

# healthwatch

## September 2024 St Helens

Hello Healthwatch members. In our newsletter this month you will find information on childhood immunisations, World Mental Health Day which is on 10th October 2024. Information on Stoptober to help you to stop smoking. Healthy Start letter with lots of information. Also information on vulva cancer.

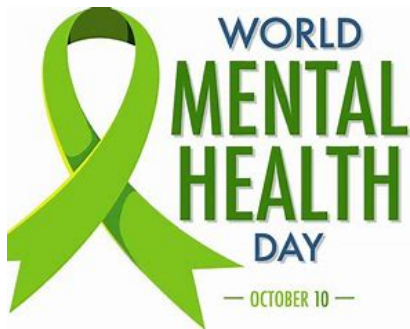
## Are your children up to date with their immunisations



One of the best ways to protect your child against diseases like measles, rubella, tetanus and meningitis is through immunisations.

As well as protecting your own child, you're also protecting others by preventing the spread of disease.

Vaccinations are offered free of charge in the UK - just book your appointments with your GP.



On World Mental Health Day, let's all come together to talk about mental health and show everyone that mental health matters. Talking about our mental health can help us cope better with life's ups and downs. So, on World Mental Health Day and beyond it, why not check in with your friends, family, peers, or colleagues? World Mental Health Day is celebrated every year on 10 October. This year's theme set by the World Federation of Mental Health is, "it's time to prioritise mental health in the workplace". The theme highlights the importance of addressing mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, for the benefit of people, organisations, and communities.

Many people spend a lot of their time working, whether that's in the community, in an office, a workshop, at home, or many other workplaces. That's why it's so important that our workplace supports our mental health, helping us get the mental health benefits of work while reducing the negative impact. But what is a mentally healthy workplace? There are many things that contribute to a mentally healthy workplace, from providing staff training on mental health to tackling discrimination and bullying. Importantly, a mentally healthy workplace supports open conversations about mental health. While talking about mental health in the workplace has become more common, many people still face stigma when it comes to severe mental health problems. This means there's more work to be done to tackle mental health stigma in the workplace. There are things we can all do to help create a mentally healthy workplace that supports open conversations. We can all learn how to confidently talk about mental health with our colleagues.

# Stoptober 2024



Stoptober is back this October to encourage and support smokers to quit for good. We've created a suite of assets including a partner toolkit, static and animated social assets, posters, digital screens and email signatures to help you support the campaign locally. All assets feature the key message 'Stop smoking for Stoptober and you're 5 times more likely to quit for good'.

## What happens when you quit?

The sooner you quit, the sooner you'll notice changes to your body and health. Look at what happens when you quit for good.

### After 20 minutes

Check your pulse rate, it will already be starting to return to normal.

### After 8 hours

Your oxygen levels are recovering, and the harmful carbon monoxide level in your blood will have reduced by half.

### After 48 hours

All carbon monoxide is flushed out. Your lungs are clearing out mucus and your senses of taste and smell are improving.

### After 72 hours

If you notice that breathing feels easier, it's because your bronchial tubes have started to relax. Also your energy will be increasing.

### After 2 to 12 weeks

Blood will be pumping through to your heart and muscles much better because your circulation will have improved.

### After 3 to 9 months

Any coughs, wheezing or breathing problems will be improving as your lung function increases by up to 10%.

### After 1 year

Great news! Your risk of heart attack will have halved compared with a smoker's.

### After 10 years

More great news! Your risk of death from lung cancer will have halved compared with a smoker's.



Please ask for the Navigators/Healthy Start  
Telephone: 07761045427/ 01744 673420  
Email: [childrenscentres@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:childrenscentres@sthelens.gov.uk)

Dear Resident,

01.08.2024

Important:

Claim your £1,200 Healthy Start Benefits today!  
Residents of St. Helens have £900,000 in unclaimed benefits

“Healthy Start can help you buy food and milk for your children if they are under 4 years old or for yourself if you are over 10 weeks pregnant.”

