



SUMMER 2023

A parents and carers guide for:

**Happy healthy holidays
for teenagers**

Summer holidays are a time for rest and switching off from the day-to-day routine of school. Staying healthy through the summer is important. Here are a few suggestions to make this summer a good one.

Please visit your local library if you need access to the internet to visit the links in this guide.

BEING ACTIVE

Being physically active releases happy hormones. Activity early in the day means better sleep and a self-confidence boost. It also helps manage stress and can be a positive coping strategy during difficult times.

Children and young people need to do two types of physical activity:

- Aerobic exercise (anything that makes the heart pump harder and breath faster)
- Exercises to strengthen their muscles and bones

Aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity every day and vary it throughout the week.

Holidays are a time to reduce the time spent sitting, lying down and screen time. So, break up long periods of not moving with some activity.

Find activities in your area:

[Activity finder on Active Herefordshire & Worcestershire](#)

[Worcestershire Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme](#)



FOOD AND NUTRITION

A healthy balanced diet with all the nutrients and vitamins needed for growing is important.

Try to reduce or avoid energy drinks and caffeine which can interfere with sleep.

[Better Health food facts](#)

[Eating well for 12-18 year olds. A practical guide](#)

SLEEP

As their brains develop, teenagers' sleep patterns can shift to later nights and later mornings.

Teenagers need between 8 to 10 hours of sleep, but many get much less and experience sleep deprivation. Maintaining a regular sleep pattern is important, especially as the new school term approaches.

Screen time and bright lights can impact on the quality of sleep. Avoid phone use at bedtime and install a night-time filter.

[Teen Sleep Hub](#)

[Sleep problems. A guide for young people](#)

Avoid napping during the day, especially after 6pm.



SUN SAFETY

Use sunscreen even on cloudy days, make use of natural shade, wear a sun hat and stay hydrated to avoid some of the effects of the sun and heat. Remember that sunburn is skin damage.

[Find out more about sun safety on the NHS website](#)

WATER SAFETY

Being by water is a great place to spend time with friends, but it's important to know how to stay safe.



[Water safety for teenagers and young people from the Canal and River Trust](#)

[Safety tips from the RNLI](#)

SOCIALISING

Staying connected with friends (beyond social media) over the summer is important for mental wellbeing.

There are lots of youth groups and activities across the county.

Ensure your teenager is safe online and have oversight of their social media accounts.

[Find groups and activities for young people in the directory on Worcestershire County Council's website](#)

[Online safety guides by NSPCC](#)

UNDERSTANDING RISK TAKING

During teenage years, people are more prone to risk taking behaviours, even more so when with their friends.

Find out more about how the brain develops during teenage years through free online courses for Worcestershire parents and carers.

Ourplace:
Understanding your child
Password: PARENTSROCK

MENTAL HEALTH

Behaviours To Watch Out For

If you start to notice changes in your teenager's behaviour, seek help or guidance from your school nursing service, even in the holidays.

Behaviour changes you may notice include:

- ongoing difficulty sleeping
- withdrawing from social situations
- not wanting to do things they usually like
- self-harm or neglecting themselves (e.g. not eating, personal hygiene)

Find out more about
young people's emotional
and mental health on
Worcestershire County
Council's website



TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Getting teenagers to talk openly about what's bothering them can be hard. Having calm and non-judgmental conversations can keep the door open to conversations about how they are feeling and some of the bigger issues.

[Click here to find out more on the talking to your teenager page of the NHS website](#)

CONCERNED? WHERE TO GET HELP

If your child's life is at risk or they have taken an overdose call 999 or go to A&E immediately.

Being a parent can be difficult at times, but you are not alone. If you are concerned, there is lots of help out there:

- [Worcestershire School Health Nurse Service](#) or call **01905 520032**, even in the school holidays
- Young people can use the confidential texting service ChatHealth by texting **07507 331750** (ChatHealth is available 9am to 5pm, Mon-Fri)
- Free confidential 24/7 text support for young people and you. Text "**WOO**" to **85258**
- [Young Minds](#) has support for parents, carers and young people
- Free, safe and anonymous support for your child on (online 12pm to 10pm weekdays and 6pm to 10pm weekends)
- [PAPYRUS](#), prevention of young suicide, call **0800 068 4141** or text **07860 039967**
- Urgent help from [Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust](#) or call **0808 196 9127**
- [Childline website](#) or call **0800 1111** anytime
- Contact your GP
- Contact [Samaritans](#) 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call **116 123** for free or email Jo@samaritans.org