

RIGHTS IN ACTION

A newsletter for ACT children and young people about their rights and wellbeing



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What's new?

- October is Mental Health Month. Raising awareness about mental health makes it easier to find support when we need it. Find out more about support services in the ACT at MindMap.act.gov.au.
- It is also Children's Week between the 19-27th of October! This year is celebrating your right to be healthy and have a healthy environment.

Did you know...

- Saying positive things to yourself reshapes thought patterns, boosting confidence and mental health!
- Writing down the things you are thankful for increases happiness!

Welcome to the October edition of Rights in ACTION. This edition is about your right to a clean environment, good quality healthcare, clean water and nutritious food. We also celebrate your mental health!

Every page has something you can do to support your wellbeing. Things like mindfulness, colouring, relaxation breathing, or journalling. Explore them all and find some that work for you!





You have the right to good quality healthcare, healthy food and clean water. You should get information about how to stay healthy.

Article (24) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

To help you to grow up happy and healthy, you have the right to good healthcare, and an environment that helps you have good food and clean water. Your right to a clean environment is the theme for this year's Children's Week!

Knowing what can keep us healthy and having good quality health care when you are unwell, is essential for your development. But if you live in a dirty, polluted place with bad water, it is very difficult to stay healthy. That is why every child has the right to an environment that supports your health and wellbeing.

To make sure children in the ACT have this, the right to a clean environment is being added to the ACT Human Rights Act. This means the government will have to consider the environment when it makes decisions and should not do anything that will harm the environment or stop you having a clean and healthy place to live.


Lots of children and young people worry about the environment. In fact, some research says that up to half of all young people aged 16 to 25 feel worried about it. This is sometimes called eco-anxiety. That means you might be so worried about it you feel upset a lot of the time.

The links between our mental health and our environment are becoming better understood, so now we know that when governments take steps to protect your right to a healthy environment, they are also supporting your mental health.

Did you know...


Spending time in natural, green spaces can support you to feel happier and healthier? Green is easier for your eyes and brain to process than other colours too!

Use this border for mindfulness colouring.



It is important to care of your mental health and feel comfortable talking to others about it.

Here are 3 healthy habits that you can follow daily to support your mental well-being.



HEALTHY HABITS FOR MENTAL WELL-BEING



By Victor (Year 11)

01

TAKE BREAKS AND REST

When you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, it is ok to take a break. Take some deep breaths, read a book or go for a walk. Giving your mind a rest can help you feel calmer and more focused.

02

LOOK AFTER YOUR HEALTH

Eating healthy, getting enough sleep, and exercising are great ways to keep both your body and mind feeling good. When you take care of your body, you feel stronger and more positive.

03 BALANCE WORK AND FUN

School can be exciting but also stressful. It is important to find ways to manage this stress during a busy school term.

Make time for your friends, hobbies, and family. Balancing your schoolwork with fun helps you feel more relaxed and less overwhelmed.



STAY ACTIVE

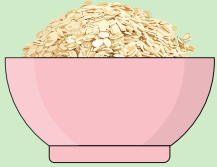




Mood boosting food!

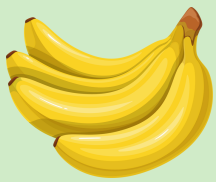


Feeling grumpy or down in the dumps? Some research is finding links between healthy food and more positive moods. Here are some foods that might help you feel a bit better.



Oats release energy slowly to keep you feeling energetic for longer. They are also a good source of iron!

Dark chocolate can boost the blood flow to your brain and might help you regulate your emotions. Reach for the dark stuff though. Milk chocolate doesn't work!!



Bananas are high in vitamin B6, which helps your brain use the feel-good hormones you naturally produce, like serotonin and dopamine.

Yoghurt is packed with healthy probiotics that help your gut be healthy. Gut health could be linked to better brain health and less depression but needs more research.

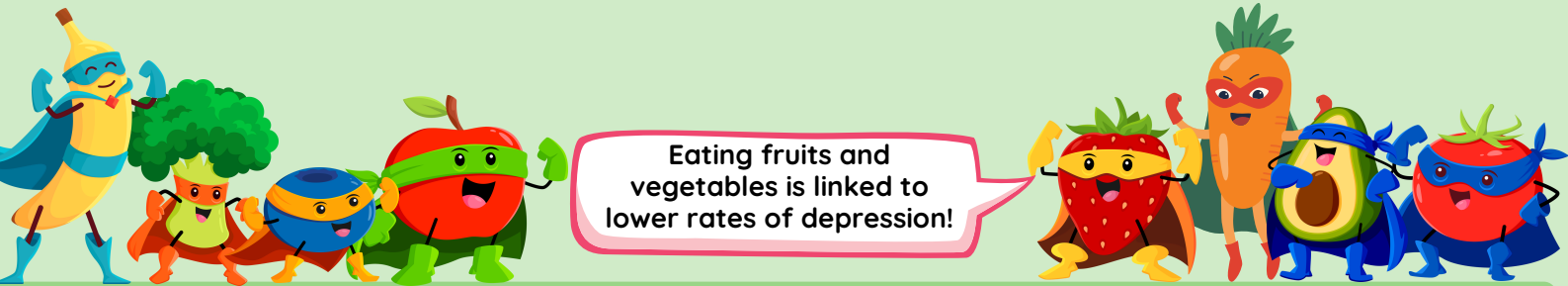


Berries are high in antioxidants. Diets with lots of antioxidants can lessen stress in your body. Both fresh and frozen are good!

