

Feeling **unwell**?
Ask yourself is it a
REAL emergency?



www.askyourself.org.uk

 @nenecomm

 facebook.com/nenecommissioning



Nene Clinical Commissioning Group

Self care

Ensure your first aid kit is well stocked with:
Paracetamol • Anti-diarrhoeal medicine • Rehydration mixture
Indigestion remedy • Plasters and thermometer

NHS 111

For confidential health service advice & information around
the clock call 111

Pharmacist

To find your local pharmacy visit www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories

GP Surgery

To find your local GP surgery, visit www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories
or call NHS 111
GP evenings & weekends call 03336 644 644

Minor Injury Unit

Minor emergencies, Northampton General Hospital NN1 5BD

A&E

Kettering General Hospital, NN16 9UZ
Northampton General Hospital, NN1 5BD

A young person's guide



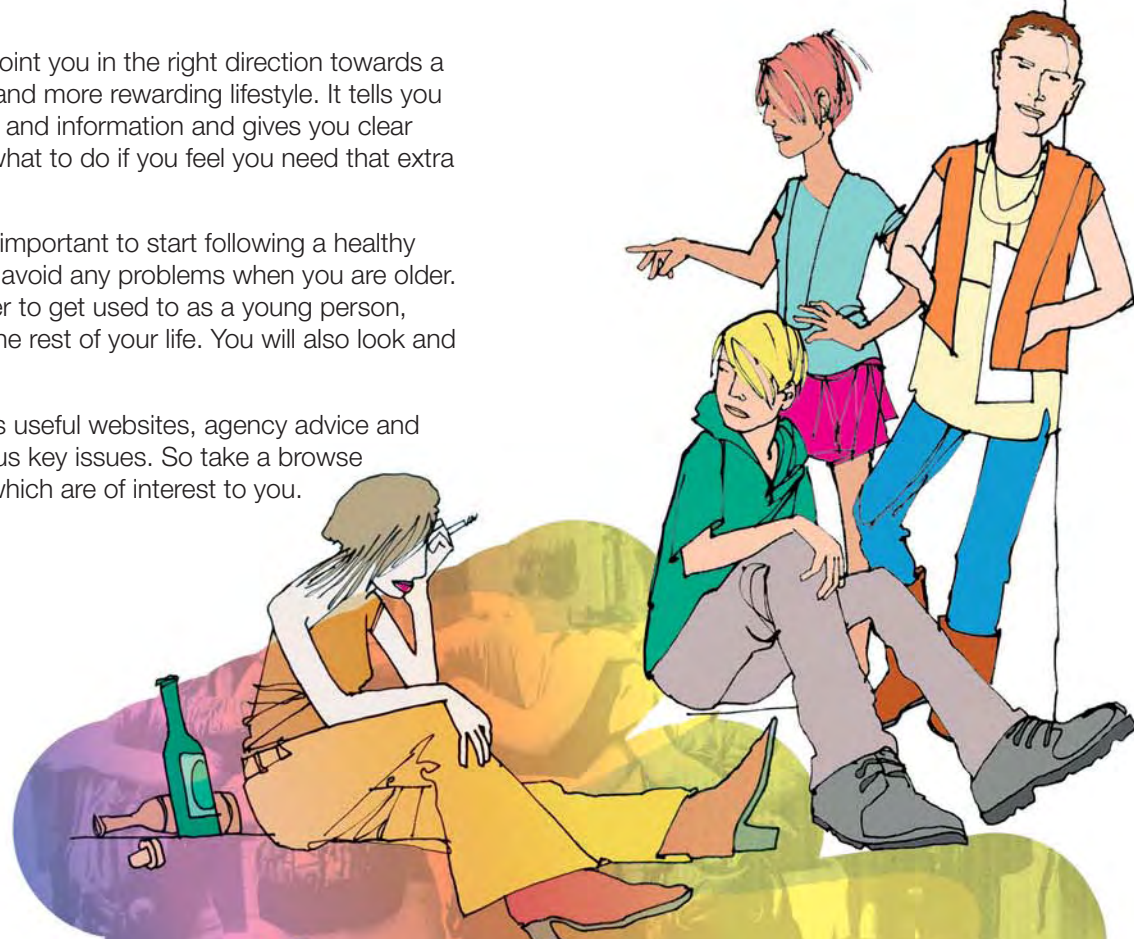
Nene Clinical Commissioning Group

Welcome

This guide will help to point you in the right direction towards a healthier, less stressful and more rewarding lifestyle. It tells you where you can get help and information and gives you clear and sensible ideas on what to do if you feel you need that extra bit of help.

As a young person it is important to start following a healthy lifestyle now in order to avoid any problems when you are older. Healthy habits are easier to get used to as a young person, and they can improve the rest of your life. You will also look and feel better, right now!

This guide also contains useful websites, agency advice and information about various key issues. So take a browse and read the sections which are of interest to you.



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A guide to services

Here in Northampton we have a wide range of professionals who are there to help and support you.



Doctor/GP

Your Doctor is often the best person to speak to if you are worried about your general health, sexual health or mental health. What you say is confidential, although they may suggest you speak to your parents. If they cannot treat you, they can advise you on where to go and what to do next.



Chemist

Many common illnesses and queries can be dealt with by your local Chemist. This can avoid going to the Doctor, although you should make an appointment if you are worried.



Sexual Health Specialist

Northampton Department of Sexual Health is based at Northampton General Hospital. Sexual Health Specialists offer advice and treatment of STIs, pregnancy and contraception. You can call in and see us without seeing your GP first. You can either attend one of our drop-in clinics or telephone to book an appointment 01604 637203.



NDAS

Northampton Drug and Alcohol Service should be your first point of contact. Tel: 01604 233227. This is a confidential service.



College Tutors

Tutors can be great people to talk to. If they cannot help they will be able to signpost you to someone who can. They may refer you to a Counsellor.



Youth Service

Service Six is the leading youth service provider in Northamptonshire. They offer free support, counselling, activities, advice, sexual health products and much more to all young people between the ages of 10-25 years old. 03332 400716



Parents/Carers

Parents and carers are sometimes the best people to talk to about your feelings. It can be hard to chat to a parent about sex, relationships or even drugs, but you may be surprised and find the support and help you need. Things are often easier when shared and could make things at home easier. Tell your parents to visit the Family Information Service at www.fis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/familyservices



Friends

It's great to have friends to chat to and share worries and ideas with. Don't forget they may not have all the experience needed when advising on things like health, drugs or alcohol, but they play an important part in our lives and how we feel. Discuss and find out more about possible problems together.



Happiness and positive thinking

Focus on the good things

There are lots of factors, which can affect our moods and feelings of positivity, motivation and energy. We can often play a major part in the way we feel, by following some simple recommendations like keeping healthy. Get enough sleep and leisure time, exercise, eat a balanced diet, avoid too much alcohol, do not take drugs and set realistic goals. Have a positive attitude and be a 'can-do' person!

