



# Keeping our Black Caribbean and African Community Healthy

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Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 John 1:2 (NIV)

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At CAHN we have a strong commitment to furthering the health and well-being of the Caribbean and African community, which has a significant Christian population. We utilise a holistic approach to improve access to health care and help the community achieve better health outcomes.

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CAHN is collaborating with the NHS both to promote awareness about health conditions which disproportionately affect our community and to explore early intervention and preventive measures.

The presence of barriers such as language differences, trust concerns, and cultural or religious requirements may give rise to a perception that the NHS lacks understanding of our health needs and fails to cater to them. As a result, it can become challenging for us to access the necessary services or receive the care provided by the NHS to promote disease prevention and overall health and well-being. We are convinced that through collaborative efforts, we can enhance accessibility, experiences, and achieve improved health outcomes for the Black Christian community.

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide guidance on how you can take proactive measures to implement self-care and take ownership of your health in five key priority areas identified by the NHS.

1. Cancer
2. Respiratory Conditions
3. Blood pressure
4. Mental Health
5. Maternal Health

## About CAHN

### Vision

To end health inequalities and wider disparities for Caribbean and African people in a generation.

### Mission

Our mission is to ensure that the strategic and operational actions of service providers across health and cross sector agencies and commissioners, lead to racial and social justice for Black people.



# 1. Cancer

## Early cancer diagnosis saves lives.

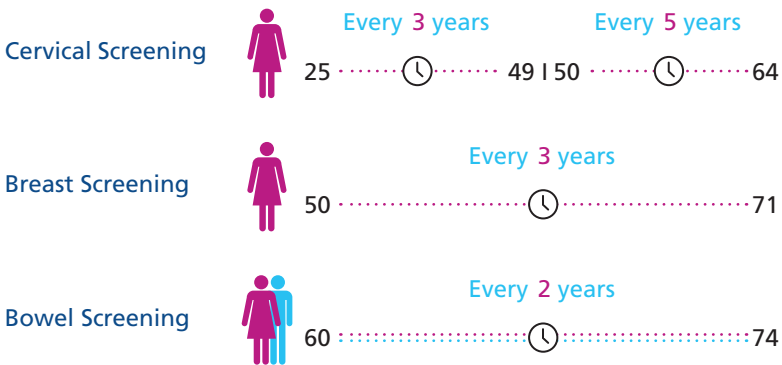
The NHS carries out tests to detect cancer before they cause any visible symptoms. This process is called screening. Screening saves lives and ensures you get treatment before any type of cancer spreads.

Screening programmes include tests for bowel, breast, cervical and lung cancers. The NHS will send letters to your home inviting you for a screening appointment. It is important to respond to these letters.

Your GP practice can discuss these letters with you and can help you get information in your chosen or preferred language.

## NHS Cancer Screening Timeline

When to attend, by age & frequency



Bowel cancer tests are done at home via a test kit.

Breast and cervical cancer screenings are undertaken in clinic appointments.

If you would like screening to be undertaken by a female (or male) professional, please ask when you arrange your appointment. You can also take a friend or family member with you.

You should not wait for a screening appointment if you have any worrying or new symptoms like bleeding, unexplained weight loss or pain.

Report these to your GP practice even if you have had a recent negative screening test.



## 2. Respiratory Conditions

Lung diseases are one of the biggest causes of lower life expectancy. Smoking contributes to higher rates of lung disease in many communities. This includes other forms of smoked tobacco like shisha. Regular reviews by your GP practice are available to people with lung conditions to help keep you well. Having your vaccinations each year for flu, COVID, and pneumonia is also very important to protect lung health – especially for those with existing lung conditions.

## 3. Blood Pressure

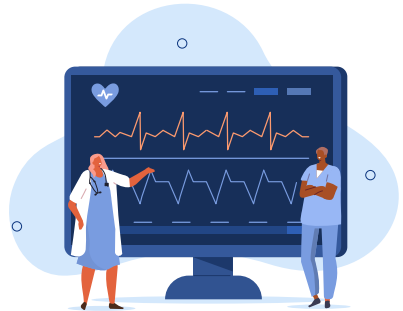
Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a general term for conditions affecting the heart or blood vessels. It includes inherited conditions, coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke and vascular dementia. CVD is one of the main causes of death and disability in the UK, but it can often largely be prevented by leading a health lifestyle.

Good blood pressure control can help prevent CVD. Making healthier food choices and keeping active can help with managing your blood pressure and improve your heart health.

Try to be physically active every day, even if it is just light activity to begin with. Do activities that improve your strength and balance at least two days a week and then a combination of more intense activity to help with the health of your heart.

Your GP practice may invite you for regular blood pressure checks if you are a certain age or have other conditions. These checks can also be done in your local pharmacy, or you can buy a machine and monitor it yourself.

If you already have CVD, staying healthy as possible can reduce the chances of it getting worse.



## 4. Maternal Health

Pregnancy and the first 12 months after birth is a vulnerable period for women, babies, and their families. Black women are five times more likely to die during pregnancy, than their white counterparts while Asian women are twice as likely to die. Early birth, small babies, and stillbirth are also more likely to affect Black and Asian women.

Having a confidential conversation with your GP practice is important if you are planning to start or add to your family. You will receive advice on how to make your pregnancy as healthy as possible, for example taking a folic acid and vitamin D tablet.

Once you are pregnant, it is important to let your GP practice know as soon as possible. They will make sure you get the right care during and after your pregnancy, including support around nursing and help for your baby.

## 5. Mental Health

Mental health covers our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Talking about mental health can be difficult at times in our communities. Some people think this is due to lacking spirituality or not being “religious enough” - but this is not the case.

Many factors can contribute to the development of mental health problems. If you are worried about your own mental health, or that of a relative, talk to your GP practice in confidence for support.

If you are struggling with anxiety or depression, NHS Talking Therapies services can help – visit [NHS.uk/talk](https://www.nhs.uk/talk) for information and self-referral. These services can provide access to interpreters and non-English resources and some therapists speak multiple languages.

People with serious mental illnesses, for example schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, are more at risk of physical ill-health. That is why they are invited for annual check-ups.



Protecting the health of our community is essential.  
Some of the conditions in this leaflet may be relevant to you,  
your family members, or friends.

Your help sharing this information will help make sure that our families  
and community are well-informed, and as healthy as possible.

**Health Hours for You!**

Join us each week for our CATHIP Health Hours with medical practitioners

- Talks on health conditions and wellbeing
- Opportunities to ask questions to medical professionals
- Lived experience stories
- Information tailored to the Black population

There is something for everyone each week whether you are a community member, health professional, student or an individual working in settings that provide care or support to Black people.

Topics include: Mental and Emotional Health, Cancer, Cardiovascular, Respiratory Conditions, Blood, Blood Pressure, Hormonal/Endocrine Conditions, Reproductive and Sexual Health.

Every Saturday 11:00hrs - 12:15hrs

Join us via Zoom:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84516756373>  
 Meeting ID: 845 1675 6373  
 One tap mobile: +442034815240, 84516756373

#CATHIP #HealthHour

Supported by:



Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,  
especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 6:10 (NIV)

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