



Health Care



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Getting Medical Help

Registering with a GP

When you move to Manchester you should register with a local GP, so that you'll be able to receive any necessary medical help. You shouldn't wait until you are ill before doing this as you may not be well enough to arrange appropriate help when you most need it.

You will still be able to see your GP at home during the holidays. They will be able to see you as an emergency patient or as a visitor.

You can find out the names and contact details of your local GP from the Advice Centre, Student Information Points, Student Life Offices or public libraries. You could also phone NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or go to the NHS website - www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

There is also a GP surgery based near the All Saints campus. St. Augustine's Surgery is a branch surgery run specifically for students.

St. Augustine's Surgery, Cambridge Hall, North Court, 41 Cavendish Street, Manchester, M15 6TT

NHS Direct

NHS Direct operates a 24-hour advice and health information service. They provide confidential information on:

What to do if you are feeling ill;
Particular health conditions;
Local healthcare services, such as doctors, dentists or late night opening pharmacies.
Self help and support organisations.

If you need health information or advice at any time of the day or night, call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.

You can also get health information and advice online at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk. This website has a health encyclopedia, a self-help guide and covers certain topics, such as depression and cancer, in depth.

Dental Treatment

If you need dental treatment you don't have to be registered with a dentist, but you will usually need to make an appointment.

You will have to pay for dental check-ups and treatment under the NHS, unless you qualify for help with these costs (see 'Help with Health Costs').

You can get contact details for NHS dentists from the Advice Centre, public libraries or the NHS website - www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Free dental treatment for serious emergencies is available from supervised dental students at the Manchester Dental Hospital on the corner of Bridgeford Street and Higher Cambridge Street. Tel: (0161) 275 6666.

Travel Vaccinations

If you are going abroad you may need to have certain vaccinations. You should contact your GP to find out which vaccinations are required and how long the course will take. You may have to pay for some vaccinations.

The Travel Clinic is a private clinic and specialises in vaccinations.
Travel Clinic: 11 Anson Road, Victoria Park, M14 5BY Tel: (0161) 224 2471.

International Students

If you are an international student studying in the UK and your course lasts for 6 months or more you are entitled to NHS treatment. Your family will also be entitled to NHS treatment if they are living with you in the UK. All EU students are entitled to NHS treatment.

Although you will not usually have to pay for medical treatment, there are charges for prescriptions, dental check-ups and treatment. You may be able to receive help with these costs (see 'Help with Health Costs').

If your course is for less than six months you are only entitled to limited NHS hospital treatment, unless it is an emergency. You may have to pay for treatment as a private patient which can be very expensive. Due to this you are strongly advised to take out medical insurance whilst in the UK. If you would like further advice you can contact the International Welfare Officer. They are based in the International Office, All Saints Building, Manchester, M15 6BH. Tel. 0161 247 1022, email intoff@mmu.ac.uk

Financial Help

Help with Health Costs

Most medical and hospital treatment is free but you may have to pay for prescriptions, dental check-ups and treatment, sight tests, glasses, etc.

Currently prescriptions cost £7.20 per item and a basic dental check-up is £16.50.

Certain groups of people are automatically exempt from these charges.

- Full time students under 19
- People receiving Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit, or Tax Credits (if you get an NHS tax credit exemption certificate).
- Women who are pregnant or have given birth in the last 12 months (help with prescriptions and dental treatment only).
- People aged 60 and over (prescriptions and sight tests, proof of age must be provided)
- People with certain medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy or particular types of diabetes) can receive free prescriptions.
- Those with a low income may be able to receive help with these costs by filling in form HC1. If you qualify you will be sent a certificate which lasts for six months. Just before the certificate expires you will need to re-apply. A HC2 gives you full help and a HC3 gives limited help. Forms are available from the Advice Centre, doctors, dentists and opticians.

If you've already paid for health costs you may be able to claim money back. Fill in form FP57 for refunds of prescriptions and HC5 for refunds of dental treatment, sight tests or glasses/contact lenses.

If you don't qualify for help with prescriptions you can buy a pre-payment certificate (PPC), which will save you money if you need prescriptions regularly. This lasts for 3 months or 12 months and will save you money if you need more than 4 or more items in 3 months or 15 or more items in 12 months. You can get an application form from a pharmacist or at www.ppa.org.uk/ppa/ppcdd/patient.do and click on the pre-payment certificates link. or phone 0845 850 0030.