A healthy person is often a happier person. No matter what your thoughts are telling you, it really is a good idea to exercise when you're feeling all out of positive thoughts! Feeling down drains our energy and even getting out of bed can take a monumental effort, so it may be hard to imagine exercising at all when we're feeling low. Endorphins are a natural feel-good chemical, which are released into the blood stream when we exercise. Smiling releases endorphins too, so smile each morning and set the mood for your day!

If we eat too much we get fat, which makes us anxious, tired and depressed with all sorts of feelings of low self-esteem.

Contact

- Student Support Services
- www.nhs.uk

Remain positive

To remain positive write down all the things that you are grateful for, something that you would like to achieve (this could be something simple like going home on time) and also something that you feel proud of. You'll be surprised how many good things you have going for you.

Set yourself achievable goals each week and you'll feel great about yourself when you tick them off.

Talking to people can help raise your energy and remind you that you're not alone. Go outside. Even a little bit of sunshine can help raise your mood a little.

If you have continuous feelings of depression tell someone.



Five Ways to Well-being

Connect...

with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, college or in your local community.

Be active...

Being active makes you feel good.

Take notice...

Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling.

Keep learning...

Learning new things is fun and will make you feel more confident.

Give...

Do something nice for someone.

Sunbeds

Sunbeds aren't a safe alternative to tanning outdoors. Like the sun, sunbeds give out harmful UV rays which damage the DNA in our skin cells and can cause Skin Cancer. Sunbeds also cause premature skin ageing, which means that your skin becomes coarse, leathery and wrinkled at a younger age. So when the tan fades, the damage remains. People with fair skin that tends to burn are at higher risk of problems from sunbed use than those with darker skin. Young people also have delicate skin and are more likely to damage it by using sunbeds. You should NEVER use a sunbed if you are under 18.

www.sunsmart.org.uk

Healthy lifestyles

Balance is the key

Being healthy is a big part of being happy. A healthy lifestyle simply means that the way you are day to day, makes you feel physically and mentally fit and well.

What is a healthy lifestyle? Balance is the key, it's about what you put into your body and also how you burn that energy off. Food is burned in our bodies to create energy. If we don't use it, we get fat - simple!

If your lifestyle is not a healthy balance - for instance through not exercising, eating an unbalanced diet, getting involved in drugs or by keeping worries and problems to yourself - you are more likely to become ill, have trouble concentrating at work or college or be unhappy or depressed. Being active can reduce your stress levels and can give you the time to think clearly.

Your lifestyle has a big affect on how you feel and what you get out of life, now and in the future. So it's a good idea to find out more about how to live healthily.

There are many other areas of our health we need to think about like sexual health, healthy teeth, drugs, alcohol and generally looking after ourselves.

Contact

- www.nhs.uk/Change4Life
- www.sunsmart.org.uk

What you can do

- Be responsible for your own health, only you know how you feel.
- Keep it fun. Healthy living is all about getting the balance right, enjoying yourself and being happy is a key part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Get active. See if your friends would like to go rollerblading or play football rather than watching TV.
- You don't need to join an expensive gym to get fit. Jog in the park or walk home, every bit helps!
- If you feel anxious or depressed talk to your parent or carer, Doctor or Tutor.



Commonly used drugs

People use all sorts of substances, both legal and illegal to get 'high'. Illegal drugs are things like Cannabis (weed), Amphetamines (speed), Ecstasy (E), Cocaine and Heroin. Many legal substances are also harmful and addictive like cigarettes, alcohol, glue, petrol and aerosols. It's illegal for shopkeepers to sell tobacco products or alcohol to anyone under 18.

Drug misuse

What to look for

Signs someone is taking drugs or misusing substances:

- Drugs can affect people differently, but they can harm the body and change the way the mind works so that people don't have so much control.
- Solvents can cause blackouts, being sick, heart problems and even sudden death.
- Some people get addicted to drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, which means that they can't cope without them.

Lots of young people want to know about drugs and alcohol - this doesn't mean you have to take them or feel like you should just because people around you are. There are lots of reasons why people drink or take drugs, sometimes it is because they think it's going to be fun.

Drugs can seriously affect your health and the way you see the world around you. They can lead to depression, loss of judgment and even death. There are many risks with any drinking or drug use so ask yourself, is it really worth it?

Maybe you're thinking about taking drugs because you are stressed or worried about college, work or home life. Try to understand why you want to take drugs or drink and try to find a better way to deal with pressures. Talk to someone you trust about the way you feel.

The safest way to deal with alcohol and drugs is not to take them.

What to do

- Talk to someone you trust so you can get help.
- Don't think you have to do this all alone.
- Don't feel pressurised into taking drugs by friends or other people at college, work or home.
- Many of the professionals on pages 4 and 5 will be able to help.

Alcohol

How many units?

			
1 pint beer 2 units	1 pint cider 2.5 units	1 large wine 1.75 units	1 alcopop 1.5 units

Units based on average alcohol units



Are you drinking too much?

- How much is too much?**
- If you're an adult man, the most you should drink is four units a day.
 - If you're an adult woman, the most you should drink is three units a day.
 - A unit is half a pint of beer or a single measure of spirits. When you drink more than twice the recommended daily limit it's called binge drinking and it's bad for your health.

- Are you drinking too much?**
- Are you drinking because you've got problems at college, work or at home? Try to solve these.
 - Are your friends drinking a lot too?
 - Remember, it's ok to say no, don't feel under pressure to drink.

- Is your friend drinking too much?**
- Help them to face the fact that they've got a problem and get some help.
 - Remember that they have to want to change their habits - you can't do it for them.

www.wreckedlastnight.com

Are you addicted to it?

Alcohol can make you feel great for the short term, and can often seem to be the answer to our everyday stresses and anxieties. If you drink a little too much, you could end up saying or doing things you don't mean and regretting it later. People often find that alcohol can cause them to act in an exaggerated way and get angry at things that normally wouldn't bother them. Things can get out of control easily and end up in a fight, unprotected sex or taking drugs or committing crime.

Alcohol can also cause health problems of all sorts including weight gain, impotency, premature wrinkles, mental health problems and even lead to STIs or pregnancy if you have unprotected sex.

Some people can enjoy drinking without it causing them any problems but some people can get addicted to it, which means they start to rely on it.

Drink a small amount with caution. Use the free MyDrinkaware tool on your Smart phone www.drinkaware.co.uk

Drugs and alcohol Drugs and alcohol do not mix and can be dangerous. For example, if you mix alcohol with Cocaine a new substance called Cocaethylene is made in your body. This is a dangerous chemical and could cause damage to your heart and liver.

