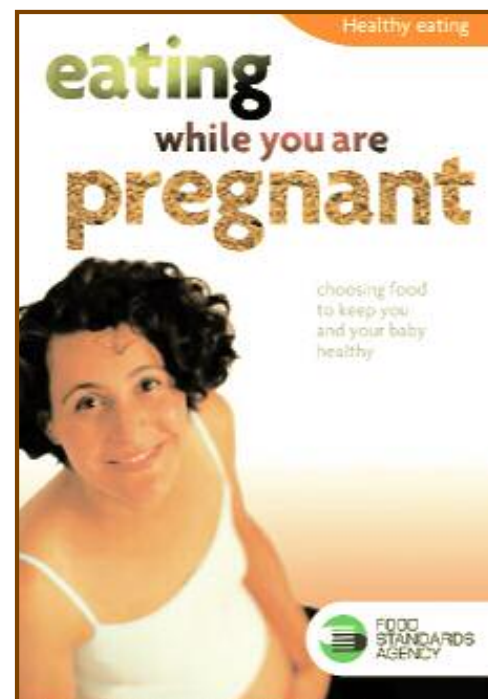
Mothers who breastfeed reduce their own risk of developing ovarian cancer, breast cancer and hip fractures (osteoporosis) in later life.

**Where to get help** - Talk to your Health Visitor or Midwife or contact:

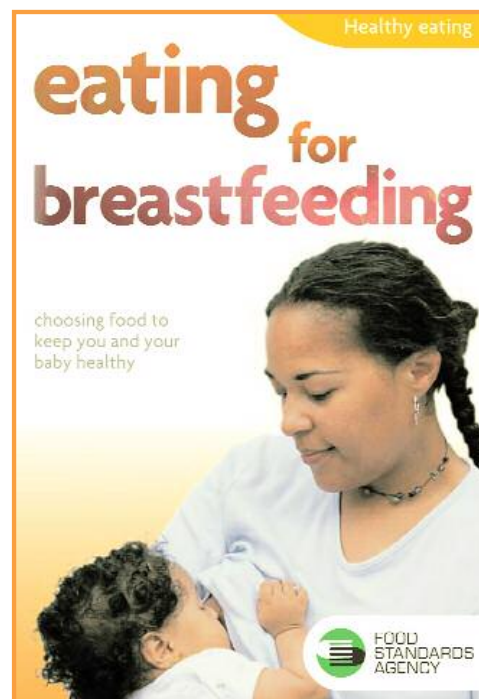
- Good Hope Maternity Hospital**, Sutton Coldfield. Drop-in Breastfeeding Clinic. Tel: 378 2211 ext. 3180, Mondays 1.30 - 4 pm
- Stockland Green Health Centre**, Reservoir Road, Erdington. Mother to Mother Support Group/Drop-in Breastfeeding Clinic. Tel: 465 2350. Wednesdays 1.00 - 3.00 pm
- Heartlands Hospital Maternity Unit**, Drop-in Breastfeeding Clinic. Tel: 424 1711. Fridays 1.30 - 3.30 pm
- Harvey Road Clinic**, Harvey Road, Yardley. Mother to Mother Support Group/Drop-in Breastfeeding Clinic. Tel: 465 1850. Day and time to be confirmed.
- Sure Start Saltley**, Anthony Road, Saltley. Tel: 322 0910.
- Washwood Heath Children's Centre**, Sladefield Road, Ward End. Tel: 464 1810.
- Adderley Road Children's Centre**, St Saviour's Road, Saltley. Tel: 464 4183.
- Sure Start East Birmingham**, Tame Valley School, Chillingholme Road, Bromford. Tel: 675 6996.
- Kitts Green/Shard End Children's Centre**, Church Lane, Kitts Green. Tel: 789 9779



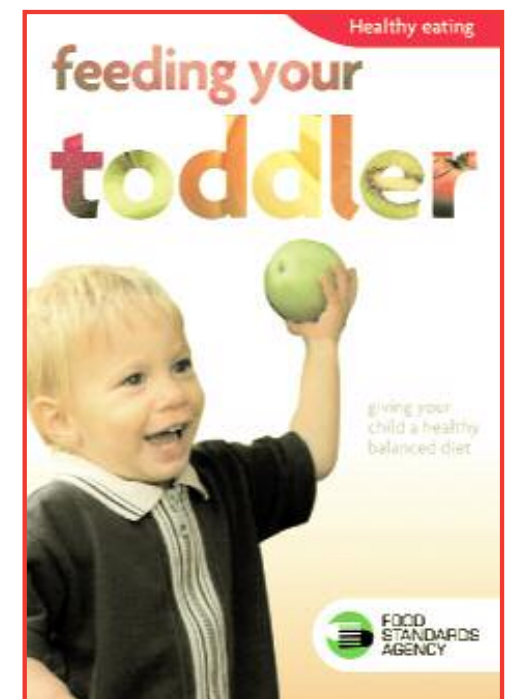
Try to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily; starchy foods like bread and rice; lean meat and chicken; fish (but no more than two portions of oily fish per week); eggs; beans and lentils; milk and cheese. Drink no more than 1 or 2 units of alcohol, once or twice a week. When you stop using contraception, start taking a daily folic acid supplement until the 12th week of pregnancy.



