



THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH LITERACY

The final article in our healthy mind, body and soul series focuses upon healthy literacy which is how society uses knowledge and understanding to manage and maintain health and wellbeing.

Poor health literacy impacts everyone at one time or another. When we cannot understand something, things can become confusing and somewhat frightening. To help, below are some of the key principles we have explored as ways of keeping healthy and staying safe:

- 1** Healthy Eating - A healthy and varied diet is crucial for maintaining our health, especially at a time when our immune system may be required to fight back. Following a healthy pattern of eating is linked with better stress management, improved sleep quality, increased concentration and better mental wellbeing in general. [The NHS Eatwell Guide](#) gives a great indication of how we can maintain balance in our diet.
- 2** Physical activity - Despite being stuck inside as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, there is no reason we should let it stop us keeping fit. As we all know, staying active is vital for our physical and mental health and general well-being. [PE With Joe](#) has been a fantastic resource which, no matter what your circumstances, can help get active and keep fit.
- 3** Hygiene – Good hygiene has never been so important as we look to protect ourselves and others from the spread of COVID-19. It is particularly crucial that we are frequently and thoroughly washing our hands and avoid touching our eyes, nose and mouth where possible.
- 4** Learning - Learning isn't just about remembering facts to pass exams. It is instead a lifelong process that doesn't stop whether you're an adult or a child. By keeping our minds active, acquiring new information and looking for new ways to learn, we increase our ability to develop ourselves.
- 5** Risk avoidance – We set out 10 ways, based upon the government guidance at the time, to minimise the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, protect ourselves, our families and our communities and ensure that at the soonest and safest opportunity we can once again embrace our family and friends after many months apart.
- 6** Acts of kindness - During this uncertain and difficult period, people have been coming together and are supporting one another, with a spike in spontaneous acts of generosity and empathy, as we have demonstrated we can all choose to be kind. Even the smallest acts of kindness can help others, whilst it has also been proven to be good for our own mental health.

Further information on each of the above headings can be found [here](#).

Ultimately, when we are health literate, we are empowered to make more informed health choices and manage our health more effectively.