If you need **help with physical health care**, you can look at [NHS Direct](https://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) and can contact them, or your family doctor (GP) - see [NHS Choices](https://www.nhs.uk) if you don't have a GP.

Some physical symptoms may not be caused by physical illnesses and they are sometimes described as physically or medically **unexplained symptoms** (see below) although actually quite a lot is known about other causes for these symptoms. They can be the result of stress, depression or anxiety acting on the body and you may need treatment for these conditions.

If you have mental health problems or learning disability, it is also very important that you look after your **physical health** and get the help you need from services to keep healthy. This may mean:

- getting the right health checks (**screening**) when you need them - like blood pressure, blood tests for cholesterol and lipids (fats) breast, cervical and prostate screening.

- sometimes specific help is needed because of medication that you take, e.g. heart tests (ECG), blood sugar for diabetes, and help for any side effects.

- if you get new **lumps or bumps** or pain, you need to check it out - if you are not sure what to do, talk with a carer or mental health/learning disability staff or your family doctor

- advice and support for dealing with **smoking**, **alcohol** or **drugs** and **weight** problems and increasing **activity**

The British Heart Foundation have an excellent [booklet](https://www.bhf.org.uk) giving advice on this.

There is guidance for mental health and primary care (GP) on relevant physical checks from Rethink Mental Illness - ([PDF Document](https://www.rethink.org)) and recent resources (August 2014) added as part of the drive to **improve outcomes**.
Also see the Royal College of Psychiatrists site on physical health and mental health

Tiredness - 'the energy diet (NHS Choices)

See good practice on Stopping Smoking

Heart disease and mental health - British Heart Foundation

Mental ill health is the largest cause of disability in the UK
Psychological support for people living with cancer — London Strategic Clinical Networks (report)

London’s care pathway for diabetes: Commissioning recommendations for psychological support (report)

The Stolen Years report – smoking and mental health

Mental ill health and hospital use: what we’ve learned - infographic | QualityWatch


At A&E, they only deal with the really sick patients – cartoon

Barriers to treatment adherence in physiotherapy outpatient clinics: A systematic review

Physical health

NHS England. SMI Toolkit

How sedentary are people with psychosis? A systematic review and meta-analysis

Explaining functional disorders in the neurology clinic: a photo story
Medically Unexplained Symptoms site - Home

NHS England. Mental health pilot scheme doubles numbers getting key physical health checks

NICE Endorsed Lester UK adaptation2 – guide to physical health checks

National Early Warning Score (NEWS) | RCP London

Health professions calling for greater leadership and action to tackle early deaths of people living with severe mental illness from RCGP

Closing the Mortality Gap — Mental Illness and Medical Care — NEJM – powerful and moving advocacy for effective treatment

Health matters: getting every adult active every day - GOV.UK

'Medically-unexplained symptoms'

These might be better described as physical symptoms not caused by physical illness as they are readily explained by the effects of stress on the body (i.e. the physiology of anxiety). However there is now quite a lot of guidance available for people experiencing these symptoms:

- Patient UK leaflet on Health Anxiety & Stress
- Royal College of Psychiatrists leaflet on physical illness and mental health

There is also guidance written for health and social care staff:

- Medical unexplained symptoms - RCGP guidance (PDF document)
- Medically-unexplained symptoms - guideline (Improving Access to Psychological Services (IAPT))
- London Health Programmes (general information and for general practitioners).
- Non-Epileptic Seizures Treatment (NEST) group
- Non-epileptic seizures
- Non-epileptic attack disorder
- Functional/Dissociative Symptoms

Training:

The Psychological Perspectives in Primary Care (PPIPCare) (PDF document) programme developed by NHS South Central offers professional training and development opportunities in advanced primary care consultation skills and CBT techniques for GPs and other primary care health professionals (it is currently available in NHS SC).

Service Pathway (In-Patient & Outpatient) - General Hospital Liaison

CQUIN for physical health & psychosis

Resources

- NHS England: Thousands of people with serious mental illness (SMI) could now be saved from an early death thanks to an innovative scheme in Bradford helping to lead the parity of esteem agenda (article)
Quality Watch: People with mental ill health and hospital use (2015 report)

- London diabetes project (site)
- Improving Chronic illness care | The Chronic Care Model: (article)
- BJPsych | Breast cancer screening in women with mental illness: comparative meta-analysis of mammography uptake: (article)
- BMJ Open | Prescribing of antipsycotics in UK primary care: a cohort study: (article)
- The Mental Elf | Psychotherapy for medically unexplained physical symptoms