Eat a varied and balanced diet (see *Thinking of Having a Baby* section). Wash your hands before and after handling food. Make sure meals are piping hot, meat is well cooked and not raw or undercooked. Don't eat raw eggs or foods containing raw or partially cooked eggs (i.e., yolk and white must be solid). Reduce your alcohol and caffeine intake. Avoid eating nuts.



Eat a varied and balanced diet. Drink at least 1.2 litres of fluids every day to ensure that you produce a good supply of milk for your baby. Small amounts of whatever you're eating and drinking may pass to your baby through your breast milk. If you do have alcohol or caffeine, try to have them only occasionally, because large amounts could affect your baby. Avoid eating nuts.



Toddlers can eat the same food as you, with no salt, sugar or honey added. Give them meals and snacks like full-fat milk (skimmed milk from 2 years of age if they are eating well); dairy foods; meat and egg (the white and the yolk must be solid); pasta (not wholemeal), potatoes and rice (not brown). Too much fibre can reduce the amount of calcium and iron they absorb.

# Unlocking the secrets of a longer, healthier life

Much of this issue of *Health News* tells you how to give yourself the best possible chance of living longer. But what does it take to reach 100 - and to live that long while still enjoying life as much as possible?

Interestingly, there are places around the world where a higher proportion of people seem to live to a very ripe old age than anywhere else.

The Japanese islands of Okinawa are one of them. So are the Mediterranean island of Sardinia and the town of Loma Linda in California.

What's their big secret? And what do they have in common? On the face of it, not very much, given their geographical distances from one another on different continents. But researchers have found a number of common threads in their daily lives.

A particularly high number of their residents keep active in old age, with many of them continuing to work for as long as possible. They tend to eat a healthy diet, with plenty of vegetables. And, interestingly, they know how to relax and socialise with families and friends.

Picture the scene. A big family group eating a well-cooked, nourishing meal



during a lazy Sunday afternoon in a tiny Sardinian village. Well, Shard End, Sheldon and Sutton Coldfield aren't Sardinia. But there are lessons to be learned along the lines of work, rest

and play.

The Japanese lady in the photo above has lived to a very ripe old age. By emulating the examples described here, you'll increase your own chances.

## Learning to switch off

It's vital to learn to switch off from the pressures of life. There's no magic formula for everyone. We're all different. What's important is that each of us finds moments of peace and tranquillity - time for ourselves when we can relax both mentally and physically.

## Having a sense of purpose

Relaxation is one side of the coin. Having a strong sense of purpose in life is another. In many ways, that's what seems to keep the older people of Okinawa going. They don't just give up on things. They don't see old age as a reason to stop living.

## Keeping active

This goes hand in hand with having a sense of purpose. Keeping mentally and physically active - doing whatever you enjoy doing most - is likely to add years on to your life and to improve the quality of your life as well.

## Eating a rainbow of colours

<p><b>Yellow/orange fruits and vegetables</b> contain antioxidants such as vitamin C as well as carotenoids and other substances which may help maintain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A lower risk of some cancers</li> <li>● A healthy heart</li> <li>● Healthy eyesight</li> <li>● An ability to fight infections</li> </ul> <p><b>Yellow/Orange</b></p>	<p>Eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day may already be part of your plan for a healthier lifestyle. But you could also <b>ensure</b> you eat a <b>colourful variety</b>.</p> <p><b>Why? Because colourful fruits and vegetables in your daily diet provide the wide range of vitamins, minerals and natural plant compounds that can provide a variety of health benefits, including lowering your risk of cancer and heart disease.</b></p> <p><b>Involve your children</b> - get them to count the number of each colour your family eats in a week. So next time you are out shopping, think colour!</p>	<p><b>/Tan/Brown fruits and vegetables</b> contain many useful substances, such as allicin, found in onions and garlic. These may help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keep your heart healthy</li> <li>● Maintain cholesterol levels that are already healthy</li> <li>● Lower the risk of some cancers</li> <li>● Fight infections</li> </ul> <p><b>/Tan/Brown</b></p>
<p><b>Red</b></p> <p><b>Red fruits and vegetables</b> contain lycopene and anthocyanins which may help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain a healthy heart</li> <li>● Improve your memory and help you think clearly</li> <li>● Lower the risk of some cancers</li> <li>● Preserve a healthy urine flow</li> </ul>	<p><b>Green</b></p> <p><b>Green fruits and vegetables</b> contain natural plant products that can help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain good eyesight</li> <li>● Ensure strong bones and teeth</li> <li>● Lower the risk of some cancers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Blue/Purple</b></p> <p><b>Blue/Purple fruits and vegetables</b> contain anthocyanins and other substances which are potential antioxidants and may help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain healthy urine flow</li> <li>● Preserve your memory function</li> <li>● Lower the risk of some cancers</li> </ul>

**So how much is a portion?** Well, it's about 80 grams or a handful. Add some colour to your life. Eat more fruit and vegetables.

<p>For extra sweetness, add chopped fruit to your cereal or stir berries into yoghurt and desserts.</p>	<p>Add peppers, mushrooms, onions or pineapple to your pizza topping and make an extra portion count.</p>	<p>Add some crunch to your sandwiches with lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber or grated carrot.</p>
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# small change, **bi**

## Reduce Your Risk of Coronary Heart Disease

### Why you should try

A coronary artery is a blood vessel that carries blood to your heart. Your arteries are like narrow tubes. Fat called *plaque* can build up in your arteries, blocking or slowing the flow of blood and oxygen through them.

