



YOUR WINTER WELLNESS EDIT

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter.

With the end of the year in sight and routines often feeling stretched, this is a natural time to pause and reflect on how we're really doing, especially when it comes to mental wellbeing. In this issue, we're focusing on the importance of mental health support and sharing accessible ways to look after yourself and others during the winter months.

Also featured is an insightful article from Jen McDiarmid, Registered Nutritionist on the vital role nutrition plays not just in achieving weight loss, but in maintaining it long-term. Her piece offers a fresh perspective that might just shift the way you think about food and health.

As always, we've included a round-up of what we've been up to recently—events, projects, and highlights that continue to inspire and energise our community.

Grab a warm drink, settle in, and enjoy the read!

If you have a printed copy of our newsletter but would like to download a free digital version with active hyperlinks, visit myhealthyway.co.uk

The My Healthy Way Team



NUTRITION AND WEIGHT LOSS

By Registered Nutritionist, Jen McDiarmid

I've spoken to so many people recently who are on very different journeys with their weight loss - some are using GLP-1 jabs (like Wegovy or Ozempic), while others are tackling it without. Whichever path you're on, nutrition is the foundation that makes the difference long-term.

GLP-1 medications can be game-changing. They reduce appetite, help manage cravings, and make it easier to create a calorie deficit. But here's the catch: these jabs don't teach your body how to thrive. They don't rebuild muscle, support your metabolism, or teach you what balance looks like when you're not on the medication. That's where nutrition comes in. And if you're going at it without medication? Nutrition becomes your number one tool. It's the thing that keeps your energy steady, your blood sugar balanced, and your brain sharp enough to actually feel like yourself while you're doing the work.

The role of nutrition in maintaining weight loss:

1. Protecting Muscle Mass – When people lose weight quickly (especially with jabs), they risk losing muscle alongside fat. Muscle is your metabolic engine.

Prioritising protein-rich foods and strength-supporting nutrients means you're protecting the very thing that keeps your metabolism switched on.

2. Balancing Energy – Without good nutrition, weight loss can feel like one long crash-diet. But with balanced meals (protein, fibre, healthy fats), your body learns stability. No more energy roller coasters.

3. Sustaining Results – Whether or not you stay on medication, what you eat determines what happens next. Think of the jab as a tool but nutrition is the lifestyle. This is what keeps weight off regardless of whether you have decided to take the jab or embark on weight loss without.

4. Healing Your Relationship With Food – Nutrition isn't just macros. It's about learning to enjoy food, not fear it. That's the difference between short-term dieting and a long-term shift that actually sticks.

Whichever route you have chosen to take, this is not only about achieving your goal, but getting to a place where you enjoy the food you are eating, you are feeling nourished and most importantly you are fuelling your body to thrive and be as healthy as you can.

For details of Jen's courses and to book a place, visit:

myhealthyway.co.uk/nutrition-courses



WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

We're a Finalist for 8 UKActive Awards!

We are incredibly proud and pleased to announce that Parkwood Leisure and our partners- 1Life, Legacy Leisure and Lex Leisure - have been selected as finalists in multiple categories at the prestigious ukactive Awards!

- 4x Regional Awards
- EDI Award
- Healthy Communities Award
- Physical Activity Hero
- Design, Build & Innovation

The ukactive Awards are the most anticipated annual event in the UK's physical activity sector, celebrating excellence and innovation across the country. They serve as a benchmark for quality and dedication, recognising the teams and individuals who are driving positive change.

This recognition is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our teams, we are so pleased to showcase our dedication and celebrate the positive impact we have on our communities.