Alcohol and the Law

It can be very easy to feel under pressure to drink more than you would like to. Alcohol is not illegal, although it is against the law:

- For an adult to buy or attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18.
- For someone under 18 to buy alcohol, attempt to buy alcohol or to be sold alcohol.
- For someone under 18 to drink alcohol in licensed premises, except where the child is 16 or 17 years old and accompanied by an adult. In this case it is legal for them to drink, but not buy, beer, wine and cider with a table meal.
- For an adult to buy alcohol for someone under 18 for consumption on licensed premises, except as above.



Get active

What to look for

It is not just your body which benefits when you do physical stuff. It really is true that keeping active will make you feel better, think better and also look better.

You don't have to be sporty either. Just an hour of moderate exercise a day will improve your mood and keep you healthy - walking, cycling or dancing are all excellent forms of exercise.

When you are studying for exams, exercise will help reduce your stress levels and give you a break to think clearly. It should be fun too and you will feel good about yourself afterwards.

Sitting indoors watching TV or playing computer games just won't help you look or feel good, so have a look at the activities you could try out and give them a go!

Look out for:

- Becoming overweight through lack of exercise.
- Feeling tired and not having the energy for normal daily tasks.
- Spending long periods of time in front of the TV or playing computer games.
- Large portion sizes lead to weight gain regardless of the type of food consumed.

Contact

- For support and advice speak to your GP
- www.sportengland.org • www.sustrans.org.uk
- www.dofe.org • www.nhs.uk/Change4life

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

www.dofe.org
Work towards an award that recognises your achievement, doing some pretty exciting stuff. You choose from hundreds of options, working within a supportive framework, which guides you through.

What to do

- Eat breakfast regularly to give you energy all through the day.
- Go to a park or a green space to socialise, get some fresh air and have fun.
- Find out when your local leisure centre runs cheaper sessions for young people. You can often get free trials.



Quitting

There are lots of ways to quit. Various methods have different success rates. e.g. Cold Turkey has a low success rate of only 2-3%, whilst support groups offers success rates of up to 20%. Your GP can prescribe Nicotine Replacement Therapy or you can buy it from a Chemist.

For under 18's there is 1-1 support available. For over 18's prescription only medication is available from your Doctor to help you quit.

If you try to give up but start smoking again, keep trying. Many people quit several times before they give up for good.

Just 20 minutes after your last cigarette your body will start getting healthier. After 72 hours you'll find it easier to breathe. It takes 15 years for your risk of serious illness to fall back to normal.

Smoking

Can kill you

Most people know that smoking causes cancer, heart disease, lung disease and that it can shorten your life, too.

But people who smoke also get bad breath, yellow fingers, rotting teeth, smelly clothes and hair, and they develop wrinkles earlier. They get a 'smoker's cough' and aren't as fit as non-smokers.

If your friends smoke, it can be hard not to start too. Another reason to avoid cigarettes is the amount they cost. Just think what you could buy with that money instead. If you smoke 20 cigarettes a day for one year it will cost you over £2,500.

Smoking can harm other people who breathe in your smoke. It also hurts your unborn baby if you're pregnant.

The nicotine in tobacco is addictive, which means it's hard to give up. There are lots of ways to get help to quit - just find the one that's best for you.

The earlier that you decide to quit the better for your health it will be.

Contact

- www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- www.quitbecause.org.uk Tel: 0808 00 22 00
- www.gottabemobile.com/2012/01/02/new-years-resolution-quit-smoking-drinking/

The Law

- You must be 18 years old to legally buy cigarettes.
- It is against the law to smoke in enclosed public places.

Five Ways to Well-being

Connect...

with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, college or in your local community.

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Keep learning...

Learning new things is fun and will make you feel more confident.

Give...

Do something nice for someone.



Could this be you?

- Being moody and irritable, easily upset, 'ratty' or tearful.
- Feeling out of control.
- Becoming stressed about minor things.
- Becoming withdrawn, avoiding friends, family and regular activities.
- Feeling guilty or bad, being self-critical and self-blaming and hating yourself.
- Feeling unhappy, miserable and lonely a lot of the time.
- Finding it difficult to concentrate.
- Not looking after your personal appearance.
- Changes in sleep pattern, tiredness and lack of energy.
- Frequent minor health problems.
- Not enjoying life anymore.
- Depression increases the risk of drug, alcohol or solvent abuse, self-harming (such as drug overdose, wrist cutting and even suicide).
- Are you being bullied, exploited or suffering abuse?

Contact

• www.anxiety.org.uk 08444 775 774 • www.youngminds.org.uk 020 7089 5050

Stress and feeling low

How to cope

Depression, stress and anxiety are serious and common problems and there is a great deal that can be done to help. The first step to getting help is to be able to recognise the problem. Sometimes it is easy to put ourselves under too much pressure about how we look, college work and exams and what other people think of us.

People are more at risk of becoming depressed if they are under a lot of stress and have no one to share their worries with.

Depression is commonly caused by a mixture of things rather than any one thing alone. Some people have experiences that lead to depression including family breakdown, the death or loss of a loved one, stress, abuse, bullying and physical illness. Depression can also be triggered if too many changes happen in your life too quickly.

Depression affects so many aspects of your life, your outlook, how you feel and what you are able to do. It can mean you find it difficult to cope with normal daily life.

Depression can cause serious problems, such as:

- Difficulties getting on with friends and family.
- Loss of friends.
- Loss of confidence and difficulty making decisions.
- Inability to study, work and perform well in exams.
- Difficulty with day to day tasks.
- Eating problems, turning to food for comfort and eating or dieting excessively.
- Lying, stealing and missing college or work.

Simply talking to someone you trust and who you feel understands can lighten the burden. It can also make it easier to work out practical solutions to problems. For example, if you are stressed out by exams or study, you could talk to your tutor, a youth worker or someone from another organisation.

Keep as active and occupied as possible, but don't overstress yourself and allow for fun and leisure time.

What to do next

- Try to understand why you are feeling this way.
- Talk to someone and don't keep it to yourself.
- You can talk to your GP in confidence if you have continuous feelings of depression and hopelessness.



Self-harm

Understanding and support

Self-harming is injuring yourself on purpose so you bleed, leave a scar, mark or bruise or taking an overdose. The most common ways to self-harm are cutting, scratching, hair pulling and burning. Some may use drugs or alcohol as a form of self-harm. We have a Substance Misuse Worker who you can meet and chat to. Girls are thought to be more likely to self-harm than boys, but this is because boys are more likely to punch out at walls, which isn't always recognised as self-harm.

People self-harm for different reasons. Some people feel bad because they're being bullied or abused, some may be stressed or are suffering a loss or may be missing someone.

People who self-harm often don't ask for help because they feel ashamed of doing it, but there is support out there and it needn't rule someone's life.