Coronary heart disease (CHD) can lead to serious health problems, including angina (pain or pressure in the chest) and a heart attack.

Men and women can get CHD. It can run in your family. If you are black or Asian, you are broadly more at risk than the rest of the population, although each ethnic group is affected differently.

If you are Asian, you have a higher risk of developing diabetes, which increases your

risk of heart disease.

If you are black, you are more at risk of high blood pressure, which also increases your risk of heart disease.

CHD develops as you get older and as plaque builds up in your arteries over the years.

If you are overweight or have high blood pressure, diabetes or high cholesterol, you have an increased risk of developing CHD.

If you smoke, eat a high-fat diet and do not exercise regularly, you have an increased risk of developing CHD, which is one of the biggest single causes of people dying early in this country.

Below are the top tips for reducing your risk, whether you're black, Asian or white.



## Top tips

#### 1. Don't smoke.

If you smoke, ask your practice nurse or pharmacist for help to stop or contact the Stop Smoking Services on 0800 731 2654 (Eastern) or 0800 389 2808 (North). After 2 or 3 years of not smoking, your risk of CHD will be as low as that of someone who has never smoked.

#### 2. Control your blood pressure.

If you have high blood pressure, your doctor can suggest ways to lower it. If you're taking medicine for high blood pressure, take it just the way your doctor tells you to. Contact the Healthy Hearts Programme at the Partners in Health Centre on 0121-465 2666.

#### 3. Exercise.

Regular exercise can make your heart stronger and reduce your risk of heart disease. Exercise can also help if you have high blood pressure. Before you start, talk to your doctor about the right kind of exercise for you. Try to exercise at least 5 times a week for at least 30 minutes each time.

#### 4. Eat a healthy diet.

Add foods to your diet that are low in fat. Ask your doctor or practice nurse for advice.

#### 5. Maintain a healthy weight.

Being overweight increases your risk of diabetes, hypertension and high blood cholesterol, which further increases the risk of CHD. Watch your waist size, as this can increase your CHD risk. Men - keep your waist size below 37 inches, and women below 32 inches.

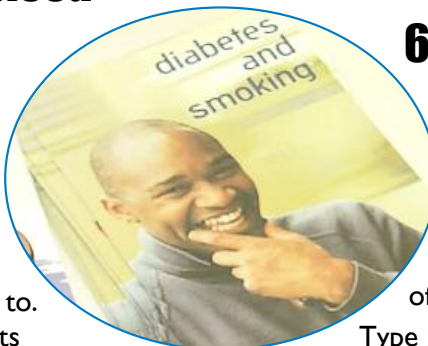
#### 6. Avoid or control diabetes.

Weight control and exercise can improve, prevent or slow down the onset of diabetes, and reduce your risk of heart disease.

Type 2 diabetes (non-insulin-dependent) increases the risk of both CHD and hypertension. Diabetic men are two to three times more at risk of having coronary heart disease than those without diabetes.

#### 7. Control feelings of stress, anxiety and depression.

Stress, anxiety and depression can increase your risk of coronary heart disease. Some people smoke more, over-eat, or drink more alcohol to cope with stress. These behaviours increase your risk of developing CHD. Ask your GP or practice nurse for support to help you to learn to manage stress and anxiety.



## GIVING UP SMOKING

If you're a smoker, the best thing you can do for your health is to stop. That applies even more if you're pregnant - after all, you're responsible for two people's health. So if you stop smoking during pregnancy, you'll improve your unborn baby's oxygen levels and he - or she - will stand a better chance of being born healthy.



#### WHAT TO DO:

*How can you stop? Well, believe in yourself for a start. Tell yourself you can really do it. Take each day as it comes - and if you need help, ask for it. The NHS provides free stop smoking support to anyone who wants it.*

### Janine's story...



Janine Kelly stopped smoking 9 weeks ago. She is nearly five months pregnant, and has two children. She was motivated to stop smoking by her 9 year old daughter's constant nagging and the fact that chemicals from cigarettes are found in the breast milk of women who smoke.

She found the support and encouragement from Heena Jabbar, her Stop Smoking Adviser, really helpful. It's inspired her to set up a breastfeeding support website. Janine is already reaping some of the health benefits of stopping smoking. Her food tastes better, her sense of smell has returned, and now she can even blow balloons up without getting out of breath! She'd recommend the service to others. Her advice to smokers who are thinking about quitting is: *take the support, as you have nothing to lose and everything to gain.*

### Nuala's story...

Nuala, 56, had been a traveller all her life until changes in her circumstances meant she had to live in one place. She found this very difficult and over a period of 18 months she became increasingly depressed - crying, not sleeping or eating, and drinking too much.

Eventually, through drinking, she became very physically ill. She was then unable to drink, and as she sobered up she was able to listen to her GP's offer of help.

Someone from a befriending service was able to sit with her as she worked through her sadness about the loss of her old life as a traveller. With the help of a psychologist, she worked on her negative thoughts and feelings and regained her self-confidence.



## DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

Depression is not something you can see. All too often, sufferers are told to pull themselves together. But it's much more than feeling fed up. When you are depressed, it just does not go away and life is hard. At least one in every six people becomes depressed. They don't always realise it, often telling themselves that they are just 'under the weather'.

If you have some of the following symptoms you might be depressed: feeling restless; finding it difficult to sleep or sleeping more; losing or putting on weight;

crying a lot; physical aches and pains; feeling irritable; no interest in sex; difficulty in concentrating; feeling unnecessarily guilty; lack of self-confidence.

#### WHAT TO DO:

*Getting the help and support of friends, family and your GP can be a great help. You need to break that negative cycle.*

*Your GP may give you medication to help if you are very depressed but, equally, may suggest you have psychological therapy or 'talking treatment'.*

Life years  
be gained  
small c

A 65-year-old lifelong cigarette smoker who quit a year and a half ago has gained four years to their lives, and women to those who continued to smoke. It's never too late to stop smoking. When you stop, the higher the chance you will gain.

Keeping active can also buy years. People who take up exercise are like top-flight athletes who late in life. When it comes to exercising, a regular basis is worth it.

# g difference



## BECOMING MORE ACTIVE



Sad but true, most of us are not active enough. Seven out of 10 men and eight out of 10 women do too little, and as we get older we do even less. Lack of activity can be a real problem in later life, with more risk of falling and breaking bones. Getting active does not have to mean playing sport. Physical activity includes walking, gardening, housework and dancing.

### WHAT TO DO

If you are not very active, start with small tasks and slowly build on these. For example, rather than use the remote control on the television, get out of the chair to switch channels. If you do too much, you might injure yourself or feel so exhausted that you give up. As a general guide, try to do 10% more each week. You'll gradually feel the difference.

### Asa's story...

Asa, 41, was like a lot of men. He had been a keen footballer until he discovered booze, smoking and junk food. His weight shot up, which made it difficult to do things. So in his spare time he just watched television.

Then, at 57, his uncle Dave died of a heart attack. Everyone always said how much they were alike. This was because Dave also liked a pint (or ten), cigarettes and plenty of junk food. It shook Asa badly and he decided he did not want to end up this way.

With a bit of persuasion from Mum and his girlfriend he went to his GP, where he saw a nurse who helped him draw up a plan of action to eat more healthily and become more active. It has not all been plain sailing but he now runs 5 miles regularly, is busy in the garden and eats a lot more fruit and vegetables.

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### Naime's story...

Naime Rehman is 37 years old, married with two young daughters, and has recently been diagnosed with diabetes. Since then, he has stopped smoking and increased the amount of exercise he does. The whole family is also now eating a healthier diet: wholemeal bread, healthy cereals, more fruit and vegetables and less fatty foods. Olive oil is now used instead of animal fat for cooking, and everyone in the family is drinking more water instead of fizzy drinks.



Naime is motivated to continue these changes by his two young daughters. He wants to watch them grow up and be involved in their daily lives. He is also aware of the need to maintain these changes to reduce the risk of complications from his diabetes.

Naime is already seeing visible benefits from the changes that he has made. He feels more energetic and his blood sugars are now stable. He says: "Diabetes runs in my family. I want to make sure that my children are aware of this. I want to make changes now to ensure that they have healthy start in life."

## EATING A BALANCED DIET

Eating healthily is important for us all. It's even more important for someone with diabetes.

For example, men who have this condition are two to three times more likely to get coronary heart disease than those without diabetes.

However, weight control and exercise can improve, prevent or slow down the onset of diabetes, as well as reducing the risk of heart disease for those with the condition.

### WHAT TO DO:

So how should you go about changing your diet to a healthier one? Well, you're more likely to succeed by making small changes that you can sustain for a long time.

Think about what really motivates you to lose weight. Concentrate on that. Have confidence in yourself. With the right attitude, you'll find it possible to make the change.

## Reduce Your Risk of Cancer

### Why you should try

Cancer is a group of many different diseases that have some important things in common. They all arise in cells, the body's basic unit of life. To understand different types of cancer, it is helpful to know about normal cells and what happens when they become cancerous.

The body is made up of many types of cells. Normally, cells grow and divide to produce more cells *only* when the body needs them. This process helps keep the body healthy.

But sometimes cells keep dividing when new cells are *not* needed. These cells may form a mass of extra tissue called a growth or tumour.

Tumours can be 'benign' or 'malignant'. Benign tumours are not cancer. They can usually be removed and, in most cases, they don't come back. Most importantly, the

cells in benign tumours do not invade other tissues and do not spread to other parts of the body. So benign breast tumours are not a threat to life.

On the other hand, malignant tumours *are* cancer. Cells in these tumours can invade and damage nearby tissues and organs. Also, cancer cells can break away from a malignant tumour and enter the bloodstream or lymphatic system. That is how breast cancer spreads and forms secondary tumours in other parts of the body. The spread of cancer is called metastasis.

As many as one in three people will develop some form of cancer during their lifetime. Studies have shown that around half of all cancers could be prevented if people make lifestyle changes. Below are some tips on how to go about it.



### 1. Stop Smoking.

Smoking tobacco is the greatest single cause of cancer, and is responsible for more than 1 in 4 cancer deaths. Smoking has killed 6 million people over the last 50 years.