MSK Hubs awarded flagship status

Five of our Musculoskeletal (MSK) Hubs have been awarded Flagship status

A huge congratulations to:

- Penarth Leisure Centre
- Tarka Leisure Centre
- Hengrove Leisure Centre
- Lord Butler Leisure Centre
- Penzance Leisure Centre

This is a fantastic achievement and a true testament to the exceptional programme our teams are delivering for people in local communities who are living in pain with various musculoskeletal and long-term health conditions



Find out what's been happening across our contracts

Visit our webpage to find out more about the great work going on across some of our local communities

www.myhealthyway.co.uk/get-active/



NUTRITION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Every year, World Mental Health Day reminds us that our wellbeing is not just about what's happening in our minds, it's also about what's happening in our bodies, our daily lives, and the choices we make to care for ourselves. When we talk about mental health, it's easy to focus only on thoughts, stress, or emotions. But the truth is: the food we eat plays a quiet, powerful role in shaping how we feel. Nutrition isn't just about physical health; it's the foundation of emotional resilience too. Think about it this way: your brain is always working, always processing. It uses about 20% of the body's total energy every single day. That means the fuel we give it matters. We need to provide the brain with the energy it needs, but also help the other systems of the body function and thrive to provide the brain with the happy hormones it needs.

How Nutrition Supports Mental Health:

- **Blood sugar balance:** Unstable energy from skipping meals or eating highly processed foods can lead to mood swings, anxiety, and fatigue. Stable blood sugar means more emotional stability.
- **Gut-brain connection:** Around 90% of serotonin, our feel-good neurotransmitter is made in the gut. A diverse, fibre-rich diet supports the gut microbiome, which in turn supports mood.
- **Nutrients for the nervous system:** Omega-3 fatty acids, B vitamins, magnesium, zinc, and iron all play crucial roles in regulating mood, calming stress, and supporting focus.
- **Inflammation and stress:** A diet high in colourful plants, whole foods, and healthy fats helps reduce inflammation, which has been linked to depression and anxiety.

Putting It into Practice: Small Steps That Make a Big Difference

Nutrition can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some gentle, practical ways to start supporting your mental health through food:

Balance Your Plate

Try to include a source of protein, healthy fat, and fibre-rich carbs in each meal. Example: Swap a plain slice of toast for eggs on whole grain toast with avocado. That balance slows digestion, keeps blood sugar stable, and helps you avoid the mid-morning crash.



[World Mental Health Day](#) is celebrated every year on 10 October.

“
Just start the
conversation.
You never really
know what a
difference you
could make.”

SAMARITANS

A registered charity

HM Government

“I just
bottled it
all up”

Paul

Helped by NHS Talking Therapies

NHS

NHS Talking Therapies can help

Your GP can refer you or refer yourself at
nhs.uk/talk

Mental
health
matters

Help us
help you

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Suicide prevention day

World Suicide Prevention Day took place on 10th September and we were proud to do our bit to share information from our sites and promote the important messages from the Samaritans.

Small interruptions you make and actions you take could help someone who is suicidal. There's no quick fix but in that moment, you could save their life.

Start a conversation - It can be as simple as saying 'hello' or asking a question. Try not to worry about saying the wrong thing.

Ask how they're feeling - Don't be afraid to ask if they're having suicidal thoughts. It gives them permission to tell you how they really feel.

Be there for them in the moment - If you're worried about someone, stay with them and let them know you're there for them. If you think it's an emergency or they've tried to harm themselves, call 999 in the UK or 112 in Ireland.

Listen without judgement - Give them a safe space to express how they feel. Try not to jump in with advice or opinions.

Visit: samaritans.org/WSPD

NHS Talking Therapies

Talking therapies, or psychological therapies, are effective and confidential treatments delivered by fully trained and accredited NHS practitioners. They can help if you're struggling with things like feelings of depression, excessive worry, social anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

You can access talking therapies for free on the NHS and you do not need to have a diagnosed mental health problem to refer yourself.

Getting support as soon as you start having difficulties can help to reduce their impact.

You may be:

- feeling anxious
- feeling low and hopeless
- having panic attacks
- finding it hard to cope with work, life or relationships
- struggling with flashbacks and nightmares about things from your past
- feeling stressed

There are also simple steps you can take to look after your mental health.

The [Every Mind Matters website](https://www.everymindmatters.org/) offers expert advice to help improve your wellbeing, as well as practical tips on sleep, coping with money worries and self-care.

Access NHS Talking Therapies [here](#).

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