Benefits

Students with disabilities may be able to claim certain benefits whilst they are studying. There can be restrictions on which benefits you can claim whilst studying full time.

Please come to the Advice Centre for more advice about this.

Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

If you have any extra course costs as a result of having a disability you may be able to claim a Disabled Students Allowance. For example if you have hearing difficulties you may need a note taker.

Learning difficulties and dyslexia count as a disability for DSA's.

Please contact the Advice Centre or the Learning Support Service for more information.

Learner Development Service, Manchester is located on the first floor of the All Saints Building. Tel: (0161) 247 3491.
Textphone: (0161) 247 3374
E-mail: l.support@mmu.ac.uk

Learner Development Service at the Cheshire Campus:
Tel: (0161) 247 5236
E-mail: stsrvccheshire@mmu.ac.uk

Health & Your Studies

Missing exams or assessments due to ill health

If you are not able to attend an exam or assessment because you're ill you will need to ask your GP for a medical certificate, or a signed statement explaining your health problems. You will need to get this within 24 hours of the start of the illness (unless there is an exceptional reason why you can't do this).

This should be submitted to the Head of Department as soon as possible, and must be submitted before the Board of Examiners meet. Please note that the student self certificate form (form SSCI) is not suitable to cover these types of absences.

Missing classes due to ill health

If you have to miss university because you're ill you will need to inform your Head of Department, or a member of the departmental staff. If you are ill for six days, or less you should fill in form SSCI (the Student Self Certificate for Absence due to Illness), when you return. This form is available from your Student Information Point / Student Life Office and should be given to your Head of Department.

If you are absent for seven days or more you will have to submit a medical certificate signed by your GP. This must be sent to your Head of Department as soon as possible. You will also need to fill in SSCI when you return.

It is important to inform your Head of Department in writing if you have a long-term medical condition which you feel may effect you whilst on the course. This can then be taken into consideration in relation to your performance on the course and your exams and assessments. Please visit the Advice Centre or check our Academic Problems booklet for more information on explaining personal mitigating circumstances.

Informing MMU about disabilities

It is important to let the University know about any disabilities you have. Early disclosure of disability will help the University to arrange any support you may need. For example, extra time in exams or alternative assessment methods.

Contact the Learning Support Service for more information and help on this. Learner Development Service Manchester are located on the first floor of the All Saints Building. Tel: 0161 247 3491 • Textphone: 0161 247 3374
E-mail: l.support@mmu.ac.uk
Learner Development Service Cheshire:
Tel: 0161 247 5326
E-mail: stsrvccheshire@mmu.ac.uk

Sexual Health

Contraception

There are many effective methods of contraception to choose from. Most GPs will be happy to discuss contraception with you, or you can visit your local family planning clinic for free advice. Your doctor will help you to choose the right method for you, taking into account your age, whether you have had

children, whether you smoke, any current illnesses and any medications you take. Most methods of contraception are available on the NHS.

Barrier methods

They include male and female condoms, the cap, and the diaphragm. Condoms also stop sexually transmitted diseases being passed from one partner to another. Free condoms are also available from the Advice Centre or the Students' Union.

Oral contraceptives

Users can choose between the combined pill and the 'mini pill'. The combined pill contains two hormones, which are taken each day for 21 days followed by a break of seven days, during which a period occurs. The mini pill is taken every day without a seven-day break.

Contraceptive injection

There are two types of contraceptive injection. One provides contraception for 12 weeks, the other for 8 weeks. Progestogen is released slowly into the body and prevents ovulation. No further contraception needs to be used until the next injection is due.

Contraceptive Implant

Implants are a set of small plastic tubes that are inserted under the skin of the upper arm, and can be left in place for up to three years. They release a progestogen hormone that prevents ovulation.

Contraceptive Patch

A patch is stuck to a clean, dry, hair free part of your body and introduces hormones into your body to prevent your ovaries releasing an egg. These must be changed weekly.

Intrauterine methods

These are tiny devices (about the size of a matchstick) inserted into the womb through the vagina and cervix. There are several different types, including a new one that contains slow release hormones.

Natural family planning

Natural methods of contraception attempt to identify the time of ovulation so that couples can avoid having sex during the time when conception is most likely. For example, timing the menstrual cycle. These techniques can be complicated and are not usually recommended.

