

## Where can I get further help?

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If you notice any changes to your body, make an appointment to see your GP or take a look at the Trust's website to see what services we offer and contact details. If you cannot get online please contact our Customer Services team on 0800 587 2108 for more details

Website – [www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk)

Follow us on Twitter to get updates on what we're doing: [@allofusinmind](https://twitter.com/allofusinmind)

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## Booklets available in this series:

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- Anger – How do I manage it?
- Baby Blues – How can I best deal with them?
- Bereavement – How can I cope?
- Confidence – How can I get some?
- Healthy Living – What should I do?
- Healthy Sex – How can I be sure?
- Low Moods – How can I feel better?
- Pain – What can I do to help myself?
- Self Harm – How can I help myself?
- Shyness – How can I manage it?
- Sleep – How can I get some?
- Stress – How do I manage it?
- The end of life – How can I prepare for it?
- Worries – How can I best deal with them?

### Your feedback is welcome

We invite you to share any comments, compliments, concerns or complaints you have about the Trust. Please speak to a member of staff or contact our customers services team on 0800 587 2108, who can also provide help in understanding this information, including in other formats.



To ensure you live a long and healthy life you need to take good care of yourself and check your body regularly. You know your body the best and will probably be the first to notice anything different. Checking yourself regularly will help to notice any health problems as soon as possible.

This booklet will explain how to check yourself and what to look out for. If you have any concerns please visit your GP. We want you to find this book uplifting and helpful; however it is not intended to be a direct substitute for a consultation with a healthcare professional.

## Skin colour and moles

Try to check your skin every few months and look out for any changes in colour or texture (especially in any moles you may have.) Use mirrors to help you check places you don't ordinarily see such as your; neck, back, buttocks and backs of your thighs. Moles can change in number and appearance; it is perfectly normal for some to fade away over time.

When looking at moles, make sure you look out for:

- Different colours – one or two colours are normal but having lots of different colours can be a sign that there's something wrong.
- An uneven or messy edge – moles are usually a circle or oval with a smooth border.
- Itchiness, crustiness or moles that bleed.
- A major growth in size.

If you have a lot of moles it is important to take extra care in the sun. This means not staying out in the sun too long and making sure you wear sun cream whenever you are. This will reduce the risks of developing any problems in the future.

“ I want to check myself  
but I don't know how ”

## Check your toilet

Although it is not a conversation we have over the dinner table we all know our normal toilet routine and know what is 'normal' for us. It is important to regularly check both your poo and urine and try to take note of any changes.

### Things to look out for:

- Blood in your poo or urine; even if it comes and goes.
- Any unusual change in your toilet habits such as having diarrhoea or constipation for a long time.
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Using the toilet more than usual.

Most of the time the reasons for these changes are very simple and easy to treat but it is important to get checked out by your GP as soon as possible.

“ Is this normal? ”

## Check your breasts

You don't need to examine your breasts every day but it is important to know how your breasts normally look and feel at different times of the month and how they change with your periods.

It is easiest to check your breasts in the shower or bath. Run a soapy hand over each breast and up under your arm.

## You are checking your breasts for:

- Change in size, outline or shape of your breast. Move your arm or lift your breast to get a good look.
- Change in the look or feel of your skin, such as puckering or dimpling.
- Discomfort or pain – particularly if it's a new pain and doesn't go away.
- A new lump, thickening or bumpy area in one breast or an armpit that is different from the same area on the other side.
- Bleeding from your nipple or discharge that's not milky.
- A moist, red area on your nipple that doesn't heal easily.
- Any change in nipple position, such as your nipple being pulled in or pointing differently.
- Rashes.

You should always attend breast screening if you are over 50. If you have a family history of breast cancer you should be screened sooner. If you are concerned about any of the above, please consult your GP.

Men should also check their breasts regularly. Even though it is far less likely for you to suffer from breast cancer it cannot be ruled out. It is important that you carry out these checks and visit your GP if you have any worries.

“*My mole has changed in shape, what should I do?*”

## Know your body

Checking your genitals may not be something you do regularly but it is very important. Getting to know how this area looks and feels will help you to know when something isn't right.

When you are checking yourself, you should look for anything that is out of the ordinary.

## Women

### Things to look for (it may be helpful to use a mirror):

- Changes in your discharge. You know what is normal for you throughout your cycle.
- Pain or discomfort when you touch the outside or inside areas.
- Lumps or bumps that weren't there before.

## Men

### Things to look for:

- Lumps on or in the testicles; these can either be sore or be painless.
- Swelling or shrinking of the penis or testicles.
- Sores or weeping on the penis or testicles.

If you notice any of these changes it is important not to panic. It doesn't necessarily mean the worst and could be an injury, infection, inflammation, or non-cancerous (benign) swelling. You should make an appointment as soon as possible to go and see your GP. Remember, you can ask for a male or female doctor to make you feel more comfortable. If you still feel anxious you might find it helps to have a close friend or family member with you.

## Get screened

Regular screening is important to see whether you are at a higher risk of developing a condition. It could also help to catch serious conditions sooner.

Screenings depend on your age, health, family history and lifestyle choices. You can find an online screening test on the NHS Choices website at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and you can ask your GP for more information.

## Keep healthy

It's important to eat a healthy, balanced diet and take part in regular exercise.

Exercise is a great way to improve your overall wellbeing – it doesn't have to be hard; try stretching, walking or swimming to get your body moving.

For more information on healthy living, take a look at the 'Healthy living – What should I do?' booklet. This can be found by visiting [www.swyt.co/selfhelpguides](http://www.swyt.co/selfhelpguides)

## Get some sleep

Make sure you get enough sleep! Not getting enough sleep can have a massive impact on the way we feel. On the other hand, too much sleep can leave us feeling heavy and tired. For more information on this, why not read our booklet; "Sleep – How do I get some?" available at [www.swyt.co/selfhelpguides](http://www.swyt.co/selfhelpguides)

## Let's start a conversation

If you notice any changes to your body then it is vital you make an appointment to see your GP for a chat sooner rather than later. Remember most of the time the changes will be normal and easy to treat and if it does turn out to be more serious the sooner you get treatment the better.

“ *What do I look out for?* ”

## Notes

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