### 2. Maintain a healthy weight.

In the UK, up to about 12,000 cases of cancer (more than 4% of all cases) could be avoided if no one exceeded a body mass index (BMI) of 25.

### 3. Keep active.

People with higher levels of physical activity have a reduced risk of colon cancer, and probably breast cancer, regardless of their body weight.

### 4. Eat a balanced diet.

You should aim to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Try also to eat fresh produce rather than processed food.

### 5. Limit alcohol.

Alcohol increases your risk of certain cancers, more so if you also smoke. Try to limit the amount you drink. For men, the

sensible maximum limit is around 21 units of alcohol per week. For women, it is around 14 units.

### 6. Stay safe in the sun.

Most cases of skin cancer are caused by damage from UV (ultraviolet) rays in sunlight. Cover up and take care not to burn. Watch moles for any changes and get unusual skin blemishes checked out by your doctor. Avoid using sunbeds.

### 7. Attend screening appointments when called

Breast screening and cervical screening programmes save lives. That's why it's very important that you attend these appointments. Make sure that your GP practice has your correct address and telephone number.

### 8. Learn what is normal for you. Be vigilant.

While simply being aware of changes in your body will not prevent cancer, it can be a useful way of detecting the early stages of the disease. If you notice a change in bodily functions or come across a lump while examining your breasts or testicles, you should visit your GP as soon as possible.

# Tobacco pack warning survey



## Messages for Smokers (or people thinking about starting smoking)

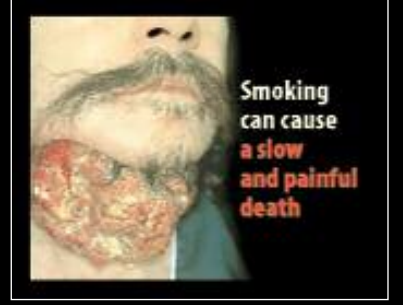
- Smokers die younger.
- Smoking clogs the arteries and causes heart attacks and strokes.
- Smoking causes fatal lung cancer.
- Smoking is highly addictive. Don't start.
- Stopping smoking reduces the risk of fatal heart and lung diseases.
- Smoking can cause a slow and painful death.
- Smoking causes ageing of the skin.
- Smoking can damage the sperm and decreases fertility.
- Smoking may reduce blood flow and cause impotence.
- Smoke contains benzene, nitrosamines, formaldehyde and hydrogen cyanide.
- Smoking when pregnant harms your baby.
- Protect children: don't make them breathe your smoke.
- Your doctor or pharmacist can help you stop smoking.
- Get help to stop smoking.

Smoking is the greatest single cause of preventable illness and premature death in the UK, killing around 106,000 people a year. Half of you who continue to smoke for most of your lives will die from your habit, half of you before the age of 69.

A smoker has two to three times the risk of having a heart attack than a non smoker.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a progressively disabling disease. It causes prolonged suffering due to difficulty in breathing. The onset is gradual and often only becomes troublesome once half your lung has been destroyed. It is rarely reversible.

Smokers' babies have a 33% higher risk of being still born or dying in the first weeks of life than non-smokers' babies.



**Picture Warnings on Tobacco Packs:** Picture health warnings on tobacco products are the subject of a public consultation by the Department of Health, which wants people's views on the Government's proposal to put images of smoking-related diseases on tobacco product packaging by the autumn of 2007. A special website asks visitors to decide which picture warning (see some of the alternatives above) is the most effective. To have your say, visit: [www.packwarnings.nhs.uk](http://www.packwarnings.nhs.uk)

For help and support to stop smoking, contact an **NHS Stop Smoking Service**  
0800 731 2654 for Eastern Birmingham residents  
0800 389 2808 for North Birmingham residents

## Remember the SunSmart code



**S**ummer's well and truly here, so follow the SunSmart code and you will be smart without your skin smarting! Spend time in the shade - under trees, umbrellas, canopies or indoors - especially between 11 am and 3 pm.

**M**ake sure you never burn. As a rule, the fairer your skin, the more careful you need to be.

**A**im to cover up with a t-shirt, hat and sunglasses.

**R**emember to take extra care with children. Keep babies under six months out of direct sunlight. Do not put

children in vest tops or sundresses if they are spending a lot of time outdoors. Shoulders and backs of necks burn easily.

Always use waterproof sunscreen (factor 15+) when children are swimming or playing outdoors with water.

**T**ips for using sunscreen properly: apply it 15-30 minutes before going out in the sun; rub in lightly on clean, dry skin; use generous amounts; re-apply once outside to ensure even coverage, and then at least every two hours.

To find out more visit: [www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)

**SunSmart**  
CANCER RESEARCH UK

**Skin cancer kills more men than women**

Finding it early saves lives

[www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)

NHS

## Tackling male mortality

Men, you are living longer. On average, a boy born in 2001 can expect to live 75.7 years - 4.8 years more than if he'd been born in 1981. But, in Birmingham, men are not living as long as those in other parts of the country.