Sterilisation

This is a permanent method of preventing pregnancy. Men and women can both be sterilised. It is only advised for those who have decided they don't want any more children. A doctor wouldn't usually consider this for anyone younger than their mid-thirties.

Emergency Contraception

If you have had sex without using contraception, or think your contraception may have failed there are two types of emergency contraception you can use.

You can take the 'morning after pill'. Emergency pills must be taken within 3 days (72 hours) of having unprotected sex. However, the sooner you take it, the better.

You can also have an IUCD (coil) fitted. This must be done less than five days after sex.

You can see your GP, a Family Planning Clinic or go to the Brook Advisory Centre (under 19's only) for emergency contraception and advice. You are also able to buy emergency pills from some chemists.

The Family Planning Association website: www.fpa.org.uk includes a 'find a clinic' search.

FPA Helpline: 0845 122 8690 9am-6pm Monday - Friday

The Hathersage Centre provides comprehensive contraception and sexual health services to men and women of all ages in walk in clinics.

'Fresh' is a new service based in the Hathersage Centre for the under 25's offering free contraception; pregnancy testing; emergency contraception; condoms; advice and referrals for termination; testing for sexually transmitted infections; someone to talk to and general health advice.

The Hathersage Centre, 280 Upper Brook Street, Manchester M13 0FH.
Tel: 0161 901 1555

PREGNANCY

If you think you might be pregnant, for example because your period is late, you should do a pregnancy test as soon as possible to find out for sure. Pregnancy tests are available from:

- Brook Advisory Centres - tests are free with immediate results. The Manchester Brook Sale office will only see people under 19.
- Family planning clinics
- Your GP
- Any other GP, registering for family planning services only

- Some Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics
- Chemists - they can do a test or sell a home pregnancy testing kit

It is important to find out as soon as possible. The earlier you find out if you are pregnant, the more options you have. If you are pregnant you should talk to your GP or to someone at the Hathersage Centre about your options.

You may decide you want a termination, to arrange an adoption or you may want to have a baby. This can be a very difficult decision to make so please seek advice as soon as possible.

It is common to feel shocked, scared, confused, embarrassed and lonely when facing an unplanned pregnancy. Professionals are there to provide information and support on the options available but only the woman herself can make the decision as to whether or not to continue with the pregnancy.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

There are 25 types of sexually transmitted infection. The most common infections are:

- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhoea
- Genital herpes
- Genital warts
- Hepatitis B
- Syphilis
- HIV and AIDS

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, it could be an indication that you have an infection. It may not turn out to be anything particularly serious, but it is very important that you get it checked out.

- Unusual vaginal discharge
- Discharge from the penis
- Sore or blister near vagina, penis or anus
- Rash or irritation around the vagina, penis or anus
- Pain or burning feeling on passing urine
- Passing urine more often than usual
- Pain when you have sexual intercourse

Symptoms, however, can vary from infection to infection and many STIs show no symptoms at all. It is not uncommon to have more than one infection at the same time.

Most STIs can be completely cured if found early enough and may only require you to take a course of antibiotics. However, if left untreated these infections can be painful and uncomfortable or at worst cause permanent damage to your health and fertility.

Most STIs can be easily diagnosed and treated at Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics which are usually based in local hospitals. If you think you may have an STI, you can refer yourself to any GUM clinic for advice and treatment. The service is completely confidential.

Manchester Royal Infirmary, Department of GUM, Oxford Road, Manchester. M13 9WL.

Tel: (0161) 276 5212 (Women) (0161) 276 5200 (Men)

The Jarman Clinic (Sexual health service for gay and bisexual men)

Withington Hospital

Tel: (0161) 291 4939

Or ring the National Aids and Sexual Health Line free on 0800 567 123 for details of a clinic in your area.

HIV/AIDS

HIV is the virus which causes AIDS. HIV damages the body's defence system so that it can't fight off certain infections.