You may feel powerless right now but once you have talked it through with a youth worker, parent, carer or your Doctor you can work towards understanding why you are self-harming and how to go about working through this difficult time.

Contact

- Samaritans 0845 57 90 90 90 • Childline 0800 1111
- www.mind.org.uk • www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.b-eat.co.uk • www.thesite.org • www.rethink.org

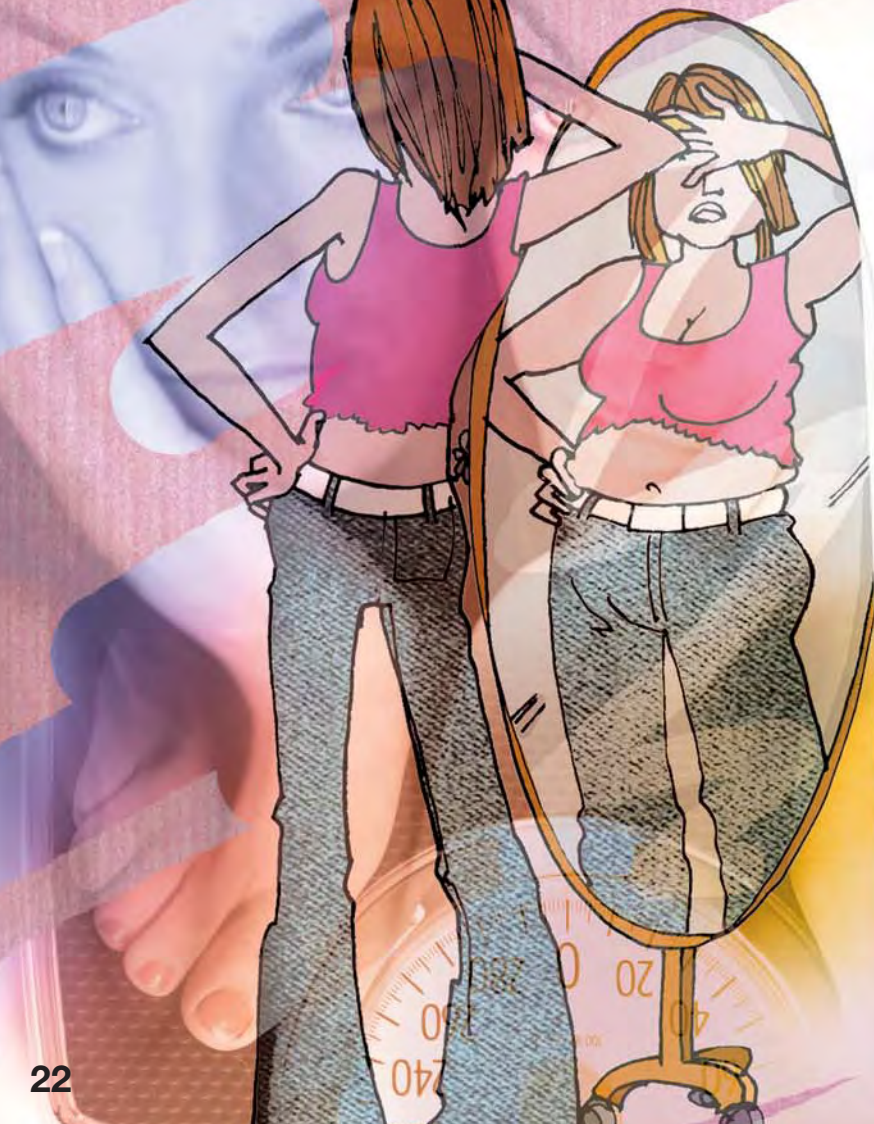
What to do

If you are self-harming:

- Don't keep it bottled-up, talk to someone you trust.
- Keep a record of how you feel when you want to self-harm.
- If you cut yourself, use something clean.
- Keep wounds clean or they might make you ill.

If a friend is self-harming:

- Listen to them and let them talk about how they feel.
- It might help them if they know you're there for them.
- Encourage them to see their Doctor who will be able to get them some counselling. This will help them talk about why they self-harm.
- Visit websites and contacts for support.



Could this be you?

If you have an eating disorder:

- It's hard to cope with an eating disorder alone - talk to someone you trust.
- If you are worried ask your parent or carer to make an appointment for you with your Doctor.
- Remember that the sooner you get some help, the easier it will be for you to beat your problem.

If a friend has an eating disorder:

- Tell them that you're worried and that you're there for them.
- Get them to see their Doctor.
- Set a good example and show your friend how important it is to have a healthy diet.

Facts about eating disorders:

1. Eating disorders can be beaten.
2. An eating disorder is serious.
3. An eating disorder is not a dieting craze.
4. An eating disorder is not attention seeking.
5. An eating disorder is an illness.

Boys as well as girls can have eating disorders.

Positive body image

Getting the balance right

Turn on the TV or flick through a magazine and chances are you'll see pictures of perfect looking celebrities staring back. This might affect your body image and could make you feel bad about yourself or that you should try to change the way you are.

Many young people who are perfectly normal and healthy feel that they don't look 'right' because they are comparing themselves to role models such as pop stars, models or other celebrities who are often skinny. This can lead to an unhealthy body image. If you do feel that you are overweight, talk to an adult you can trust and try to find out more about healthy eating and exercise.

It's a good idea to eat well and stay a healthy weight but some young people, can take dieting too far and develop an eating disorder.

The two main types of eating disorders are Anorexia Nervosa which is when you starve yourself and Bulimia Nervosa which is when you make yourself sick after you eat or take laxatives. They are both very bad for you.

Make sure you talk to an adult or friend you trust to get the help you need.