Too many men leave it too long before they go to the doctor with a potentially serious illness. Going earlier would help. But there are other things men can do for

themselves:

- **Drink less alcohol.** Try to see 'drinking friends' less often. Spread drinking out over the week rather than all in one or two sessions. Have a couple of alcohol free days a week. Visit [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)
- **Eat more healthily.** Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and avoid

processed foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar. A burger is OK but only as a treat. Visit [www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating](http://www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating)

- **Look out for warning signs of cancer.** If you're worried about symptoms (e.g., rapid weight loss, blood in faeces, persistent coughing), speak to your GP or practice nurse.

- **Stop smoking.** It is still the biggest cause of early death, and it costs a fortune. Visit [www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk) or phone 0800 731 2654 (Eastern) or 0800

389 2808 (North) to access your local Stop Smoking Service.

- **Reduce your stress.** Asking for help is not just for women. Visit [www.bbc.co.uk/health/mens\\_health/mind\\_stress.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/mens_health/mind_stress.shtml) for tips on how to get on top of your stress before it gets on top of you.

**One more thing! Men often rely on women to sort out their health problems. So, ladies, if he has not read this article, put it under the remote control.**

# Help us to help you by using the right service

## Sarah does the right thing

When Sarah woke up feeling terrible one morning she didn't overreact - she knew how to get the best possible help

**Sarah wakes up with a red nose**  
URRRHHH, I'VE GOT A COLD. I CAN'T GO TO WORK LIKE THIS

**A few days later, Sarah still feels dreadful**  
SPLUTTER! I STILL FEEL AWFUL - I CAN'T COME TO WORK. I'LL HAVE TO GO TO THE DOCTOR

**In need of relief, she pops to her pharmacist**  
I'VE GOT A COLD. WHAT CAN I DO?  
TRY THIS COLD AND FLU REMEDY AND IF IT DOESN'T CLEAR UP IN A FEW DAYS, SEE YOUR GP

**PHARMACISTS CAN HELP WITH...**  
...colds, flu, allergies, giving up smoking, blood pressure tests and many minor ailments.

**She makes an appointment and sees her GP**  
YOU WERE RIGHT TO SEE ME. NORMALLY THE FLU REMEDY WOULD HAVE HELPED. THIS HAS NOW DEVELOPED INTO A CHEST INFECTION AND YOU NEED ANTIBIOTICS

**YOUR GP CAN HELP WITH...**  
...ongoing medical conditions like diabetes and asthma, health screenings such as cervical screening, diagnosis, treatment and prescribing medicines.

**A week later, feeling better...**  
IT'S SUCH A NICE DAY I THINK I'LL MAKE A DETOUR THROUGH THE PARK  
OUCH - MY ANKLE! THAT REALLY HURTS!

**Sarah isn't sure whether to go to A&E so she phones NHS Direct**  
I FELL OVER AND MY ANKLE'S KILLING ME. I THINK I MUST HAVE SPRAINED IT  
YOU DON'T NEED A&E FOR A SPRAIN. A WALK-IN CENTRE IS MUCH QUICKER AND I CAN TELL YOU WHERE YOUR NEAREST UNIT IS

**NHS DIRECT CAN HELP WITH...**  
...anything! It can give you advice on all conditions and suitable treatments.

**At the walk-in centre, Sarah's luck improves - she doesn't have to wait long to see a nurse!**  
DON'T WORRY. IT'S NOT BROKEN  
THAT'S GREAT NEWS! THANKS FOR SEEING ME SO QUICKLY...

**NHS WALK-IN CENTRES CAN HELP WITH...**  
...minor breaks such as fingers, toes and nose, cuts where the bleeding is not severe and sprains.

**Treat yourself**  
**Your guide to staying safe in the sun this summer.**  
• If you get a sting or a bite, brush the bee or insect off with a flat stick, or pull it out with tweezers by grasping the part of it nearest your skin.  
• **Apply ice to the area.** Itching and swelling may develop over the next few hours - it should subside in a few days. Soothe the itching with over-the-counter antihistamines.  
• **If you develop difficulty breathing, swelling in the throat, mouth or tongue, or generalised itching or hives, go to A&E immediately.**  
• Always wear factor 15+ and wear waterproof sunscreen if you're going in the sea or pool.  
• **Drink plenty of fluids (around eight glasses a day) and take frequent rests when working or playing in the hot weather.**  
• Remember, alcohol dehydrates you, and the heat of the sun makes it worse.

## Where can I get help?

### ASK YOUR COMMUNITY PHARMACIST

Your pharmacist can give you advice and information on a wide range of health problems - and point you in the right direction if you need specific kinds of medical help.

Pharmacists can offer you a *medicines use review*, where they check what you are taking, discuss possible side effects, and advise on any changes to your prescription that might be needed.

Different pharmacies may also be able to provide one or more 'extra services' including, for example, smoking cessation support, emergency contraception, cholesterol testing, blood pressure checks and advice on weight management.

To find out more, ask at your local pharmacy for details of the range of services they can offer.



### NHS WALK IN CENTRE, HIGH ST, BIRMINGHAM

Open between 8.00 am and 8.00 pm Monday to Saturday, and from 11.00 am to 5.00 pm on Sunday, this NHS nurse-led facility in the lower ground floor of Boots the Chemist offers help and advice in dealing with minor illnesses and injuries. Phone **0121-255 4500** for further information about the services available.

