

Additional information on boosting physical resilience to air pollution

With threatening levels of air pollution and other environmental factors adversely affecting the health of Londoners, it is becoming increasingly important to maintain and improve physical resilience. A good healthy lifestyle (including not smoking) can have a huge impact, even in polluted areas.

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET AS A WAY OF LIFE

Eating a well-balanced diet can help to reduce your risk of various diseases that are linked to pollution such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer, and this help you maintain a healthy weight. According to the National guidelines' Eatwell Guide your daily diet should be made up of:

- A third of your meal could be starchy foods, such as potatoes, bread, rice and pasta.
- Lots of fruit and vegetables (at least 10 portions of fruit and vegetables per day)
- One portion of dairy and alternatives, such as milk or soya milk, cheese, and yogurt
- One portion of non-dairy protein, such as chickpeas, tuna, eggs, beans, and lentils
- A small amount (1% of your diet) of oils and spreads, such as butter



Where possible, try to choose healthier options such as wholegrain or wholemeal varieties, and brown rice instead of white. Several studies have suggested that some of the harmful effects of air pollution can be amended by intake of micronutrients such as B vitamins, and vitamin C, D, and E. For more information on which foods to eat for vitamin intake, refer to the NHS website: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vitamins-minerals/Pages/vitamins-minerals.aspx>.

While we are mainly concerned with resilience, it is helpful to also try to purchase seasonal produce and from local markets



so the food has a low carbon footprint. Remember to bring your own reusable bags, and try to buy products that do not come with unnecessary packaging. For more information on seasonal products, you can refer to <http://eattheseasons.co.uk>.

MAINTAIN EXERCISE AS A WAY OF LIFE

It is recommended that we all try to be active daily and get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise (where you raise your heartrate and get slightly out of breath) a week, such as cycling or brisk walking. Doing so offers an abundance of health benefits, including reductions in the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer varieties, dementia and depression.

If you choose to exercise outside it is important to do so in relatively unpolluted areas. Research has found that the benefits of cycling and walking for a healthy adult outweigh the risk of air pollution for exposure levels typically found in London, but measures should still be taken to further reduce the risk:

- Exercise earlier in the day when pollution levels are lower
- Avoid main roads and pollution sources, and when possible use parks, and side and backstreets

