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Sexual Health

Key messages

- Being healthy is about feeling good physically, mentally and emotionally. Being sexually healthy means that we avoid infections, illnesses and take responsibility to ensure that we protect ourselves and others, emotionally and physically.
- Sexual health is an important and integral part of overall health. When we are sexually healthy we make the best decisions for ourselves with regard to our sexual partners and sexual practice.
- For people who choose to be sexually active, sex can be enjoyable, safe and should be based on mutual respect and agreement.

Other important messages to share:

- It's important to take care of your sexual health and to talk about relationships and sex with your loved ones.
- There are 15 different methods of contraception available on the NHS. All are free even if you usually pay for your prescriptions.
- Some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea often don't have signs and symptoms, so using a condom and getting tested when you change partners is really important.
- Over 100,000 people live with HIV in the UK; however an estimated 1 in 8 are unaware of their infection. Taking a HIV test is the only way to find out if you have HIV.

Why is it important?

Early diagnosis of STIs and HIV is important to ensure that any treatment you require will have better outcomes. It will also help to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to others.

Self help:

If you would like to talk to someone about a sexual health issue you can call the national Sexual Health Helpline on **0300 123 7123**. Your call will be treated with sensitivity and in strict confidence. The Sexual Health Helpline is open from 9.00 am to 8.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Find more sexual health information for young people and adults at www.nhs.uk/livewell/sexualhealthtopics/pages

The Family Planning Association (FPA) also provide help, advice and information. Visit www.fpa.org.uk

Local services:

The Dudley Sexual Health and Contraception Service is available at:

GUM Clinic, Russells Hall Hospital 01384 456111 ext 3900

Advice on all aspects of sexual health, including confidential screening and treatment of STIs

Contraception & Sexual Health Clinics, throughout the borough 01384 321480

Support, advice and a full range of contraception

Brook Dudley, 1 Castle Street, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 1LA 01384 239001

Free confidential sex advice, contraception, STI testing and counselling for young people

Respect Yourself Teenage Pregnancy 01384 813653

Free confidential sex advice, contraception and STI testing for young people

Summit House Support

Free and confidential advice and support for people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS

Or you can visit the following websites:

The Dudley Group Contraception and Sexual Health Service

www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/sexual-health

To find your nearest free HIV testing venue

www.startswithme.org.uk/where-to-test

Sexual health website designed by young people, for young people in the borough

www.deardudley.co.uk

Brook Young People - a sexual health service for young people up to 25 years of age. There is a local service in Sandwell and Dudley.

www.brook.org.uk

Get involved:

Be open and talk about relationships and sexual health with your family, close friends and colleagues. Encourage them to value themselves and build positive relationships.

Providing support for friends and family to attend clinics or services can increase confidence and enable them to be proactive.

Talk about contraception and sexual health needs early on in a relationship and avoid leaving it until the 'moment' as it can then be overlooked resulting in unplanned pregnancy and STIs.



**Sexual
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