



Health
Matters®



Every issue,
Dr Sara Kayat
advises on topical
health matters
and provides
relevant tips.



Health Matters

Essential Health Screenings for Women

Explore Practical Tips on Health Screenings for Women with Dr Sara.

Charity Updates

We have updates on two of our recent grant recipients; **Froglife** and **Arthur Rank Hospice**.



www.hsf.co.uk

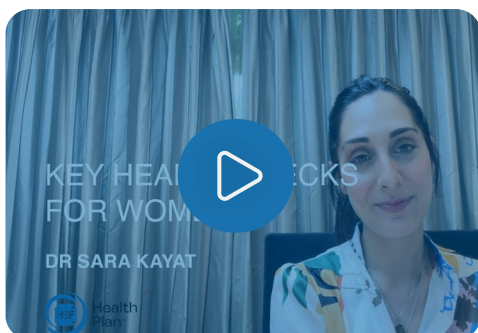




Essential Health Screenings for Women

Prevention stands as a powerful ally in women's health. Timely health screenings can detect conditions early, when they are most treatable, and, in many instances, prevent illness entirely. Yet, regrettably, women too often delay or miss these crucial checks. This can be attributed to demanding schedules, uncertainty regarding necessary screenings, or a prevalent tendency to prioritise the needs of others over their own.

Essential health screenings play a vital role in supporting women's wellbeing at every stage of life, and it is helpful to be reminded which are the most important, when they should be undertaken, and how women can take a more proactive, informed approach to their health, including self-care.



Watch Dr Sara's video for practical tips on Essential Health Screenings for Women.

Health Checks for Women

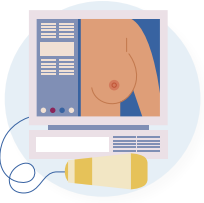


Cervical Screening (Smear Test)

Cervical screening remains one of the most vital tools in the ongoing effort to prevent cervical cancer. The NHS extends invitations to women aged **25 to 64 for a cervical screening test**, with intervals ranging from every **3 to 5 years**, depending on age and previous results.

This test specifically identifies high-risk strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV), which can induce cellular changes in the cervix. If left unaddressed, these cellular alterations possess the potential to progress into cancer. The NHS Cervical Screening Programme is estimated to save **4,500 lives** each year in England by detecting HPV and referring women for effective treatment. Despite its critical importance, uptake remains a significant concern.

According to NHS Digital, in 2023-24, **68.8%** of eligible individuals aged **25 to 64** were adequately screened in England. However, around **1 in 3** eligible women still don't attend their smear test, often citing reasons such as embarrassment, fear, or simply being too busy. If you have missed a smear test, do not hesitate to schedule one. The procedure is swift, and the practitioners are highly skilled in ensuring your comfort and support throughout.



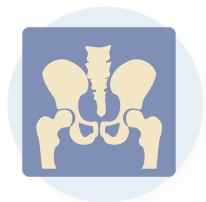
Breast Screening

Breast cancer stands as the most common cancer affecting women in the UK, impacting **1 in 7 women** during their lifetime. Early detection is paramount and dramatically enhances treatment outcomes.

The NHS Breast Screening Programme invites women aged **50 to 71** for mammograms **every three years**. Certain local areas are currently piloting an expansion of this programme to commence at **age 47**. For women over **71**, it remains possible to request screening. In 2023-24, **70% of women aged 50-<71** took up their invitation for breast screening in England, meeting the minimum **70%** standard for the **first time in five years**. This programme is estimated to save the lives of around **1,300 women** and detect approximately **19,000 cancers** every year in the UK.

Equally crucial is cultivating breast awareness. This involves understanding the normal appearance and feel of your breasts so that any changes can be promptly identified. Such changes might include new lumps, alterations in size or shape, dimpling of the skin, or nipple discharge. Make it a practice to check your breasts monthly, ideally at the same time each month, preferably after your period. Remember to extend your check to the area up to your collarbone and under your arms. Should anything feel amiss, consult your GP without delay.