The main ways that HIV can be passed on are:

- Having unprotected sex
- Sharing of hypodermic needles
- From mother to baby during pregnancy, birth and breast feeding
- Direct contact with infected blood
- Blood transfusions outside the UK and in the UK prior to 1985

You can't get HIV through:

- Kissing, touching or shaking hands
- Sharing crockery or cutlery
- Coughing or sneezing
- Contact with toilet seats
- Insect or animal bites
- Swimming pools
- Eating food prepared by someone with HIV

For someone to become HIV positive, or have the HIV virus, the HIV virus has to enter their bloodstream. The virus is found in a number of bodily fluids, and the ones that contain enough HIV to infect someone are:

- Blood
- Seminal fluid (semen)
- Vaginal fluid, including menstrual fluid
- Breast milk

HIV infection can happen when one of the bodily fluids listed above gets into someone else's blood. Saliva, sweat and urine do not contain enough HIV to infect someone.

How do the bodily fluids get into someone else's bloodstream during sex? Through the internal linings of the sex organs and rectum (anal passage) during penetrative sex (where the penis enters the vagina or anus) without using a condom. (This is called unprotected sex)

For men this means through the glans, or head of the penis, through the rectum, and through the urethra (the tube in the penis)

For women this means through the vagina, the cervix (entrance to the womb) or the rectum.

Sex is a positive experience for most people and it's important to remember that this doesn't have to change. You can reduce the risks of contracting HIV in these ways:

- Until you and your partner are sure there's no chance of passing on the virus, always use a condom, or equivalent barrier. Also, make sure it's fitted before any genital contact occurs.
- If you do inject drugs, use a clean needle each time you inject.

HIV Testing

Having an HIV test isn't difficult. You give a sample of blood which is then examined for HIV antibodies. The result is normally ready around a week after you've taken the test. However, in order for the test to give the most accurate result, it's best to wait three months after you think you might have been infected before you get tested. This is because it takes three months for the antibodies to develop and be traceable in the test. The long wait is perhaps the most difficult part of the HIV testing process, but waiting means you'll be sure the test result is accurate.

Free HIV tests are available from your GP or from Genito-urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics (details of clinics under 'Sexually Transmitted Infections').

If you're worried about confidentiality, don't be. If you go to a clinic you can

do it anonymously, whether it's for advice or the test itself. Before the test happens you'll be given a run through from a trained counsellor of what the procedure involves and what happens after you get the results.

Sexual Health & National Aids Helpline

Tel: 0800 567 123

A 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, free and confidential telephone service with advice about HIV, AIDS, sexual health, sexually transmitted infections, local services, clinics and support services.

Health Issues

ALCOHOL

Whilst at University you may find that alcohol can play a large part in your social life. If you are careful and in control this can be a positive experience. But drinking too much, or at the wrong time, can lead to a range of difficulties. The important thing is to know where the benefits end and the risks begin.

The system of measuring alcohol in units was devised over 20 years ago and the strength and variety of drinks available has changed dramatically.

- Standard glass of wine (175ml) approx 2 units
- Large glass of wine (250ml) 3 units
- Pint of standard lager 2.3 units
- Pint of premium lager 2.8 units
- Pint of strong cider 4.7 units
- Single 25ml spirits 1 unit

Many people have been told that a glass of wine = 1 unit and a pint of beer = 2 units.

The daily benchmarks for adult men and women are a guide to how much you can drink without putting your health at risk. In general:

Men can drink between 3 and 4 units a day or less

Women can drink between 2 and 3 units a day or less

If you are consistently drinking more than this, you may want to think about changing your drinking habits.

Regularly drinking too much will increase the risk of long-term damage to your health. This can include problems like raised blood pressure, liver

damage, cancers of the mouth and throat digestive problems/ ulcers, psychological and emotional problems such as depression and problems in pregnancy.

In addition it can cause weight gain because alcoholic drinks contain a lot of calories. For example, half a pint of bitter contains about 90 calories and an average glass of medium white wine 95 calories.

It is important to remember that alcohol affects physical co-ordination and reaction times, making you more likely to have accidents. You should never drink and drive. It causes the unnecessary deaths of about 500 people every year and over 17,500 injures. There are also legal implications. On average there are about 2000 breath tests every day, and in the year 2000 there were almost 90,000 convictions. Each convicted driver lost their licence for at least one year.

It is not just drivers that need to be careful. Around half of pedestrians aged between 16 and 60 who are killed in road accidents would fail the breath test. It can also make people more violent and more likely to become involved in a fight. For example, half of all adults admitted to hospital with head injuries are drunk.

