

## 8. Goals and targets

Set achievable goals or targets which you can maintain as part of your self-management plan. Your goal might be to walk more for example. If you have not been walking for a while, start slowly. Begin by walking for 10 minutes at a time. As you get more comfortable, you can gradually increase this. The recommendation for good health is 30 minutes of moderate activity 5 times a week.

## 9. Be as healthy as you can be

Everyone benefits from a healthy lifestyle.

- Eat a healthy diet
- Try to achieve a healthier weight
- Be as active as you can be
- Stop smoking
- Reduce or cut out alcohol

These are all good steps to take for your health.

## 10. Mind your mental health

The emotional effects of a long-term health condition can be difficult. Managing such a condition can increase the stress of everyday life. Caring for both your physical and mental health can help you cope better with your condition. It is important to talk about your feelings. Talk with people you respect and trust such as your family, friends or your healthcare team. Look for help if negative feelings interfere with your ability to enjoy life.



## Further information:

This leaflet has been produced by the Self-management Support Co-ordinators of Health and Wellbeing in the HSE.

More information and resources to help you can be found on [www.hse.ie/selfmanagementsupport](http://www.hse.ie/selfmanagementsupport)

For further information and for supports to help you self-manage, the following websites may be of interest:

[www.asthma.ie](http://www.asthma.ie)

[www.copd.ie](http://www.copd.ie)

[www.croi.ie](http://www.croi.ie)

[www.diabetes.ie](http://www.diabetes.ie)

[www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)

[www.getirelandactive.ie](http://www.getirelandactive.ie)

[www.getirelandwalking.ie](http://www.getirelandwalking.ie)

[www2.hse.ie/healthy-eating-active-living/](http://www2.hse.ie/healthy-eating-active-living/)

[www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)

[www.healthyireland.ie](http://www.healthyireland.ie)

[www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)

[www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

[www.safermeds.ie](http://www.safermeds.ie)

[www.askaboutalcohol.ie](http://www.askaboutalcohol.ie)

[www.quit.ie](http://www.quit.ie)

[www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie)



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Support**



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# Tips for Self-Managing your Health when living with a long-term health condition



[www.hse.ie/selfmanagementsupport](http://www.hse.ie/selfmanagementsupport)



## What is a long-term health condition?

A long-term health condition is one which can be treated and managed but usually not cured. Some examples are asthma, COPD, diabetes, heart conditions including heart failure and stroke. Many people have more than one long-term health condition. Having such a condition can result in many changes for people. These can be physical, emotional or social.

## What Is self-management?

Self-management is what a person does every day to manage their long-term health condition(s).

### This may include:

- Recognising and dealing with symptoms, taking medication and managing other treatments
- Making lifestyle changes
- Coping with the emotional consequences of the health condition.

Learning how to manage your condition may help you feel better, stay active and live well.

To do this well, a person needs to have the right information, education, support and services.

## Here are some tips to support you to manage your health

### 1. Knowledge is power

Learn about your condition, what it is, how to manage it and how it may impact your life.

Your healthcare team can help you understand your condition and how you can live well with it.

You may also get information from reliable organisations or websites. Some of these are listed at the end of this leaflet.



### 2. Team work

Team work between you and your healthcare team is important. They may be an expert on your condition but you are the expert on you. The treatment plan that works best for one person with your condition may not work best for you. Nobody knows more than you do about your body, your feelings, your actions and how your health affects you. Learn to recognise the signs or symptoms that tell you when you need to look for help.



### 3. Know where to look for support

Support can come from many sources: your healthcare team, family and friends. Some people find it helpful to join a support group and to talk with other people who have the same condition.

For some conditions there are specialist courses available for you to attend. These include Cardiac Rehabilitation, Pulmonary Rehabilitation and Diabetes Education. Talk with your healthcare team about these.

There may also be courses which can help you develop your skills in self-management. The Living Well programme is one such example. You can find more information at [www.hse.ie/livingwell](http://www.hse.ie/livingwell).

### 4. Be prepared

Attend all your GP and hospital appointments and bring a list of your questions to get the best out of your time. Take notes during the appointment so you can remember the information discussed. Bring someone with you for support if you wish.



### 5. Manage your medication

Learn about the medication prescribed for you, why you are taking it, when to take it and how to take it. Bring an up to date list of your medications to all appointments.

It is important that those involved in your care know what medications you are taking. Ask your GP or Pharmacist for a list of the medications you are taking. You can also get a copy of a 'My Medicines list' on [www.safermeds.ie](http://www.safermeds.ie).

### 6. Pace Yourself

Pacing is carrying out activities over time and not carrying them all out at once. It's better to do a smaller amount every day than tiring yourself by doing too much at one time. Everyone's ability and condition is different. Pay attention to your body and how you are feeling doing regular tasks.

### 7. Vaccinations

Preventing flu, pneumonia and other infections is an important step in self-management. People with long-term health conditions are more at risk if they catch infections such as flu or pneumonia. Ask your doctor or nurse about vaccines recommended for you.