Contact

- www.b-eat.co.uk
- www.youngminds.org.uk

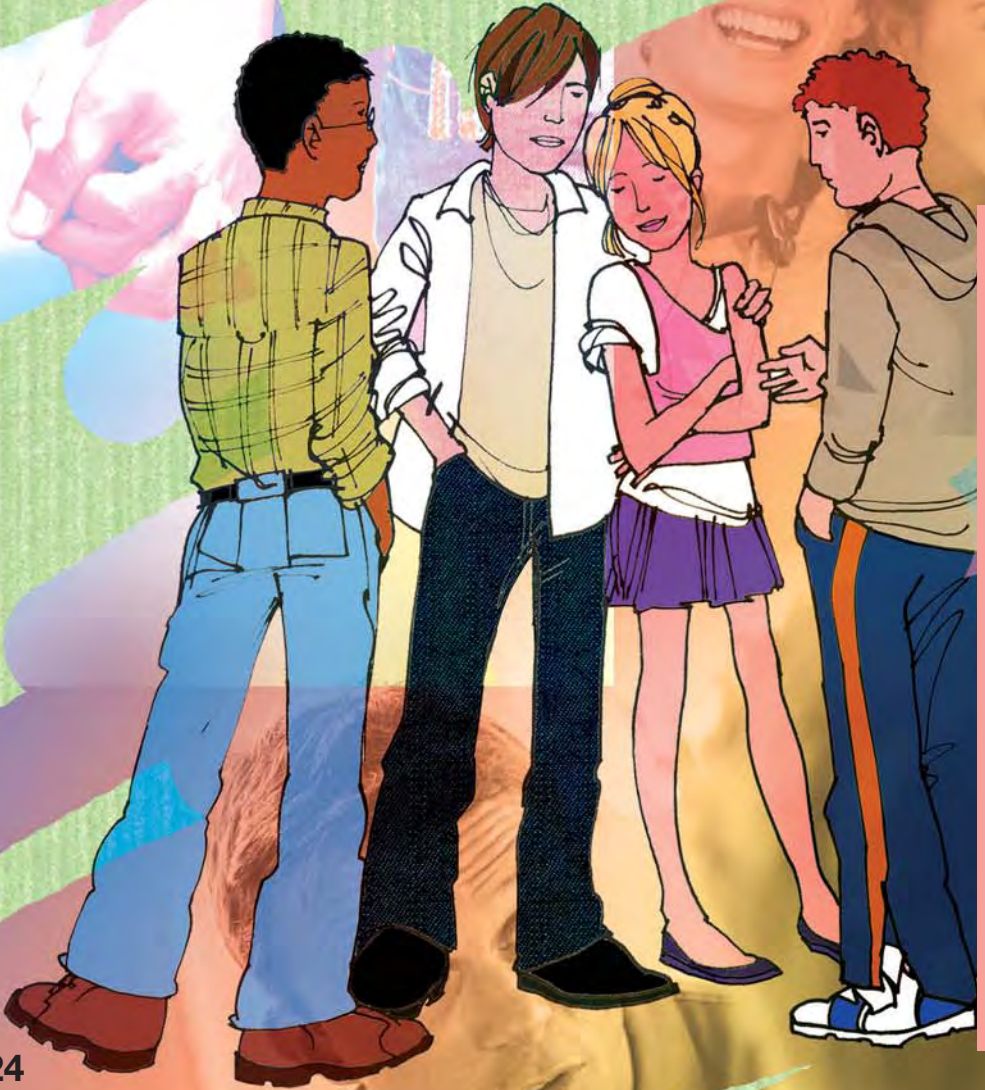
Look out for:

Signs of Anorexia include:

- Eating less and less.
- Losing a lot of weight very quickly.
- Growing more body hair (usually girls).

Signs of Bulimia include:

- Eating too much in one go.
- Going to the toilet after eating to be sick.
- Sore throat and mouth infections.



Getting help

- Free and confidential advice, information, tests, treatment and contraceptives are available in Northampton from the Department of Sexual Health, Northampton General Hospital 01604 637203. This is a confidential service. We will not tell anyone about your visit unless we are worried that someone under 18 is being harmed.
- If you've had sex without contraception, or think it's failed, you can take emergency contraception up to 72 hours later.
- If you think you might be pregnant, talk to your parents. Free pregnancy testing is available at all young people's sexual health clinics, GUM clinics and some Doctors.

Relationships

Talk about it

“My boyfriend said he would finish with me if I didn't sleep with him. I realised then he didn't care enough about me to respect my feelings.”

If we respect others it helps us remember to respect ourselves. Positive relationships with friends, family as well as people we come across in our everyday lives are so important.

Our friends play an important part in our lives and help shape us as a person. Make sure you value them and let them know you do. The way we treat other people makes a big impression on them, so, try to be positive and helpful - a smile goes a long way!

Sometimes, because we all want to be loved it is easy to mistake casual sex for love. You are putting yourself at risk of STIs as well as getting pregnant.

If you have decided you're ready then practising safe sex by using contraception will reduce the risk of STIs and pregnancy. For the best protection against both of these, using condoms and a hormonal contraceptive like the Implant is the best option.

Contact

- Family Planning Clinic 01604 635838
- www.besavvy.org.uk
- www.idas.org.uk/healthyrelationships

Who can help?



Sexual Health Specialist



GP

Department of Sexual Health, Northampton General Hospital

Are you ready to have sex?

- Nobody is putting pressure on you and most young people wait until they are at least 16 before they have sex, even if they say different!
- You're not doing it because you think all your friends are.
- Make sure you respect everyone you come into contact with.



HPV Inoculations

Get protected

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV for short) vaccine protects against the two strains of HPV that cause cervical cancer in over 70% of women.

Is the vaccine safe?

The vaccine has undergone rigorous safety testing as part of the licensing process required in the UK and other European countries.

How effective is the HPV vaccine?

The vaccine is 99% effective in preventing the cervical abnormalities that can lead to cervical cancer caused by HPV types 16 and 18.

Are there any side effects?

As with most vaccines, the most common side effect is mild to moderate swelling, redness and pain at the site where the injection is given. Other mild side effects might be slightly raised temperature, sickness and muscle aches. Very rarely, some people have an allergic reaction soon after immunisation. This reaction may be a rash or itching affecting part or all of the body. It is not a reason to stop having HPV vaccinations.

Contact

- www.nhs.uk
- www.123againsthpv.co.uk

Doctor says

Can girls who have allergies or other illnesses still have the HPV vaccine?

There are very few girls who cannot receive the HPV vaccine. Problems like food allergies, asthma, eczema and hay fever do not prevent someone from having this vaccine. If you have any concerns, speak to your Doctor.



Contraception and STIs

It's not worth the risk

If you are sexually active, one of the risks you undertake is the possibility that you will become pregnant. This is a risk taken by both partners. No form of contraception is 100% reliable. You can get pregnant or a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) the first time you have sex. Talk to your parent, carer or someone you trust about it. Go 'Double Dutch' - use a condom to prevent STIs and a LARC (long-acting reversible contraception) like an implant, to prevent pregnancy.

It is not ideal to be a teenage parent and it is a good idea to think about and plan contraception, so you are prepared. It is also unpleasant and sometimes embarrassing to have an STI.

Here in Northampton we have the C-card scheme. You will need to register for a card, which you can use to provide you with free condoms as well as advice and help. It is a confidential service for all young people, which offers condoms to all, even if you are 15 or under and you have discussed your needs with our sexual health professionals and they agree.

**PREVENT PREGNANCY
GET LARC**
(Long Acting Reversible Contraception)

ask for larc
Long Acting Reversible Contraception

Chlamydia is a real risk

Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed STI. Most people who are infected have no symptoms, so they do not know they have it. If left untreated, it can cause complications including infertility. Condoms can protect against Chlamydia.

Contact

For further information visit www.miltonkeynes-northamptonshire.nhs.uk/chlamydia or visit your local sexual health clinic or your GP.