Nuts are high in healthy fats, protein, and fibre. All of these are important for brain health and might also help your mood!



Remember that how you feel is influenced by a lot of things, so healthy food won't always make you feel better, but it might give you a little boost!



Feel good smoothie



Ingredients

- 1 ripe banana
- 1/2 cup plain yoghurt
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup berries (fresh or frozen)
- 1/4 cup rolled oats or instant oats
- 1 teaspoon honey (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)

Method

1. Peel banana and cut into chunks
2. Place all ingredients into a blender
3. Replace the lid
4. Blend
5. Serve cold.

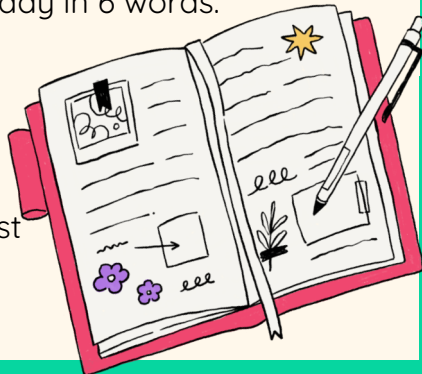
For variety, try different berries, add chia seeds, swap honey for maple syrup, or try a flavoured yoghurt.



Journalling

Writing in a journal can help you feel less stressed. It can give you space to think things through, focus on positive emotions, and help you be creative. Here are some ideas to get you started (and do not forget to decorate your pages with drawings, pictures and nice leaves!).

- Write a letter to your younger or older self!
- Write down three wishes.
- Write 5 things you are grateful for.
- Design an advertisement to promote your strengths.
- Describe your day in 6 words.
- Design your dream pet or house.
- Write a song.
- Draw your most recent dream.



Sensory focus

We all get overwhelmed sometimes. Mindfulness is a nice way to give yourself a break, you can do this one anywhere.

1. Sit comfortably
2. Take 4 slow breaths. Count to 3 when you breathe in, hold it for 2, then breathe out for four. Now breathe normally.
3. Name 5 things you can see.
4. Name 4 things you can hear.
5. Name 3 things you can feel.
6. Name 2 things you can smell.
7. Name 1 thing you can taste.

This takes your focus off things that are overwhelming and helps your mind relax. The more you do it, the better you get at it.



Box breathing

When we are stressed, our breathing can become shallow and quick, or we might hold our breath. If you slow your breathing down and breathe deeply, it can calm you down. Here is a good tool to help you focus on your breathing.

1. Find something rectangle shaped - your phone, a piece of paper, a box, a computer screen, desk, or imagine one.
2. Use your finger to trace around the outside of the rectangle.
3. On the short side, breathe in through your nose, deeply into your stomach.
4. As you trace the long side, breathe out of your mouth slowly.
5. Repeat for the next two sides.
6. Do this as many times as you need to.

Do something kind for someone else.

Fake laugh until you really laugh.

Spend time outside with nature.

Watch your favourite movie.

Play your favourite music.

Spend time with friends.

Run a bubble bath.

Do some exercise.

Hug a loved one.

Start a journal.

Take a walk.

Pat a pet.

Sing!

#Selfcare



Breathe in...

Breathe in...

Breathe out...



I want to listen to you!

Yuma! I am Jodie, your Children and Young People Commissioner and part of my job is to help make Canberra better for you!

I need your help!

I want to know what you think should be better so that children and young people in the ACT can grow up happy, healthy, and safe.

Have your say

If you would like me to come to your school or club, you can email me at actkids@act.gov.au or ask your teacher or another adult to email for you.



You can also:

- draw or write your ideas and email them to me, or
- upload a video or voice message to my Young Thinker Forum (www.hrc.act.gov.au/ytf).

I will use what you tell me to plan my work in 2025.

Information for adults

I am available on various dates in October and November, starting in Children’s Week (18-27 October 2024, Week 1, Term 4). Contact my team to book a time.



Listening sessions will start with an interactive human rights workshop, then some activities to help children and young people consider and talk to me about the issues I should work on to make Canberra a better place for them to live. We can tailor the session to work with your timetable and group.

Please contact my team with any questions at actkids@act.gov.au or to book a session.