**Light Bites**

**Light Bite 1**

**Healthy Packed Lunches and Snacks**

A healthy nutritious lunch enables your child to be at their best and make the most out of their learning.  But providing healthy lunches doesn’t have to be time consuming or expensive.  For example, try switching expensive crisps for carrot sticks, using leftovers from dinner to make lunches for the next day or try making pasta salads. Try to cut back on high sugar or high fat foods such as chocolate, crisps, sweets which will only give a short burst of energy and will not sustain your child throughout the remainder of the school day.

For more information and handy tips please see the websites below -

[**https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes**](https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes)

[**https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/20-tips-to-eat-well-for-less/**](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/20-tips-to-eat-well-for-less/)

**Light Bite 2**

**Physical activity**

There is lots of evidence which shows exercise is an important factor to reducing the risk of a major illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes or stroke. Research also shows that regular physical activity can boost your child’s self-esteem, mood and sleep quality, ensuring they have the best start to life.

To maintain a basic level of health, children and young people aged 5 to 18 need to do:

* at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day – this should range from moderate activity, such as cycling and playground activities, to vigorous activity, such as running and tennis
* on 3 days a week, these activities should involve exercises for strong muscles and bones, such as swinging on playground equipment, hopping and skipping, and sports such as gymnastics or tennis

Children and young people should also reduce the time they spend sitting for extended periods of time, including watching TV, playing computer games and travelling by car when they could walk or cycle.

For more information and handy tips see the websites below –

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-and-young-people/>

<https://www.healthforkids.co.uk/grownups/healthy-bodies/how-help-children-become-active/>

**Light Bite 3**

Did you know that all children should have a dental check-up at least yearly?  Children should start going to see a dentist as soon as their milk teeth appear.  NHS dental care for children is free.

Also, all children should have a regular eye check at a high street opticians.  The routine eye test will check if your child needs glasses and is also an important check for overall eye health.  Optician’s appointments are free for children and some glasses are free or subsidised by the NHS.

You can search for a local NHS dentist at the link below -

<https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Dentist/LocationSearch/3>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/>

**Light Bite 4**

**Child Emotional Health and Wellbeing**

Did you know that there are some simple steps you can take to promote your child’s emotional health and wellbeing so that your child develops a healthy brain?

* **Cuddle** your child, and if you cannot, then find other ways to provide reassuring contact. Children need a minimum of 8 touches during a day to feel connected to a parent.
* **Relax** with your child and maybe practice some breathing exercises together.
* **Play** with your child and give them lots of opportunity to experience different types of play. Maybe go for a walk together.
* **Respond** to your child and give them your full attention. Put all phones and computers away.
* **Talk** to your child. Ask them about their school day and talk through any concerns they may have.

**Light Bite 5**

**Parental Emotional Health and Wellbeing**

If you are feeling worried, low in mood, suffering with stress, have reduced sleep or are not feeling emotionally well, then you are not alone. Did you know that poor emotional health and wellbeing affects 1 in 4 people – and they are only the people who report it. Hertfordshire’s Wellbeing Service provides free and confidential talking therapies and practical support for Hertfordshire’s residents who are over 16 years old. You can self-refer into their services via their online form or by calling Hertfordshire referral hub. Alternatively you can visit your GP who can complete this referral.

Telephone: 0300 777 0707

Self-referral form: <https://www.hpft.nhs.uk/services/community-services/wellbeing-service/referrals/self-referral/>

There is lots of self-help advice available. You can get more information on promoting your emotional health and wellbeing on the websites below –

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>

**Light Bite 6**

**Bed Wetting**

Bed wetting is very common and children usually grow out of this.  However, you may find these Do’s and Don’ts useful to help your child on their journey to dry nights.

DO

* Encourage your child to drink plenty of water during the day
* Ensure your child sits on the toilet before they go to bed
* Make sure your child has easy access to the bathroom at night, this may mean you need to leave a light on or have a nightlight and they may need assistance if they sleep on a bunk bed.

DON’T

* Do not allow your child to drink tea, coffee, fizzy drinks or dark coloured drinks like blackcurrant juice
* Do not ‘Lift’ your child or wake them to go to the toilet in the middle of the night
* Allow punish or reprimand your child for having wet nights.

The following websites have many more useful tips and info –

<https://www.eric.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Bedwetting/>