We think you maybe eligible

You can apply online or by phone :



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



Email: [healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk](mailto:healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk) or  
[childrenscentres@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:childrenscentres@sthelens.gov.uk)  
07761045427/ 01744 673420/ 0300 330 7010



Phone:



Please visit <https://shorturl.at/i1Gh3> or scan the QR code below to take the survey:

Complete the survey to enter the draw to win a £100 Love2shop voucher!

Yours Sincerely,  
Family Hubs, St. Helens Borough Council.





# Vulval Cancer

Your paragrVulval cancer is rare and affects around 1,400 people a year in the UK. Around 80% of people diagnosed are over 60; however we are increasingly seeing more people being diagnosed at a younger age. If you were born with a vulva you are at risk of vulval cancer. This is relevant to you if you've not undergone genital surgery, or if you've had a phalloplasty or a metoidioplasty (both sometimes referred to as bottom surgery), as part or all of the vulva is kept and remodelled.

The vulva describes the external genitals, including the soft tissue (labia minora and labia majora), the clitoris, and the Bartholin's glands.

#### Symptoms:

- A lasting itch on the external genitalia
- Pain or soreness on the external genitalia
- Thickened, raised, red, white or dark patches on the skin of the external genitalia
- An open sore or growth visible on the genital skin
- A mole on the external genitalia that changes shape or colour
- A lump or swelling on the external genitalia

All these symptoms can be caused by other more common conditions, such as infection, but if you have any of these, you should see your GP. It is unlikely that your symptoms are caused by a serious problem but it is important to be checked out... remember non-cancerous conditions can be uncomfortable and so much better when treated!

#### Risk Factors:

Skin conditions that cause inflammation may sometimes develop into an early cancer. The two most common of these being vulval intraepithelial neoplasia (VIN) and Lichen Sclerosus. Some of these cell changes will go away without the need for any treatment; however, finding these abnormal cells early can help to prevent cancer.

Smoking - Smoking increases your risk of developing VIN and vulval cancer. This may be because smoking makes the immune system less effective, and less able to clear the HPV virus from your body and more vulnerable to the effects of the virus.

Vulval intraepithelial neoplasia (VIN) - VIN is potentially a pre-cancerous condition. This means there are changes to certain cells that aren't cancerous, but could become a cancer at a later date if left untreated. This is a gradual process that usually takes well over 10 years.

There are two types of VIN:

Usual or undifferentiated VIN – this typically affects people under 50 and is thought to be caused by an HPV infection

Differentiated VIN (dVIN) – this is a rarer type, usually affecting people over 60, associated with skin conditions that affect the area, and is more likely to be associated with cancer.

Human papilloma virus (HPV)

HPV is present in at least 40% of cases, which suggests it may increase your risk of developing the condition. HPV is known to cause changes in the cells, which is known as VIN.

## LIVING WELL BUS TIMETABLE.

Focus is on: NHS health check BMI, Glucose check, Cholesterol check and blood Pressure Checks. Vaccines: Shingles and MMR

### Date

05/10/24 Saturday	-	Sutton Leisure Centre, Elton Head Road
11/10/24 Friday	-	Tesco, Earlestown, Newton-le-Willows
21/10/24 Tuesday	-	St Helens Town Centre
23/10/24 Wednesday	-	Newton-le-Willows Health & Fitness Centre, Ashton Road, Newton-le-Willows

As from 4th October Covid Booster and flu vaccine commence

Criteria for Covid vaccine Autumn Booster :

Adults 65 and over;

Residents in a care home for older adults;

Individuals 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group;

Frontline NHS and social care workers, and those working in care homes for older people



Have you accessed health and social care services in St Helens lately? Have your say about your experience by completing our survey. Patient and service user stories help us to find out what local people think of the services they use - what's going well and what's not so good.

Telephone: 0300 111 0007  
Email: [info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk)

If you'd like to receive this newsletter by email, please contact us on the details above.