If you think you may have a drink related problem contact the Drinkline Helpline. Tel: 0800 917 8282

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon Monoxide is a highly poisonous gas. But it can be difficult to recognise because it has no colour, no smell and no taste. If you have any appliances that burn gas, oil or coal then carbon monoxide can get into your home if they haven't been fitted properly or serviced regularly.

Gas appliances need air to burn safely. Carbon Monoxide can be produced if there is too little air or if the chimney is blocked or obstructed. Signs to look out for are:

Stains or soot around a gas fire or at the top of a gas heater. This could mean the chimney is blocked.

The flame on your gas fire or water heater should not be yellow or orange. There shouldn't be a strange smell when the gas appliance is on.

Symptoms are vague and can be similar to those caused by other illnesses – even a cold or flu. But if anyone in your house has any of the following

symptoms after using a gas appliance go to your doctor:

- Unexplained headaches, chest pains or muscular weakness
- Sickness, diarrhoea or stomach pains
- Sudden dizziness when standing up
- General lethargy
- Sore throat and dry cough

If you are at all worried about a gas appliance stop using it immediately and do not use it again until it has been checked by British Gas or another fitter registered with the Gas Safe Register which replaced CORGI in April 2009.

For details of a registered gas installer in your area go to www.gassaferegister.co.uk

If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak report it immediately. Leaking gas can cause an explosion. Report it to National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999 (24 hour freephone).

If you are in rented accommodation your landlord is legally responsible for making sure all gas appliances in your home are safe. A gas safety check should be carried out every 12 months by a Gas Safe registered gas engineer. It is up to your landlord to arrange and pay for these checks.

The gas engineer will provide a record of each gas safety check. The landlord must keep these records for at least two years, and they should make sure you have a copy. You have the right to be given a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate within 28 days of the check taking place.

When you move into a new home you should be given a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate from the last check made before you moved in. If you aren't automatically given one ask for a copy.

These legal duties on landlords come from The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

Drugs

If you would like any information about drugs the Advice Centre produce a leaflet which describes different types of drugs and the effects and risks of taking them. Please pick one up from the Advice Centre.

Mental Health

Awareness of mental health issues have been raised significantly within the UK over recent years. Substantial efforts have been made to de-stigmatise the image associated with such illnesses and encourage sufferers to seek medical help and other forms of therapy such as counselling.

Mental illnesses include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Eating disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Schizophrenia

Depression

The most common form of mental illness is believed to be depression. Depression comes in several types. It is separate from feeling down or in a bad mood. Depression can involve deep unhappiness, extreme lack of motivation or a sense of overwhelming despair. NHS guidance suggests depression is estimated to be the fourth most common cause of disability and that about 15% of people will experience severe depression at least once in their lives. However due to many sufferers going undiagnosed the actual amount may be much greater.

Eating Disorders

An eating disorder, such as anorexia or bulimia, is an obsession with food, eating, body weight and size. Eating disorders develop as outward signs of inner emotional or psychological distress or problems. They can become the way that people cope with difficulties in their life. Without appropriate help and treatment, eating problems may persist throughout life.

Anyone can develop an eating disorder regardless of age, race, gender or background. However, young women are most vulnerable, particularly between the ages of 15-25 years.

Anorexia

Someone with anorexia is terrified of being a 'normal' weight and attempts to starve her or himself. It is a way of demonstrating that they are in control of their body weight and shape. Ultimately, however, the illness itself takes control and the chemical changes in the body affect the brain and distort thinking, making it impossible for the person to make rational decisions about food.

Physical signs of anorexia can include extreme weight loss, dizzy spells and fainting and a swollen stomach, face and ankles.

Psychological signs of anorexia can include an intense fear of gaining weight and a distorted perception of body shape or weight.

Behavioural signs in anorexia can include rituals attached to eating, such as cutting food into tiny pieces, secrecy and wearing big baggy clothes.

The long-term effects of anorexia

The long-term effects of anorexia on the body and mind can be alarming and severe. Women with anorexia tend to find it more difficult to become pregnant and there is the possibility of developing osteoporosis later in life. Fortunately, many of these effects can be reversed - once the body receives proper and regular nourishment.

Bulimia

A person with bulimia seeks comfort from bingeing, then gets rid of the fattening effects of bingeing by vomiting, taking laxatives, exercising or starvation. This is an attempt to prevent gaining weight. Bulimia is more difficult to detect as the person often will not lose weight so dramatically. As with anorexia, people who develop bulimia rely on the control of food and eating as a way of coping with emotional difficulties in their life.