Double Dutch

All contraception will prevent you from getting pregnant if used correctly. However, if you are sexually active long acting reversible contraception could be an easier option rather than taking the pill. Long acting reversible contraception (LARC) can protect you from getting pregnant for 3 months to 10 years depending on the type you use. With LARC you don't need to remember to take a pill everyday.

We recommend Double Dutch = LARC to prevent pregnancy + condoms for protection against sexually transmitted infections.

Always think 'Double Dutch!' This is where a condom is used with another form of contraception, such as LARC, to provide protection against both STIs and unplanned pregnancy.

If you have unprotected sex or your method of contraception has failed you may be able to use emergency contraception to try and prevent pregnancy.

Forms of Contraception

- Condom
- Female Condom
- Patch
- Combined Pill
- Progestogen-only Pill
- Implant (LARC method)
- Injection (LARC method)
- IUD/Coil (LARC method)
- IUS (LARC method)

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is one of the most common STIs in the UK and it's on the increase. But the good news is it's easy to test for and really easy to treat.

Chlamydia can be passed on through unprotected vaginal sex, anal sex or oral sex (kissing, licking or sucking someone's genitals). If people share sex toys and do not wash them or cover them with a condom every time then they can pass chlamydia on as well.

Getting a Chlamydia test is easy and you should get one if you have any concerns at all, and particularly if any of the following have happened to you:

- You've had sex without a condom.
- A condom has split while you were having sex.
- A condom has slipped off or failed in any way during sex.
- If someone you've had sex with tells you they have chlamydia.

How to recognise Chlamydia

People with Chlamydia often have no symptoms - so you could have it and not even know! If you notice any of these signs you need to be checked so it can be sorted quickly. The test is quick, easy and you don't even have to be examined.

Women

- Unusual vaginal discharge.
- Pain when passing urine
- Heavy period or bleeding between periods.
- Pelvic and lower abdominal pain.
- Abdominal pain during vaginal sex.
- Bleeding during or after sex.

Men

- White/cloudy and watery discharge from penis.
- Pain when passing urine.
- Painful swelling of testicles.

How it's treated

Chlamydia is really easy to treat, usually with a single dose of antibiotics. You shouldn't have sex for two weeks after treatment.

There are no embarrassing or painful things that you need to do when you go for a test. It's usually a simple self swab for girls and a urine test for boys.

HIV

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) damages the body's immune system so it cannot fight off infections. HIV can lead to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) otherwise known as 'late stage HIV'. HIV can be

passed from one person to another through blood, semen (including pre-cum) and vaginal fluids. It is most commonly transmitted through unprotected vaginal or anal sex, but can also be caught through sharing sex toys or needles and other injecting equipment. It's a myth that you can only catch HIV from gay sex.

The most common signs are a fever, rash and a severe sore throat - all at the same time. HIV is preventable and treatable, but it is not curable.

Genital warts

Genital warts are easily passed from one person to another through unprotected vaginal sex, anal sex or oral sex (kissing, licking or sucking someone's genitals). They can also be passed on through close genital contact (when the skin touches).

How to recognise them

Warts can take a year or more to develop after infection with the wart virus. Warts are not always visible, especially if they occur inside the vagina, particularly on the cervix, or in the anus. If warts are not present, the virus cannot be tested for.

How they're treated

Warts can be treated by applying special ointments or paints, by freezing or surgical removal under local anaesthetic.

Genital herpes

Genital herpes is passed from one person to another through unprotected vaginal sex, anal sex or oral sex (kissing, licking or sucking someone's genitals). It can also be passed on through close genital contact (when the skin touches).

How to recognise it

- Symptoms of herpes simplex:
- Tingling or itching on or around the genital area followed by the appearance of small, painful blisters.
 - General flu-like symptoms such as headache, backache or a temperature.
 - Burning sensation when passing urine.

The Herpes virus is at its most infectious just before, during or just after an outbreak, when blisters or sores are present. Lots of people have the virus but don't show any symptoms.

How it's treated

No cure is available for genital herpes, but an anti-viral drug (Aciclovir) can reduce the problem. It is important to get treatment as soon as possible for it to have an effect on symptoms.

Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea can be passed on through unprotected vaginal sex, anal sex or oral sex (kissing, licking or sucking someone's genitals). If people share sex toys and do not wash them or cover them with a condom every time then they can pass gonorrhoea on as well. About 10% of men and 50% of women will not have obvious signs of gonorrhoea so you may need a test to find out whether you have it.

How to recognise it

Symptoms for both men and women:

- Thin white, yellow or green discharge from the penis or the vagina.
- Frequent need to wee.
- Pain when weeing.
- Women may notice heavier than usual periods or bleeding between periods.
- Men may have painful testicles.

How it's treated

It's usually a simple self swab for girls and a urine test for boys. Gonorrhoea is usually treated with a single dose of antibiotics and you shouldn't have sex for two weeks after treatment. If left untreated gonorrhoea can lead to infertility and inflammation of the joints or the eyes.



Getting help

If you are worried about pregnancy or STIs contact: Department of Sexual Health, Northampton General Hospital, Cliftonville, Northampton NN1 5BD. 01604 637203. For unplanned pregnancy advice visit www.fpa.org.uk

Under pressure

- Don't have sex because your boyfriend or girlfriend wants you to but you're not sure. It's completely up to you. Remember it's against the law to have sex if you're under 16.
- Don't let your judgement be affected by drugs or alcohol. You may be drunk and agree to do something you would not normally do. Try to plan ahead and think what you would do if you get into a difficult situation. Be prepared with a condom. (see page 28).

Pregnancy

What you should know

Becoming a parent can be a wonderful and fulfilling thing in life, but it's important that you're ready for it. Bringing up a baby will put you under huge pressure and stress and can be really hard work. That's why many people wait until they're a bit older to start a family.

If you have unprotected sex, you might get pregnant or catch a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI). Condoms are best at preventing you catching STIs like Chlamydia, Genital Warts, Herpes and HIV. To reduce the chances of getting pregnant and catching an STI by the greatest amount you need to go 'Double Dutch' which means using a Condom to prevent STIs and a LARC (Long Acting Reversible Contraception) like the Implant, to prevent pregnancy.

Don't be embarrassed to talk about contraception with your partner. It's worth it to stay safe and healthy.

If you've had unprotected sex and your period is late, don't panic. The next step is to find out if you're pregnant and decide what to do.

Remember a small amount of alcohol can, for some people, lead to significant impairments to the baby.

Signs you might be pregnant:

- Your period is late.
- You feel sick.
- You have a metallic taste in your mouth.
- Your breasts are sore.

Who can help?