### NHS DIRECT 0845 4647 24-HOUR HELPLINE

At any time of day or night you can phone NHS Direct and receive advice on health matters from a qualified nurse. You can also log on to the NHS Direct web site at [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) for information about treatments for common illnesses and to find out more about locally available services.



### URGENT CARE CENTRES

Open seven days a week, the **Urgent Care Centre in Warren Farm Road, Kingstanding**, has nurse practitioners on duty who can deal with a wide range of minor illnesses and injuries.

These include, for example, bumps, grazes, sprains, ear aches, sore throats, coughs and hay fever. No prior

appointment is needed. You can just turn up and be seen. Average waiting time is around five minutes, so it is far quicker and more convenient for many people than attending a hospital accident and emergency department, which is really for 'emergencies' only.

## Do you have a Family Medicine Cabinet?

Keeping a well stocked medicine cabinet at home can help with many common illnesses including coughs, colds and sore throats. All the items below are quite cheap and worth having to hand. Keep them in a box with a lid (a plastic sandwich box is quite suitable).

- First aid items: a supply of plasters, dressings, antiseptic cream and an elastic bandage for sprains
- Simple painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen (adult and child varieties)
- Sun cream or lotion (factor 15 or above)
- Insect repellent
- Antihistamine cream (for relief from insect bites)
- Tablets to stop diarrhoea
- Vapour rub for coughs and colds
- Cough mixture
- Tweezers for removing splinters
- Thermometer

Don't forget that your pharmacist can offer you advice should you need it.



**Be safe: Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.**

# A message from your PALS

**Concerned but don't want to complain?**  
**Worried but don't know what to do?**  
**Have a problem but don't know whom to ask?** Contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We can help you by providing:

- information on local health services
- help to resolve problems concerning local health issues

**We will keep your information confidential**  
 PALS can be contacted by the public on 0800 328 3205. A service is provided from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, with a voicemail outside these hours or when the line is busy. PALS can also be contacted at pals@ebpct.nhs.uk



## We also run PALS sessions out in the community:

**Partners in Health Centre**, Yardley Green Road, Bordesley Green East, Birmingham B9 5PX. Tel: 0121 465 2667, fortnightly on a Wednesday, 1.00 pm - 4.00 pm. **Kents Moat Library**, 55-57 Pool Way, Kitts Green, Birmingham, B33 8NF. Tel: 0121 464 5755, the last Friday of each month, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm. **Castle Vale Library**, Spitfire House, 10 High Street, Castle Vale, B35 7PR. Tel: 0121 464 7335, starting 4th July, first Tuesday of the month, 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm.

**When you bring your concerns to us, we will explain how PALS works.**

# Changes in GP Practices

**Changes have been taking place in four Eastern Birmingham GP Practices in recent weeks as Dr Kumble (Erdington), Dr Ahamed (Stechford), Dr Pai (Hodge Hill) and Dr Latif (Saltley) have all retired.**

Eastern Birmingham Primary Care Trust Chief Executive, Sophia Christie, said: "The PCT is grateful for the long service which they have provided to their local communities. We wish them all a long and happy retirement."

Ms Christie added that there were exciting changes taking place in primary care. The PCT's long term aim, she explained, was to enable GP Practices to grow to serve populations of around 15,000 people from purpose-built premises that can provide the full range of primary care services.

Patients registered with the four Practices where GPs have just retired have been informed of the temporary arrangements put into place by the PCT to ensure continuity of care.

Patients are invited to go along to meetings to discuss future long term arrangements that meet their needs. The meetings are being held on:

**Monday, 7th August** at 6.00 pm at Glebe Farm Community Centre, Glebe Farm Road, Stechford.

**Tuesday, 8th August** at 6.00 pm at Stockland Green Health Centre, 192 Reservoir Road, Erdington.

**Tuesday, 15th August** at 6.00 pm at St Philip and St James Church, Hodge Hill Common, Hodge Hill.

**Thursday, 17th August** at 6.30 pm at The Amaanah Medical Practice, Saltley Centre for Health, Cradock Road, Saltley.

Comments about the service changes are invited by telephoning the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0800 328 3205.

# Nine thousand patients have benefited from Choose and Book

**Patients registered with 81 out of 84 GP practices within Eastern and North Birmingham PCTs are now benefiting from the many advantages offered through Choose and Book.**

Over 9,000 patients have used the new system since October 2005, and the number is currently increasing by more than 600 every week.

Choose and Book gives you the flexibility and ability to choose which hospital you want to go to. You can also choose the date and time for your first out-patient appointment.

So what does this mean for you? Well, you will have the choice of at least four hospitals. On top of that, the choice of date and time will allow you to fit your treatment in with your commitments at home and at work.

So even if you live just down the road from Heartlands or Good Hope hospitals and think you have no real choice, YOU DO.

Patient choice means respecting patients who choose *not* to choose. You can ask your doctor to make the decisions for you.

If you want to be involved in the decisions about your care, you can determine which factors are most important to you when considering your choice of hospital. For example:

- How quickly can I be seen?
- How easy is it to get to by car or public transport?
- Information on the quality of care provided

- Reputation of the hospital
- Recommendation from a friend or member of the family

And don't forget that you can choose the date and time of that first out-patient appointment. Not only can you do all this, but you can also arrange the appointment yourself, from home, with a simple telephone call.