Physical signs of bulimia can include frequent weight changes, sore throat and tooth decay caused by excessive vomiting and swollen salivary glands making the face more round.

Psychological signs of bulimia can include uncontrollable urges to eat vast amounts of food, a distorted perception of body weight and shape and emotional behaviour/mood swings.

Behavioural signs in bulimia can include bingeing and vomiting, periods of fasting, secretive behaviour and a reluctance to socialise.

Long-term effects of bulimia

In a similar way to anorexia, bulimia can take over the life of the person with the disorder, making them feel trapped and desperate. Chaotic eating and dramatic loss of fluids can cause serious physical problems.

Bulimia can, in extreme cases, be fatal due to, for instance a heart attack. An imbalance or dangerously low levels of the essential minerals in the body can significantly or fatally affect the working of vital internal organs. Other dangers of bulimia include rupture of the stomach and erosion of tooth enamel.

Treatment

Eating disorders are serious illnesses and often require specialist medical care, not only for the physical problems but also for psychological difficulties.

However, with illnesses like anorexia or bulimia, the person must themselves want to get better before help can be really effective. People with eating disorders often have mixed feelings about 'giving up' their illness. This is because their eating habits have become a way of coping with their emotional problems.

There are a variety of ways in which people can be treated. Recovery is not easy but it is certainly possible. A patient may be offered a combination of different forms of therapy, such as counselling, self-help and support groups, psychotherapy, therapy sessions and diet and nutritional advice.

Beat (eating disorders charity) runs self-help and support groups. The Association also runs a Telephone Counselling Programme for people with bulimia. This is a ten-week programme conducted with the agreement and support of a GP. Further details are available from beat.

Beat, 103 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1DW

Website: www.b-eat.co.uk

Helpline: 0845 634 1414

E-mail: help@b-eat.co.uk

Open Monday - Friday 10:30am to 8:30pm & Saturdays 1:00pm to 4:30pm

Meningitis

Meningitis is the inflammation of the meninges, the lining surrounding the brain. It can be caused by many different organisms including bacteria, viruses, fungi and amoeba.

Some bacteria that cause meningitis can also cause septicaemia (blood poisoning), this is when the bacteria enter the bloodstream and multiply uncontrollably. This is most often seen with meningococcal meningitis, causing meningococcal septicaemia

Meningitis is not always easy to spot at first because the symptoms can be similar to those of flu. They may develop over one or two days but sometimes develop in a matter of hours. Symptoms do not appear in any particular order and some may not appear at all. It is important to remember other symptoms may occur:

The main symptoms in adults and children are:

- High temperature, fever, possibly with cold hands and feet
- Vomiting, sometimes diarrhoea
- Severe headache
- Neck stiffness (unable to touch the chin to the chest)
- Joint or muscle pains, sometimes stomach cramps with septicaemia
- Dislike of bright lights
- Drowsiness
- Fits
- The person may be confused or disoriented.
- Rash (see below)

Septicaemic rash

Patients with septicaemia often develop a rash which may start anywhere on the body as a cluster of tiny blood spots, which look like pin-pricks in the skin. If untreated, these blood spots will join to give the appearance of fresh bruises.

The "glass test" can be used to see if a rash might be septicaemic. If you press the side of a clear drinking glass firmly onto the spots or bruises, they will not fade. Even though the rash may be harder to see on dark skin, the glass test can still be done. Look for the spots or bruises on paler parts of the skin, e.g. palms of the hand or soles of the feet. There is sometimes a rash on the surface of the eye the part mainly covered by the eyelid.

Do not wait for a rash. It may be the last symptom to appear, and in many cases may not appear at all.

Treatment

Bacterial meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia need immediate treatment with antibiotics and appropriate hospital management.

People who have come into close contact with meningococcal meningitis

and/or meningococcal septicaemia require antibiotics (close contacts are people who are living or sleeping in the same household or who have intimately kissed the patient). If you have been in close contact with somebody who has contracted meningitis, seek advice from your GP.

Viral meningitis cannot be helped by antibiotics and treatment is based on good nursing care. Recovery is normally complete, but headaches, tiredness and depression may persist for weeks or even months.

