

# SUPPORT YOUR



## Teen Health Support

**Ms F Kamei**

**Assistant Head: Safeguarding**

(Referrals to the  
school nurse can be  
made via Ms Kamei)

[fkamei@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:fkamei@thomastallis.org.uk)

### **Teen health is extremely important.**

Adolescence is an important period that lays the foundation for good adult health and relationships. Academic success and achievement are linked to good health and wellbeing. It is therefore extremely important to ensure that young people understand the positive impact a healthy lifestyle can have.

#### Men ACWY Vaccine

Young teenagers, sixth formers and students going to university for the first time are advised to have a vaccination to prevent meningitis W disease.

The men ACWY vaccine is given by a single injection into the upper arm and protects against four different causes of meningitis and septicemia – meningococcal (Men) A, C, W and Y diseases.

There are two Men ACWY vaccines called Nimenrix and Menveo. They are very similar, and both work equally well.

### **Sleep**

Talk to your teenager and emphasize the importance of sleep. Sleep has proven advantages for memory and performance. Around 9 hours sleep each night is recommended.

Cut out the caffeine to beat insomnia. Suggest that your teenagers drink less caffeine (contained in drinks such as cola, tea, coffee and energy drinks). Too much caffeine stops them from falling asleep and prevents a deep sleep. Don't binge before bedtime. Let teenagers know that eating too much or too little close to bedtime may prevent sleep, due to an overfull or empty stomach. This can be a cause of discomfort throughout the night.

Bedtime routines are a great sleep aid. Encourage your teenager to have a bedtime routine. Doing the same things in the same order an hour or two before bedtime each night can help them drift off to sleep.

Ensure they have a good sleeping environment – ideally a room that is dark, cool quiet, safe and comfortable. Limit screens in the bedroom. If possible do not have a mobile, tablet, TV or computer screen in the bedroom as the light from the screens interfere with sleep.

## Exercise

Regular exercise helps young people sleep soundly, as well as improving their general health.

Teenagers should be aiming for at least 60 minutes each day.

A young person should take part in three different types of physical activity each week:

**Aerobic** exercise: young people can dance, swim, play football or rugby, run, cycle and take part in martial arts.

**Bone-Strengthening:** young people can weight train, play badminton, hockey, netball and gymnastics.

**Muscle-Strengthening:** young people can take part in resistance exercises with bands, handheld weights or machines, rock climbing, playing basketball and tennis.

## Eating

A teenager's body goes through many physical changes - changes that need to be supported by a healthy balanced diet. By eating a varied diet teenagers should be able to get all the nutrients they need from food and drink, allowing their body to grow and develop naturally. Some important nutrients to be aware of are:

**Iron** (mineral) for maintaining healthy red blood cells. A good source of iron can be found in red and white meats, beans, green leafy vegetables and pasta.

**Vitamin D** for preventing hormone deficiencies and muscle weakness. Most people receive sufficient exposure to the sun, whilst some groups are at an increased risk of low levels, requiring supplements, for example sitting on the computer for long periods of time. Vitamin D can be found in eggs, oily fish and fortified breakfast cereals.

**Calcium** for strong teeth, bones and heart muscle. Calcium can be found in cheese, soya, beans, tofu, yoghurt and milk.

### Breakfast every morning.

It kick starts the brain activity and is important preparation for the school day. Having breakfast will help get some of the vitamins and minerals needed for good health.

## Fruit and Veg 5 a day

Fruit and vegetables are good sources of many of the vitamins and minerals your teenagers body needs.

### Healthier snacks

Cut down on food and drink that is high in fat, sugar and salt, such as sweets, chocolate, cakes sugary fizzy drinks and crisps.

### Stay hydrated

Encourage your teenager to drink six to eight glasses of fluids a day – water and lower fat milk are all healthy choices.

### Feeling tired

If your teenager is often feeling run down, they may be low in iron. Teenage girls are especially at risk because they lose iron during their period.

### Eating disorders

Can affect both male and females at any age and are characterized by abnormal change towards food and eating habits. If you are concerned your young person has an eating problem, please speak to your GP or make a referral to the school nurse.