This means you can book your appointment as soon as you get home from visiting your GP.

Without Choose and Book, this process can take several weeks and, even then, you may need to re-arrange the appointment you have been offered by the hospital.

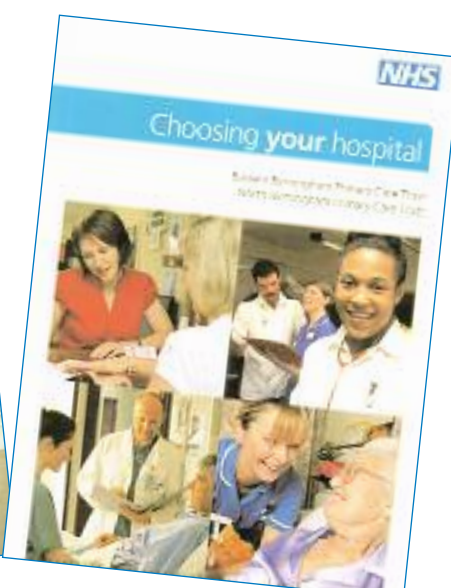
Having this choice of appointments, and being able to make it more

quickly, means you don't have to wait so long - a great benefit if you're feeling anxious.

So, if your GP says that you ought to be referred to hospital, ask about Choose and Book. You should be able to pick up a copy of *Your Guide to Choose and Book*, which explains the process to you in easy to follow steps.

*Choosing your Hospital* is a guide that answers many of the questions you might have and provides details of the hospitals you can choose. It also lists information that will help you choose the one that is best for you. Both booklets should be available at your GP practice.

Choose and Book was designed to give you a choice. Make sure you benefit.



## Medium Secure Unit Community Liaison Group meetings

A Community Liaison Group has been established to help keep people in the Bordesley Green area informed about progress on the development of a medium secure unit on the site of the former Yardley Green Hospital, and to give them a voice.

The group, which met on 6th June and 19th July, comprises individuals who represent the views of local people. *If you are interested in joining the group, please contact 0800 051 0302 or e-mail admin@msuwm.org.uk*

If you would like to meet members of the project team who are planning the new scheme, they will be present during the afternoon at a Health Mela on 10th August at the Partners in Health Centre, Yardley Green Road, Bordesley Green.

## Do you want more control over your health?

### Become an "Expert Patient"



**A free course to help people living with a long-term health condition to improve their lives and manage their condition better**

Expert Patient Programme Service  
 Kingsnorth House, 1 Blenheim Way  
 Kingstanding, Birmingham B44 8LS

**Freephone 0800 032 6016**

## Diary of events

### August:

- Sexual Health Week, 7th to 13th August

### September:

- National Pregnancy Week, 4th to 10th September
- Blood Pressure Association Know Your Numbers Week, 11th to 17th September

### October:

- 1st October 2006: Birmingham East and North Primary Care Trust established
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 1st to 31st October
- Walk to School Week, 2nd to 6th October
- World Mental Health Day, 10th October

# How well did we do last year?

Recently, we reviewed how well we did against our Business Plan for 2005/06.

### Waiting Times:

- Between April 2005 and March 2006, 100% of patients were able to get an appointment to see a GP within 48 hours of making the request.
- Between April 2005 and March 2006, no one waited longer than 12 weeks for their first hospital out-patient appointment, and no one waited longer than six months for admission to hospital.

### Extra Services and Facilities:

- We have set up a special team of nurses - known as *assertive case managers* - who provide care for vulnerable adults to prevent

the need for them to go into hospital.

- We appointed extra mental health staff to support patients in Washwood Heath.
- A new Urgent Care Centre opened at Warren Farm Health Centre in Kingstanding.
- We developed a community-based Macmillan nursing service for cancer patients.
- We have planning permission for a new health centre to replace the current Streetly Road practice.
- Plans for three more Children's Centres have been approved (for Wyrley Birch, Falcon Lodge, and Perry Common) and building work is on track.
- We set up a community stroke team
- More GP practices are providing sexual

health clinics (an additional two in Erdington and Perry Barr).

### Improvements in Health:

- More people attended stop smoking clinics and 1,000 people quit smoking for at least 4 weeks. Drop-in smoking cessation clinics were set up in Boots and Asda, and at least 33 GP practices now provide smoking cessation services.
- More pregnant women stopped smoking - 80% of them continued not to smoke.
- We have seen a drop in teenage conceptions in Kingstanding. We also set up eight *Here for You* drop-in clinics which saw 1,612 young people. The *Schools Sex and Relationship* project was expanded to three schools.
- Thirty-six readers of *Your Life* magazine showed they had been empowered by the magazine to make lifestyle changes.

- Exercise classes for people who have coronary heart disease are now held in Erdington, Kingstanding, Wyndley, Fox Hollies and Stechford. Community heart failure clinics are held in Kingstanding, Walmley, Four Oaks, Reservoir Road, and Eden Court.

### Working for Our Communities:

- The *We're Listening* programme now includes carers and vulnerable older people.
- We now employ a range of people from a wide variety of backgrounds and communities that more closely reflect the communities we serve.
- Three more *Expert Patient* courses have been held. We can now run at least 10 courses a year.
- Health panel meetings were held in Yardley, Erdington and Hodge Hill.