For information regarding vaccination against meningitis see www.immunisation.nhs.uk

The Meningitis Trust Helpline. Tel: 0800 028 1828 (Freephone). The Helpline is open 24 hours a day. They offer facts, information, literature and support to people concerned about meningitis and meningococcal disease.

E-mail questions and concerns to: helpline@meningitis-trust.org

Web: www.meningitis-trust.org

Smoking

Risks of smoking

Smokers are at greater risk from illness and early death than non-smokers. Even breathing the smoke from other people's cigarettes can affect your health.

There are many serious and often fatal diseases caused by smoking, such as:

- Lung cancer
- Other cancers: mouth, throat, larynx, oesophagus, bladder, kidney, pancreas and stomach
- Coronary heart disease
- Chronic bronchitis and emphysema

If you smoke, giving up is probably the greatest single step you can take to improve your health. In the last 15 years, 11 million people in the UK have successfully kicked the habit.

Giving up smoking increases your chances of living a longer and healthier life. When you are no longer exposed every day to nicotine, carbon monoxide, tar and other poisons, your body begins to repair the damage. As body systems start to return to normal, you experience the following benefits, many within a few weeks:

- Less risk of smoking-related diseases (see above)
- Improved breathing
- Loss of smoker's cough
- Sense of smell and taste improves
- Hair, skin and breath no longer smell of tobacco smoke
- Clearer complexion
- Better circulation
- Whiter teeth
- Better able to cope with sudden exertion
- Lack of worry over damage smoking is doing to your health
- Feeling good about yourself for having quit

As well as improving your health and reducing the risk of fatal diseases you will save a lot more money if you don't smoke. Think how much you usually spend on cigarettes in a week. If you smoke a pack of cigarettes a day, giving up now will save you over a £1,400 over the next year.

Quitting smoking

There are several ways to try and quit smoking. There are products available to support smokers trying to give up, which work by relieving these withdrawal symptoms. Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is one method that works by providing the body with nicotine without the disadvantages of all the other chemicals contained in cigarettes.

NRT is available as:

- Patches, which stick to the skin and release a steady dose of nicotine into the body,
- Gum, which is chewed whenever the craving for a cigarette is felt,
- Inhalers, which not only deliver nicotine but also mimic the action of smoking, which may help with possible psychological addiction, and
- Nasal spray, which is snorted through the nostrils and is effective almost immediately.

Support and advice is available from your nearest NHS Stop Smoking clinic and your GP.

You can contact the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 00 22 00. If you would prefer to meet with someone the Helpline can give you details of your nearest smokers support centre. Website: smokefree.nhs.uk

You can also phone Quitline on 0800 00 22 00 (12 - 9pm seven days a week) for help and advice on giving up smoking. Website: www.quit.org.uk

Keeping Healthy

Healthy Eating

To be sure of eating a well-balanced diet, you need to eat a variety of different foods each day. Try to eat some foods from the following food groups every day. It is also important to vary the foods chosen from each group to get all the different nutrients you need.

Bread, other cereals and potatoes

- Bread, rolls, chapattis
- Breakfast cereals, oats
- Pasta, noodles
- Rice
- Potatoes, sweet potatoes
- Dishes made from maize, millet and cornmeal
- Beans and lentils.

Starchy foods are rich in carbohydrates, an important source of energy. They are also a good source of B vitamins, and contain some calcium and iron. Starchy foods such as bread, cereals and potatoes should form the main part of your meals. Choose high-fibre varieties whenever you can.

Fruit and vegetables

- All fresh, frozen and canned fruit and vegetables
- Salad vegetables
- Beans and lentils.

Fruit and vegetables are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. Try to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Include some fruit, some vegetables and some salad, and choose a wide variety to ensure you are getting all the vitamins and minerals you need. Dried fruit and fruit juice can make up some of the choices from this group.

Milk and dairy foods

- Milk
- Cheese
- Yoghurt and fromage frais.

Dairy foods are a good source of protein, calcium and vitamins A, D, and B12. They can also be high in saturated fat. Choose lower-fat versions whenever possible.

Meat, fish and alternatives

- Meat - beef, pork, bacon, and lamb
- Meat products - sausages, beefburgers, meat pies
- Poultry - chicken, turkey
- Fish - fresh, frozen, canned
- Fish products - fish fingers, fish cakes
- Eggs
- Beans and lentils - baked beans, chickpeas, lentils
- Nuts and nut products, such as peanut butter
- Textured vegetable protein and other meat alternatives.

