

Health & Wellbeing Newsletter

Autumn 2017



Welcome to the Autumn 2017 Health and Wellbeing Newsletter.

Since the last Newsletter the Health and Wellbeing Forum has been working closely with the Health, Safety and Environment Department to develop an extended Occupational Health and Wellbeing Event which is taking place this October.

We are also considering further proactive health and wellbeing training programmes and initiatives. Further details will follow.

In this edition read our useful tips on making healthier food choices, the flu vaccination programme and the Health and Wellbeing Event which is taking place from 16th – 26th October 2017. Don't forget that we want to hear from you – share any thoughts, tips, articles on our Health and Wellbeing Blog in the Knowledge Centre on the Wire or by emailing Julia.carson@nienetworks.co.uk

Occupational Health and Wellbeing Event 2017

Once again we have listened to you and we've taken your views into consideration making our health and wellbeing event even bigger, and even better than last year!



We would love for all of you to take part and enjoy as many of these checks as possible across all our locations

The annual Occupational Health and Wellbeing Week has increased to become an "Event" and will be run over two weeks this year in October! Week 1 will run from 16th – 19th and week 2 from 23rd – 26th October.

The Health, Safety and Environment department has worked closely with the Health and Wellbeing Forum to produce an extended programme, offering more health checks, talks, information and demonstrations across the nine main locations. We would love for all of you to take part and enjoy as many of these checks as possible across all our locations, especially those who haven't received a health check in the past.

Some old favourites like the Cancer Focus NI Van and Blackwell Associates will be returning to offer health checks along with more of last years very popular Yoga sessions from Cloud Nine NI Yoga. Some new additions will include Pilates sessions, Health Matters delivering various health MOT health checks and information sessions on diabetes awareness, male and female cancer awareness and maintaining a healthy heart information

sessions. We also have a physiotherapist coming along to deliver some interactive sessions to help us avoid those aches and pains! A representative from BHSF, the low cost healthcare plan, will be holding 'drop in' clinics throughout the event at various locations if you wish to explore what they have to offer again. There will also be the chance to win your very own Fitbit!

Alex Wallace, Safety Officer, hopes the extended programme will encourage more employees to think about their health and wellbeing and make positive changes! "We have introduced more days and some new initiatives this year and we hope as many employees as possible get involved so check out the enclosed schedule and keep an eye on noticeboards and the Wire for more details!"

A full schedule of events is enclosed along with details of how you can book onto the various events. Book early to avoid disappointment!!

Look After Yourself

Do you know that 1 in 6.8 people experience mental health problems in the workplace?¹

Evidence suggests that 12.7% of all sickness absence days in the UK can be attributed to mental health conditions.²

A poor work-life balance can affect your mental health, but there are a number of ways to tip the work-life balance back to achieve a healthy medium.



¹ TMental Health and Work, retrieved from gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/212266/hwwb-mental-health-and-work.pdf

² ONS.(2014). Full Report: Sickness Absence on the Labour Market, Feb 2014.

1. Talk about your feelings

Talking about your feelings isn't a sign of weakness. It's part of taking charge of your wellbeing and doing what you can to stay healthy.

Talking can be a way to cope with a problem you have been carrying around in your head for a while. Just being listened to can help you feel supported and less alone. If it feels awkward at first, give it time. *Make talking about your feelings something that you do.*

2. Keep active

Experts believe exercise releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good. (They don't tell you that it might hurt for a while... But it can!) Regular exercise can boost your self esteem and help you concentrate, sleep, look and feel better.

Exercise doesn't just mean doing sport or going to the gym. Walks in the park or gardening can also keep you active. *Try to make physical activity part of your daily routine.*

3. Eat Well

There are strong links between what we eat and how we feel, but food can also have a long-lasting effect on your mental health. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well, just like the other organs in your body. A diet that's good for your physical health is also good for your mental health. *Try to eat at least three meals each day and drink plenty of water.*

4. Drink sensibly

We often drink alcohol to change our mood. Some people drink to deal with fear or loneliness, but the effect is temporary.

When the drink wears off, you feel worse because of the way alcohol withdrawal symptoms affect your brain and the rest of your body.

Occasional light drinking is perfectly healthy and enjoyable for most people.

Look for healthy ways to manage difficult feelings.