Health Checks for Women



Bone Density Testing (DEXA Scan)

Osteoporosis affects over **3 million** individuals in the UK, with the vast majority being women. After menopause, declining oestrogen levels can lead to a reduction in bone density, consequently increasing the risk of fractures. Indeed, half of women **over 50 years of age** will experience a low trauma fracture due to osteoporosis.

A bone density scan, commonly known as a DEXA scan, is recommended for women presenting with specific risk factors. These may include early menopause, long-term use of steroids, a history of smoking, a family history of osteoporosis, or certain pre-existing medical conditions. While bone health may not always feel like an immediate concern, fractures resulting from osteoporosis can significantly impair mobility and diminish quality of life as we age.

Prevention and early diagnosis genuinely make a profound difference. Even prior to screening, you can support your bone health by ensuring adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D, engaging in regular exercise (particularly weight-bearing activities), and limiting alcohol consumption and smoking.



Cardiovascular Risk Assessments

Heart disease is frequently perceived as a “man’s issue,” yet it stands as the leading cause of death for women worldwide. Coronary heart disease (CHD) alone kills more than twice as many women in the UK as breast cancer.

From the age of 40, women become eligible for a complimentary NHS Health Check every five years. This comprehensive check includes assessments of blood pressure, cholesterol levels, Body Mass Index (BMI), and diabetes risk. Women with a family history of heart disease or existing personal risk factors may require more frequent checks.

It is important to note that symptoms of heart issues can differ in women, often presenting less as the “classic” chest pain and more as subtle signs such as fatigue, nausea, shortness of breath, or jaw pain. Do not dismiss these symptoms. Take the initiative to know your numbers. Understanding your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels empowers you to make informed decisions concerning your heart health.

Health Checks for Women

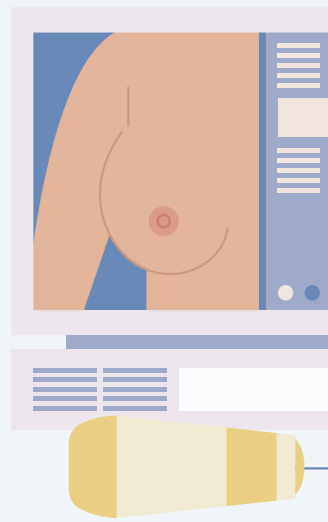


Mental Health Check-ins

While not a formal “screening” in the traditional sense, women’s mental health warrants as much dedicated attention as physical wellbeing. Many women navigate unique mental health challenges, ranging from postnatal depression to anxiety associated with perimenopause.

Approximately **1 in 4 adults** in England will experience a mental health problem each year, and women are more likely than men to experience common mental health problems, with **20.7% of women** affected compared to **13.2% of men**. Alarmingly, young women aged **16 to 24** are at the highest risk, with **28.2%** experiencing a common mental disorder. Yet, prevailing stigma and a perceived lack of time can lead women to “soldier on” rather than actively seek support. If you are experiencing feelings of being low, overwhelmed, or unable to cope, please reach out to your GP. Prioritise small, consistent daily habits that safeguard your mental wellbeing, such as spending time outdoors, ensuring adequate rest, fostering connections with others, and confidently saying “no” when necessary.

We all lead busy lives, and it is all too easy to relegate our health to the bottom of the priority list. But early detection saves lives, and your health is unequivocally worth protecting.





Dr Sara regularly practices mindfulness and yoga herself, and has a keen interest in preventative medicine.

Meet Our Doctor

Dr Sara Kayat

Each month, Dr Sara Kayat provides us with her latest health and wellbeing tips. Health Matters editions are launched along with an accompanying video, which you can find on the HSF Health Plan YouTube channel.

Dr Sara is This Morning's resident GP on ITV, regularly offering her expertise on their weekly "Second Opinion" feature.

She is a practising NHS GP at Gray's Inn Medical Practice, and is an advocate of maintaining good mental health.

HSF Health Plan – Your Health Is Our Priority!

Looking for Remote Health and Wellbeing Support?