These foods are good sources of protein, B vitamins, and minerals such as iron, zinc and magnesium. They can also be high in fat. Choose lower-fat or lean versions where available.

Foods containing fat and sugar add variety to your diet but should not be eaten too often or in large amounts.

Exercise

As well as trying to have a healthy diet you should try to exercise. By building up to half an hour of moderate-intensity activity per day, you will improve your health.

Exercising will give you greater stamina, stronger muscles, a lower risk of heart disease and stroke, a lower risk of osteoporosis (brittle bones), improved posture and a better shape and appearance. Living an active lifestyle can also help you to feel more energetic and feel better about yourself by giving you more confidence. You will also feel more relaxed, sleep better, and be able to deal with everyday stresses more effectively, reducing your risk of depression.

There is no need to do an exhausting workout. Being regularly active at a moderate level means doing an activity that makes you feel warm and breathe a bit harder. Even dancing in a club is a good way to exercise.

Try to find activities that you enjoy and can make a regular part of your life. Contact the Student Activities Centre or the Athletic Union for information about the university's sports clubs. They can be found on the second floor of the Students' Union or telephone (0161) 247 1162.

Useful contacts and Helplines

Brook Advisory Centre
Tel: (0161) 237 3001

Campaign Against Living Miserably (young men suffering with depression)
Tel: 0800 58 58 58
Web: www.thecalmzone.net

Counselling Service (at MMU)
Tel: (0161) 247 3493

Drinkline Helpline
Tel: 0800 917 8282

Beat (eating disorders charity)
Helpline: 0845 634 1414
Helpline e-mail service help@b-eat.co.uk

Family Planning Centre
Tel: (0161) 434 3555

The Jarman Clinic (Sexual health service for gay and bisexual men)
Tel: (0161) 291 4939

Learner Development Service, All Saints Building, Oxford Road
Tel: (0161) 247 3491.
Textphone: (0161) 247 3374
E-mail: l.support@mmu.ac.uk

Learner Development Service, Cheshire
Tel: (0161) 247 5326
E-mail: stsrvccheshire@mmu.ac.uk

Lifeline Manchester (Drugs)
www.lifeline.org.uk

Manchester Dental Hospital
Tel: (0161) 275 6666

Manchester Royal Infirmary (STI clinic)
Tel: (0161) 276 5212 (Women) (0161) 276 5200 (Men)

The Meningitis Trust Helpline
Tel: 0800 028 1828

National AIDS & HIV Helpline
Tel: 0800 567 123
National Drugs Helpline
Tel: 0800 77 66 00
Website: www.talktofrank.com

NHS Direct
Tel: 0845 46 47 (calls charged at local rate)

NHS Smoking Helpline
Tel: 0800 022 4322

Manchester Pregnancy Advisory Service
Tel: (0161) 228 1887

British Pregnancy Advisory Service
Tel: (08457) 304030
Web: www.bpas.org

Rape Crisis Line
Tel: (0161) 273 4500

Sexual Health Line
Tel: 0800 567 123

St. Augustine's Surgery, Lower Chatham Street, Manchester
Tel: (0161) 247 3522.

Travel Clinic
Tel: (0161) 224 4736

Contact the Advice Centre for more information or help:

Manchester

3rd Floor, Students' Union, 99 Oxford Road, Manchester, M1 7EL Tel: 0161 247 6533,
Fax 0161 247 6314
E-mail: s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk
www.mmunion.co.uk/advice

MMU Cheshire, Didsbury, Gaskell and Hollings

The Advice Centre runs advice sessions at Crewe, Gaskell, Hollings, and Didsbury. Phone
0161 247 6533 to book an appointment

Telephone advice available 10am - 12noon each week day.



A Manchester Metropolitan Students' Union Publication 2008 V 3.3

Manchester Metropolitan Students' Union, 99 Oxford Road, Manchester, M1 7EL
Telephone: Manchester 0161 247 6533
E-mail: s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk Web: www.mmunion.co.uk/advice

Large print versions of this leaflet are available

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Before taking any action you are advised to visit the Advice Centre, Students' Union, 99 Oxford Rd, Manchester.