

Your Health

Everyone has mental health...

Mental health is the way we think and feel and our ability to deal with life's ups and downs.

However, sometimes mental health can be a problem, making you feel stressed, anxious, depressed or that everything is just too much.

Mental health problems are all too common in the workplace and are the leading cause of sickness absence.

Work is a pretty major part of our lives: it's where we spend a lot of our time, where we get our money and often where we make friends. Having a fulfilling job can be good for your mental health and wellbeing.

What are the signs of poor mental health?

Speak to your doctor if you feel your mental health is:

- Stopping you from getting on with your life
- Having an impact on the people you live with or work with
- Affecting your mood for more than a couple of weeks
- Causing you to feel suicidal.



How can work help?

Many people with mental health problems try to hide them because of the discrimination that still exists. However, awareness in society is increasing and managers are better prepared to understand more about mental health and how to support workers. You can talk to your OH team who will offer advice and refer you as necessary for further support.

Managers now have many tools to help them assess how work may affect mental health and can put in place often minor adjustments, to support an employee through a period of mental illness or a longer-term diagnosed mental ill-health condition.

Five steps to mental wellbeing

- Connect with people around you - your family, workmates and friends and spend time with them
- Be active - go for a walk, mow the grass, take a bike ride. Find an activity you enjoy
- Keep learning: new skills can give you confidence. Take an evening class or join a group
- Give to others - there's lots you can do, from volunteering to helping someone with a heavy suitcase
- Be mindful. Try to be aware of NOW, the present moment, rather than worrying about the past or future.



RESPIRATORY AWARENESS

What happens to your body when you stop smoking?

After 20 minutes: Pulse rate returns to normal.

After 8 hours: Nicotine & carbon monoxide levels in blood reduce by more than half & oxygen levels return to normal.

After 48 hours: Carbon monoxide will be eliminated from the body. Lungs start to clear out mucus & other smoking debris.

After 48 hours: There is no nicotine in the body. Ability to taste and smell is improved.

After 72 hours: Breathing becomes easier. Bronchial tubes begin to relax and energy levels increase.

And over the next few years, your circulation improves, your risk of heart disease and lung cancer drop.

Asthma: the low-down

- It's a long-term condition that affects the tubes carrying air in and out of your lungs.
- Common symptoms include wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath and tightness in the chest.
- Around 5.4m people are currently receiving treatment for asthma. That's one in every 12 adults and one in every 11 children.
- There are lots of safe and effective treatments available to manage the symptoms. You just need to work with your GP or asthma nurse to find the ones that work well for you.



Silicosis - a work-related lung condition

- Silicosis is a long-term lung disease caused by inhaling large amounts of crystalline silica dust, usually over many years.
- Working with silica can see dust penetrate the lungs, and over a long period cause swelling, hardening and scarring of the lungs.
- People working in occupations with exposure to certain types of stone, rock, sand and clay may be affected.
- If this is the case, your manager will ask your OH team to undertake health surveillance and provide guidance.