5. Keep in touch

Strong family ties and supportive friends can help you deal with the stresses of

life. Friends and family can make you feel included and cared for. They can offer different views from whatever's going on inside your own head. They can help keep you active, keep you grounded and help you solve practical problems.

It's worth working at relationships that make you feel loved or valued. But if you think being around someone is damaging your mental health, it may be best to take a break from them or call it a day completely.

It can be hard to cope when someone close to you dies or you lose them another way. Counselling for bereavement or loss can help. *Remember, it's good to talk!*

6. Ask for help

We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things go wrong. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, ask for help.

None of us are superhuman.

7. Take a break

A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health. It could be a five minute pause, or your half hour lunch break, or a weekend exploring something new.

Taking a break may mean being very active or it may mean not doing very much at all.

Listen to your body. If yourself time to sleep. Without good sleep our mental health suffers and our concentration goes downhill.

Give yourself some "me time". Sometimes, the world can wait.

8. Do something you're good at.

What do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past?

Doing an activity you enjoy probably means you're good at it and achieving something boosts your self esteem.

Concentrating on a hobby like gardening can help you forget your worries for a while and it can change your mood. *Enjoying yourself helps beat stress.*



9. Accept who you are.

Some of us make people laugh, some are good at maths, others cook fantastic meals. Some of us share our lifestyle with people who live close to us, others live very differently.

We're all different. It's much healthier to accept that you're unique than to wish you were more like someone else.

Feeling good about yourself boosts your confidence to learn new skills, visit new places and make new friends.

Work out if there's anything about yourself that you still want to change. Are your expectations realistic? If they are, work towards the change in small steps.

Be proud of who you are.

10. Care for others

Caring for others is often an important part of maintaining relationships with people close to you. It can even bring you closer together.

Helping others can make us feel needed and valued and that boost our self esteem.

Friends are really important, they can help us see the world from another angle, which can help put our own problems in perspective.

For more information visit www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health/looking-after-your-mental-health

Cycle to Work Scheme

The cycle to work scheme is back. The scheme enables you to hire the bike and equipment up to £1000 from NIE Networks and pay back the cost of the bike over 12 months from your gross salary. The window to apply for a new bike opens from the 1-30 September.



Roadshows will be held across locations week commencing 4 September.

You can apply for your new bike at www.cyclescheme.co.uk/d2ab7a.

Visit cyclescheme.co.uk for more information.

Employee Profile

Chris Kerr takes us through his fitness regime and outlines the benefits of being active and eating healthy.

My name is Chris Kerr I work in Connections. Outside of work I play Gaelic football for Antrim Senior footballers & my club team St Galls GAC. I have been asked to give a quick insight into my weekly training and nutrition routine and the benefits it has for me physically and mentally.

I have outlined my average weekly training schedule.

Monday – Gym session/recovery session

Tuesday – Pitch Session

Wednesday – Club Game / Gym Session

Thursday – Rest / A walk or Stretching session

Friday – Pitch Session

Saturday – Rest

Sunday – Match / Pitch Session

Nutritional Benefits

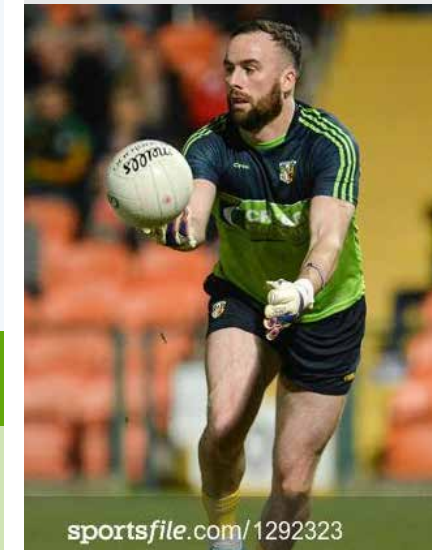
Due to the amount of training and games I have per week, it is important for me to be on top of my nutrition in order to aid my training for energy and more importantly recovery and maintenance. I try to eat 4-5 small meals a day as opposed to 3 big meals. Preparation and consistency are key for me. Meals will consist of protein, carbohydrates and fats. I tend to have lean meat (chicken, turkey, mince, pork), with sweet potato, rice, potatoes and veg and salads. For breakfast I will have eggs and lean meat a day and greens. I aim to drink 3/3.5 litres of per day, and have 5-6 pieces of fruit daily, which ties in with the physical & mental benefits of exercise, having more energy, healthier body & mind.