Sexual Health Specialist

GP

What to do

Go to your Doctor or sexual health clinic to find out about different types of contraception. If you've had unprotected sex and your period is late, you can buy an over the counter pregnancy test or take a test at your chemist or family planning clinic. Talk to your parents about what to do. If you feel you can't, there are lots of places to go to get help and advice. If you've had unprotected sex, emergency contraception can stop you getting pregnant as long as you take it within 72 hours. Ask your Doctor or family planning clinic for advice.

Myths about condoms

There are a lot of myths about condoms, so make sure that you are aware of the facts before you have sex.

MYTH: It's safer if you use two condoms.

TRUTH: No it isn't. Using two condoms at once is a really bad idea, it increases the chances of them ripping. Only use one at a time.

MYTH: Condoms break easily.

TRUTH: No they don't. Put it on carefully, ensuring there's no air bubble at the end. Be careful of sharp nails, jewellery or teeth. If the condom won't roll down, it's the wrong way round. Throw this condom away and start again.

MYTH: Condoms are the only type of contraception I need to think about.

TRUTH: No they're not. It is recommended that you and your partner use a condom and another form of contraception. See pages 28-31 for STIs and LARC.

MYTH: You need extra lube. Vaseline is good.

TRUTH: A bit of extra lubrication is good but don't use anything with oil in it as it can dissolve the condom - that includes baby oil, Vaseline and hand cream. Lipstick has oil in it too. Use a water-based lubricant, such as KY jelly or Durex Play from the C-Card scheme or a chemist.

MYTH: My girlfriend is on the pill, so we don't need condoms.

TRUTH: Yes you do. The pill does not protect you or your partner from STIs.

MYTH: If I ask to use a condom, my partner will think less of me.

TRUTH: Insisting that you use a condom suggests that you know how to take care of yourself and shows that you know what you want, which can be very sexy.

MYTH: You don't need a condom if you're having oral sex.

TRUTH: Yes you do. You should use a condom for oral sex because all STIs including gonorrhoea, chlamydia and herpes can be passed on this way.

MYTH: You have to be 18 to buy condoms.

TRUTH: No you don't, you can buy condoms at any age. You can also get them free from Northampton C-Card scheme.

MYTH: I don't need a condom - I only sleep with nice people.

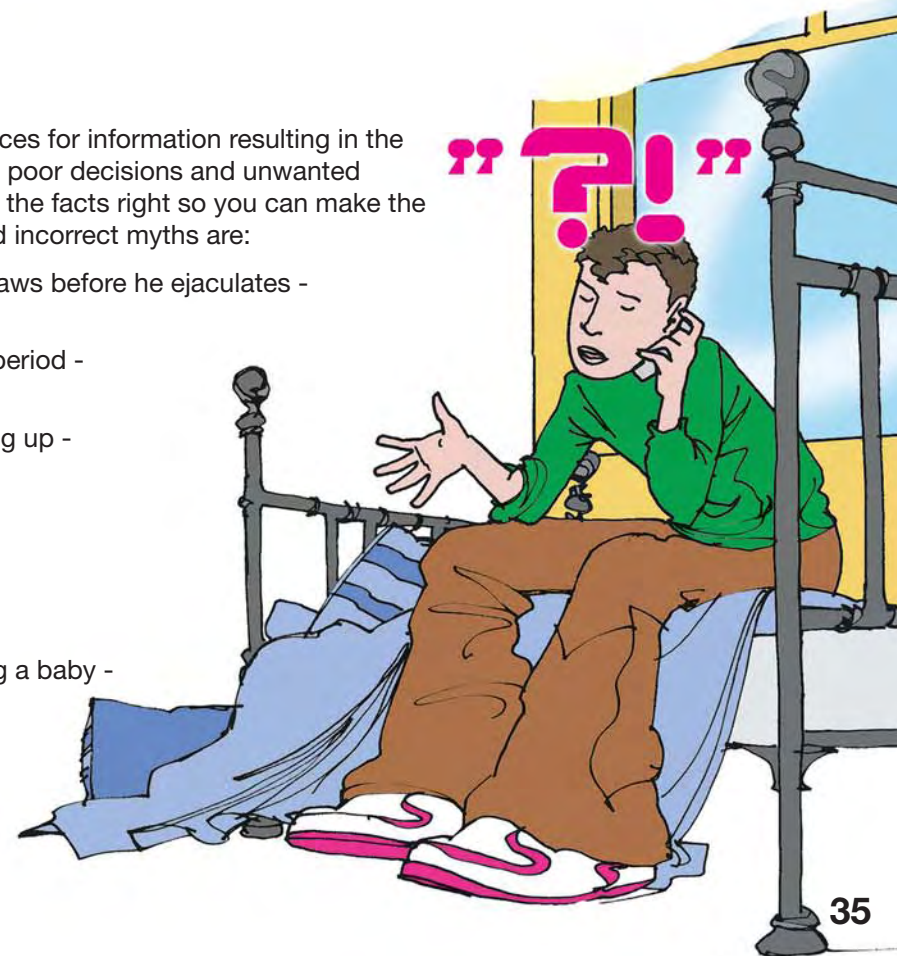
TRUTH: STIs don't know or care if you're nice or not. The way someone looks is no indicator of whether they have an STI. Many STIs don't show any symptoms, so you could infect each other without even knowing it.

The myths

True or false

Many young people rely on often ill-informed sources for information resulting in the spread of dangerous sex myths which can lead to poor decisions and unwanted results. It is important to find out the truth and get the facts right so you can make the best choices. The most commonly shared sex and incorrect myths are:

- A woman cannot get pregnant if the man withdraws before he ejaculates - **WRONG!**
- You cannot get pregnant if you are having your period - **WRONG!**
- You cannot get pregnant if you have sex standing up - **WRONG!**
- You cannot get pregnant if it is your first time - **WRONG!**
- You can only catch HIV from gay sex - **WRONG!**
- You cannot get pregnant if you are breastfeeding a baby - **WRONG!**
- You cannot get pregnant without orgasm - **WRONG!**
- Birth control pills can cause cancer - **WRONG!**



“ ? ”



Sexuality

It may be that you have a different sexuality. This comes in many forms and you may find it difficult to deal with. There is no reason to panic, whatever you feel in terms of sexuality is completely normal. It may surprise you to know there are many people out there in exactly the same situation as you.

The Department of Sexual Health at Northampton General Hospital offers support in all matters of sexual health, including issues around sexuality.

- www.stonewall.org.uk
- www.tht.org.uk

The law

If anyone makes a joke about you, calls you names, threatens or abuses you because you're not the same as them, they are discriminating against you.

There are laws to protect you. For example, the Disability Discrimination Act; the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act.

Equality and diversity

Everyone is equal

“What you look like and where you're from aren't important - I think what really counts is what you're like as a person inside.”

We are all unique, and that's what makes life so interesting. Living in a diverse society means understanding how people are different in all sorts of ways - for example gender, disability, age, sexuality, culture, beliefs and religion.