HSF Health Plan's HSF Assist provides instant access to a range of essential support services, all designed to prioritise your wellbeing. These include:

- ✓ Virtual doctor consultations
- ✓ Private prescription services
- ✓ Counselling and emotional wellbeing support
- ✓ Legal advice
- ✓ Debt management guidance

Access these invaluable benefits, included with all HSF Health Plans, by registering or logging in at mypolicy.hsf.eu.com for the helpline number.

For details on how to provide this service to your workforce, visit hsfassist.com. Supporting you, wherever you are.



Froglife

About Froglife

Froglife is a national wildlife charity dedicated to the conservation of native reptile and amphibian species and the protection of their natural habitats. The charity is equally committed to making nature accessible to all, particularly those living in urban and socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Research shows that such communities often lack access to high-quality green and blue spaces, which can negatively impact their mental and physical well-being. Froglife works to bridge this gap through inclusive, nature-based programmes that engage and educate.

Nature-Based Support for Dementia

One of Froglife's key initiatives is Leaping Forward for Dementia, a London-based project designed to support people living with dementia and those who care for them. The programme encourages participants to connect with the natural environment, helping to improve mental well-being, reduce loneliness and promote social engagement. The project also supports the wider care network, recognising the importance of carer well-being in dementia support.

Weekly Sessions and Inclusive Activities

The project delivers weekly Wild Times sessions across South London in locations such as parks, community gardens and nature reserves. For those unable to access outdoor spaces, Froglife offers sessions at dementia cafés, ensuring participation is inclusive and flexible. In addition, carers are supported through targeted activities at the Wandsworth Carer Hub, giving them opportunities to relax and connect with others. On average, the programme supports 327 individuals annually through around 148 sessions as part of Froglife's wider Transforming Lives initiative.

Grant to Support Dementia-Friendly Conservation

The Hospital Saturday Fund has awarded a grant of £10,000 to Froglife. This funding will support the ongoing delivery of the Leaping Forward for Dementia project in London, enabling more people living with dementia, their carers, and family members to benefit from the therapeutic power of nature and conservation-based activities

To find out more visit
www.froglife.org



Andy Gilbert, GMC Member, The Hospital Saturday Fund, presented a £10,000 grant to Dylan Jackson-French, Project Manager & Rose Williams, Project Manager, Froglife Trust.

Arthur Rank Hospice

About Arthur Rank Hospice

Arthur Rank Hospice was founded in 1981 to support people across Cambridgeshire living with advanced serious illnesses or life-limiting conditions. The hospice delivers expert palliative and end-of-life care through its state-of-the-art facility in Cambridge, the Alan Hudson Day Treatment Centre in Wisbech, and directly in patients' homes via the Arthur Rank Community Team.

Each year, approximately 3,600 patients benefit from the charity's compassionate and holistic support.

Strong Local Partnerships

Arthur Rank Hospice works in close partnership with Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge and the Sue Ryder Hospice in Peterborough,

enabling a seamless continuum of care for patients across the region. As a result of these strong clinical links and high standards of care, the hospice consistently maintains one of the highest bed occupancy rates in the UK. Its 23 inpatient beds are almost always fully utilised, reflecting the vital role it plays in the local healthcare system.

Living Well Services

The current hospice building, opened nine years ago, includes modern facilities that support a wide range of patient services. Among these is the Living Well Service, which provides therapeutic support to those managing life-limiting conditions. Patients can take part in group sessions or one-to-one consultations focused on emotional, physical, and social wellbeing. Typically delivered

as an eight-week course, the service also offers extended support to individuals who require additional care, helping to reduce isolation and maintain quality of life.

Grant for Ongoing Patient Support

The Hospital Saturday Fund has awarded a grant of £6,820 to Arthur Rank Hospice. This funding will go towards the delivery of the Living Well Service, enabling the hospice to support between 30 and 40 patients each week with specialist care and wellbeing-focused activities.

To find out more visit www.arhc.org.uk



Pauline Jones, Head of Compliance, Governance, HSF Health Plan presented a £6,820 grant to Chloe Czarnecki, Grants & Grants Officer & Emma Hartly, Joint Living Well Services Team Lead, Arthur Rank Hospice.



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