Physical Benefits

At this time of year I have a busy schedule in terms of preparing for championship games and getting to the gym before or after work. I find it has great benefits both physically and mentally. The physical benefits are that I have much more energy, improved sleeping patterns, improved fitness and a decrease in body fat. Overall physical exercise can contribute to having a healthier body and organs and reduces the risk of heart disease.

Mental Benefits

There are a number of mental health benefits of exercise such as improved mood, stress relief, feeling happier, reduce anxiety, stress and depression, increased self-esteem and clearer thinking. I found this particularly important following the passing of my father 4 years ago. I found exercise, even a walk or light run, really helped to clear my head and help battle the depression and anxiety. I feel it is just as important to mentally benefit from exercise just as much as the physical benefits.



sportsfile.com/1292323

World Heart Day - 29th September 2017

Friday 29th September 2017 marks World Heart Day. There are many ways in which you can keep your heart healthy to prevent cardiovascular disease that includes conditions such as heart disease, heart attack and stroke. There are a number of informative sessions taking place during the Health and Wellbeing Event (16th – 26th October 2017) to raise awareness and ensure you are educated on heart health.

Have a look at the schedule enclosed and book onto a session in a location near you!

Making a few small changes to your food shopping habits, cooking methods and diet can make a huge difference to your health.

- Buying fresh foods from the supermarket instead of ready meals or processed foods.
- Pan frying foods in healthier cooking oils such as coconut oil instead of deep fat frying.
- Preparing a fresh packed lunch instead of buying prepacked sandwiches or unhealthy takeaway foods.
- Preparing main meals with fresh foods.



Preparing your main meals at home with fresh ingredients allows you to see exactly what you are consuming. Seasoning meals with herbs and spices is a great way to add flavour instead of jarred sauces which can be high in fats and sugars.

Some examples of healthy alternatives/ food swaps include-

Foods	Healthy Alternatives
Whole milk	Skimmed milk or alternative milks such as almond milk, soya or coconut milk
Yoghurts	Fat free Greek yoghurt or Natural yoghurt
White bread, Pastas,	Wholegrain varieties
Sugary cereals	Porridge topped with a sprinkle of fresh or dried
Meat	Lean meats such as lean turkey or beef mince, Chicken (skinless), Turkey sausages, lean bacon
Fish	Unbreaded fresh fish, Tuna in water (instead of oil)
Eggs	Egg whites
Creamy sauces	Vegetable based sauces/ herbs and spices
Unhealthy snacks	Fruit, nuts, seeds
Fruit juice	Whole fruit such as a banana, blueberries etc.
Fizzy juices / fruit juice	Water (recommended 2 litres daily).

For further information visit NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/Healthyfoodswaps.aspx>

Tuna Salad

Ingredients

- 3: 70 gram cans of tuna, drained
- 1 medium red bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 red onion, diced
- 1 cucumber, sliced thinly and diced
- 1/4 cup sesame oil
- Juice of 1 lime
- Salt and pepper, to taste



Instructions

1. In a large bowl break up the tuna into small pieces
2. Mix in the red bell pepper, red onion and cucumber. Pour the sesame oil on top and stir to combine everything. Lastly add the juice of 1 lime and stir to combine again.
3. Salt and pepper to taste if needed.

Why not put the mix into pitta bread instead and eat as an alternative to a sandwich.

Flu vaccine Clinics

NIE Networks, in conjunction with our occupational health provider, Blackwell Associates, provides a flu vaccination programme to all employees every year.

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season, which begins usually around October each year.

An agreed level of vaccines has now been purchased. Qualified professionals from our Occupational Health Advisor, Blackwell Associates, will be administering the vaccine at a number of NIE Networks locations on the following dates:



- Friday 27 October 2017
Danesfort
- Monday 30 October 2017
Dargan
- Wednesday 1 November 2017
Craigavon
- Wednesday 8 November 2017
Ballymena
- Wednesday 15 November 2017
Omagh
- Monday 20 November 2017
Campsie

If you already receive the annual flu vaccine from your own GP please continue to do so.

If you haven't already registered your interest through the Wire, and you are interested in receiving the flu vaccine, return the enclosed slip to Human Resources, Danesfort, indicating your preferred location and vaccination date no later than Wednesday 27 September 2017.