You may have a disability, which means you may not be able to do things that other people can do. You may face challenges but life can still be as fun and full of achievement.

As well as diversity, we need equality. That means treating everyone the same. The law says that everyone, including young people, should have equal rights no matter who they are. These laws help people at college and at work in particular.

Some people do not treat everyone as equals - this means they discriminate against people because they are different. If you are the victim of discrimination, it's good to know how you can get help. We all have the right to our opinion, and our identity.

Contact

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- www.childline.org.uk • www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk
- For LGBT young people: www.stonewall.org.uk
- www.tht.org.uk

Discrimination

Try to see differences in people as a positive thing, and not something to be suspicious or scared of. If you feel you are suffering from discrimination it is important to tell someone. See the contacts section for places to get help if you're being discriminated against.

Learn as much as you can about people as individuals. Knowing about different cultures, disabilities, sexualities and views can help you see past the label, and appreciate the human being.

Keeping yourself safe

Trust your instincts

As you get older you need to take responsibility for looking after yourself. When you're out and about, there are things you can do to keep safe and feel more confident. Trust your instincts - if a situation doesn't feel right walk away. If a situation doesn't feel right when you are on-line walk away too.

Make sure your parents or carers know where you are, and travel with friends, especially at night.

At clubs or bars watch your drink as spiking drinks with drugs is a growing problem. Don't drink too much or take drugs as this also makes you vulnerable. To get home use a registered taxi with friends and try and book it in advance. When using buses and trains at night sit near the driver or in a carriage with as many people as possible.

Don't flash your iPod or mobile around as this can tempt thieves and muggers. Always be wary of giving out personal information about yourself, especially on Internet chatrooms when you don't know who is on the other end.

Don't let fear of crime stop you having fun but do take steps to prevent yourself being a target.

What to do:

- Follow your instincts, if you feel unsafe do something about it.
- Keep a number of a taxi/minicab firm in your mobile phone book.
- Keep enough money for the bus, train or taxi journey home.
- Report any incident to the Police.
- Don't drink to excess as it will lower your ability to make safe judgements.
- Perhaps leave some emergency money in the house just in case something happens and you need it for the taxi.

Look out for:

- When you're out and about, be careful not to show your iPod or mobile phone you may find yourself a victim of crime.
- It's not a good idea to walk home alone at night, so arrange to have lifts home with your friends if you can.
- Always let your parent/carer know where you are and the time you expect to be home.
- Strangers offering you a lift.

E-safety and exploitation

My name is Tracy and I'm 14 years old...

My name is Julie and I'm also 14 years old...

How to stay safe on the internet:

- Don't use your real name in chatrooms and forums.
- Edit your privacy settings on your social networking site so that only people you know can view your information.
- Don't lie about your age.
- Don't give out your email address, mobile number, home address or college address.
- Be careful where you post your photos and who can see them, remember once something is on the net then it can be accessed by lots of people, and you might not want them looking at your pictures!
- If you decide to use a chatroom, use a public one, not private, where there are only two people.
- Don't agree to meet anyone you've met on the internet.
- Grooming is where typically an older person will use the internet or its services to communicate with young people.
- Peers and friends can become involved and try to introduce others to exploitation. Do not be pressurised into doing something you do not feel is right.

Staying safe

The internet is a great way to keep in touch with your friends who you don't see every day, through social networking and chatrooms. Sexual exploitation can happen to anyone and can happen in different ways including being groomed through the internet, face to face, mobile phone, introduced through friends, peer grooming and even being exploited as some sort of gang initiation.

It is important to make sure you know the person you are speaking to because not everyone tells the truth about who they are. They may not be the same sex as they have said and not the same age. There are adults who use the internet to exploit young people. Never post unsuitable images of yourself on the internet, and never let someone else take pictures of you and use them in this way. These photographs may seem like a bit of fun in the heat of the moment, but they will be there forever and there's not much you will be able to do about it.

Staying safe on the internet by making sure you are only speaking to people you know. Don't give out details about yourself, and never go on your own and meet someone from a chatroom or social network site if you don't know them.

Bullying can happen on the internet, in chatrooms and text messaging. It is as serious as physical bullying and must stop. If you are being bullied you must talk to someone you trust.

What to do if you think you are in danger:

- If you think someone in a chatroom or forum is lying about who they are, email the moderator and tell them what has happened.
- Warn your friends if someone has added you as a friend and you don't know them, they may have added your friends as well.
- If you think you are being bullied or targeted on the internet, via chatrooms, email or text then let someone know.

Contact

- www.ceop.police.uk
- www.thinkuknow.com



Useful contacts

National contacts

- **Action for Children**
Practical information for children, young people, and parents going through a family break-up.
0300 123 2112
www.actionforchildren.org.uk
- **Beating Eating Disorders**
For advice and information on all types of eating disorders.
0845 634 1414 www.b-eat.co.uk
- **Brook**
Free and confidential information on sexual health for under 25s.
0808 802 1234 www.brook.org.uk
- **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre**
Dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse of children.
www.ceop.police.uk
- **Domestic Violence Helpline**
0808 2000 247 Free phone 24 hour
National Domestic Helpline
www.womensaid.org.uk
- **Family Planning Association (FPA)**
0845 122 8690 www.fpa.org.uk
- **Frank**
Friendly, confidential drugs advice.
0800 776600 www.talktofrank.com
- **Samaritans**
Confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.
0845 57 90 90 90
- **Stop Smoking**
www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- **YoungMinds Parents Helpline**
Committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.
020 7089 5050
www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.anxiety.org.uk
08444 775 774
- www.besavvy.org.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.drinkaware.co.uk

- www.idas.org.uk/healthyrelationships
- www.juniorcitizen.org.uk
- www.mind.org.uk
- www.nhs.uk
- www.nhs.uk/Change4Life
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- www.quitbecause.org.uk
0808 00 22 00
- www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk
- www.redcross.org.uk
- www.rethink.org
- www.sunsmart.org.uk
- www.thesite.org
- www.thinkuknow.com
- www.wreckedlastnight.com
- **For LGBT young people**
www.stonewall.org.uk
www.tht.org.uk

Local contacts

- **Northampton Drug and Alcohol Service (NDAS)**
Spring House, 39 Billing Road,
Northampton NN1 5BA.
01604 233 227
- **Sexual Health Advice**
Sexual Health Department,
Northampton General Hospital
01604 637203
- **NHS Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire**
01604 651100
- **Citizens Advice Bureau**
0844 855 2122
www.northamptoncab.org.uk
- **Youth Service Service Six**
Phone or text us on:
03332 400716
www.servicesix.co.uk
- **Northampton Mental Health Helpline**
0845 766 0606
- **Northamptonshire C-Card Scheme**
www.miltonkeynes-northamptonshire.nhs.uk/ccard/