DAY 12: Fibre, tai chi and free eye tests

Hi Take Fivers,

We hope today is a good one for you all, but if not, we understand that some days can be a struggle. If that's the case then be kind to yourself, try to tap into something motivating and see what might be possible.

Many of you will be retired or nearing retirement. Retirement is a huge shift in life and for some it can spell freedom and a new lease of life whilst for others it may bring challenges. It requires planning to ensure the extra time can be enjoyed as well as financial planning to ensure there's enough money to live the life we want. Research has shown that social connections are very important in retirement and that having control over the retirement process is important for positive adjustment to retired life. Whether you are retired or soon to retire it's worth reading this top tips article from the British Heart Foundation.

Let's get into it…

Summary:

- **Fibre** is the unsung hero of the healthy gut. Foods like wholegrains, nuts, seeds, beans, oats and fruit help keep the gut happy, just remember to drink more water as your fibre intake rises.
- If you are struggling with hydration or aren't sure if you are well hydrated, try the **Take Five hydration diary.** Tools like a diary can help build routine.
- **Tai Chi** offers a brilliant blend of movement, mindfulness and social connection, with research showing benefits for strength, balance, pain management and overall wellbeing. Some local classes are listed in the move section below.
- Volunteering brings huge rewards, from new friendships and purpose to better wellbeing and stronger community ties. Work at one of Hillingdon's heritage sites or check out other options on the Hillingdon Health and Care partners website H4All.
- Have your say and use your brain in the process: **Hillingdon Older People's Assembly** and the **Hillingdon Disabilities Assembly** both meet regularly at the Civic Centre.
- **Eye and hearing health** are essential for staying independent and safe. If you're over 60, get your free eye test booked if you haven't already. Head to Age UK's online advice pages to find out more.

For more information...

Eat

It's true, beans, beans are good for the heart…

Our food checklist so far: protein, calcium, vitamins D and B12 and flavonoids which means today we are on **fibre - the unsung hero of a healthy gut**. Fibre is great for us, despite it being the parts of fruit and vegetables that we cannot digest. Fibre passes through our digestive system and helps with digestive health, regular stools, helping control blood sugar and managing weight by helping you feel fuller for longer.

Interestingly, there are two types of fibre – soluble and insoluble. Soluble fibre dissolves in water and this helps to regulate blood sugar and can bind with cholesterol to stop it being absorbed. Meanwhile, insoluble fibre provides the bulk helping to avoid constipation. Good sources of insoluble fibre are wholegrains, bran, nuts, seeds, and vegetable skins. Soluble fibre is found in oats, fruits (apples, citrus), root vegetables, and beans. Just don't forget to drink a bit more fluids when having more fibre.

Drink

Do you ever forget to drink until you realise you have a headache or you're feeling lethargic? It may happen when you're busy or out of your normal routine.

The University of Glasgow's Dr Esther Papies reveals some interesting observations on the Hydration for Health podcast. Qualitative studies showed that those who drink water habitually, in other words they do it without thinking, find it easy to stay well hydrated.

If water drinking isn't habitual for you and you struggle to stay well hydrated everyday, don't worry, Age Scotland and The Open University worked together to develop a Take Five hydration diary to help you develop a water habit! Remember, dehydration increases our chances of urinary infections, can cause dizziness and increase risk of falls, affects our memories and energy levels and cause kidney damage - that's a lot of reasons to get drinking.

Move

How does hitting three of our action areas at once sound? Interesting right? If you haven't heard of it already, we'd like to introduce you to the world of **Tai Chi!**

Studies carried out across the globe suggest that practising the ancient Chinese exercise can improve health and wellbeing. With slow, gentle movements, Tai Chi is perfect for beginners and is even used within pain management services all over the UK to help those with chronic conditions.

This combination of movement and meditation works the body and mind, ticking off **move** and **think** in Take Five terms. Find a local class to **connect and engage** with others and you've scored the hattrick! Plus, in Hillingdon we are spoilt for choice – there's Tai Chi at Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Complex, Uxbridge Community Centre and Parkinson's UK runs classes specifically for people with Parkinson's and their carers also at the Uxbridge Centre.

If it's not easy to get out of the house right now, you can still enjoy all the benefits Tai Chi has to offer. Thanks to Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust, you can practise Tai Chi at home, standing or sitting with these easy-to-follow videos.

Connect and Engage

Did you know that volunteering is good for you? And over 65s are the most likely to volunteer contributing to their communities across the country every day. Volunteering has huge benefits to society but it can also be incredibly rewarding and beneficial for the volunteers themselves. It can open up new friendships, boost mood and give renewed purpose as well as having physical benefits of often getting you out of the house.

There are countless ways to volunteer locally, for instance, why not explore volunteering at one of Hillingdon's heritage sites or check out other options on the Hillingdon Health and Care partners website H4All.

Think

Civic engagement is the academic term used for individual or group activity that addresses public concerns or aims to improve the community - for instance communities campaigning for safer streets around schools or volunteers in a community garden. Research into civic engagement has found, guess what?! Yes, it benefits those engaged - **improved social networks and a greater sense of belonging and often an improved sense of health and wellbeing.**

In Hillingdon, there are organisations that help represent the views, concerns and triumphs of older people in the area and they would love to hear from you! The Hillingdon Older People's Assembly meets regularly at the Civic Centre and provides a stimulating discussion that invites contributions from everyone. There's also the Hillingdon Disabilities Assembly for people with disabilities and their carers. These organisations are key to ensuring our views are heard, represented and the first step in taking actions for change.

Tip of the day!

Before we wrap up for today, we want to highlight the importance of looking after your eyes. From fall prevention to being able to carry on driving, there are so many reasons to have your eyes tested and checked over regularly.

Did you know that if you're over 60 *or* suffer from diabetes, you're entitled to **free eye tests** every two years? Head to Age UK's online advice pages to find out more.

On a similar note, if you've noticed your **hearing** decline, speak to your GP or other healthcare professional without delay. Looking after your hearing will help you to stay active, connect and engage with others and move around safely.

When you open our next newsletter, you'll be almost halfway through your challenge! You're such an amazing community and we're proud to be on this journey with you.

With all our best wishes,

Team Take 5

Reminder: This information is general guidance and if you have any concerns over your own health please speak to your medical professional.