

TIPS ON

TALKING WITH YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

The contents:

- Choosing who I talk to
- Worries I might have about talking to others
- What I want others to know (and what I don't)
- How can I explain my health?
- What to do if someone doesn't understand
- Answering unkind questions
- What to do when your feeling overwhelmed



CHOOSING WHO TO TALK TO

- **You get to decide who you tell about your health!**
- **It can be a close friend or someone you trust**
- **You don't have to tell everyone, just the people you feel safe with**



WORRIES I MIGHT HAVE TALKING TO OTHERS

- It's normal to feel nervous or worried that people might not understand.
- Lots of kids feel the same way when talking about something important.
- It might help to prepare what you might say when your explaining your health to someone.
- You could practice a conversation with a family member to help you feel more confident



WHAT I WANT OTHERS TO KNOW (AND WHAT I DON'T)

- You can choose what you want to share with your friends.
- You might want to tell them everything, or you might only want to tell them some of it. You don't have to talk about things you don't want to share.
- You could say, “I want to tell you some things about my health. There are some things that I don't feel happy to talk about yet, but I might tell you later.”



HOW CAN I EXPLAIN MY HEALTH?

- Giving a short and clear explanations might help you do this.
- For example, “ I have a health condition called _____. This means that my body works a bit differently. I manage this by doing _____. That’s all.”
- You might say, “I have to be careful about what I eat so my body stays healthy”, “Sometimes I need medicine to help my body” or “I might need to go to hospital appointments.”
- It’s important to think of answers that suit you and your health condition.
- Talk about what you can do aswell, “we can still have lunch together I just need to check my food first.”



IF SOMEONE ASKS A QUESTION

- **Some friends might understand straight away. Others might have questions. That's okay.**
- **If someone asks a question, try and use this as a chance to teach someone about your health.**
- **It's important to remember that they probably aren't trying to hurt your feelings. They might have never heard of your condition before and are learning something new.**
- **A good friend listens, is kind and respects you. They don't have to understand everything to be a good friend.**



ANSWERING UNKIND QUESTIONS

- If it seems that people are trying to upset you on purpose, a firm response can show that these questions are not welcome. Here are some examples:
- “That’s a bit of a personal question”
- “I don’t need to explain that if I don’t feel like it”
- “Nothing’s wrong with me.”
- It can be upsetting when people ask unkind questions about your health condition.
- In these situations, saying positive things to yourself can help you. For example, “People asking unkind questions is their problem, not mine.”



FEELING OVERWHELMED

- Sometimes your friends might want to ask you a lot of questions. This is because they want to know how you are feeling and might even want to learn about your condition.
- But we know that this can be overwhelming at times, and this is completely normal.
- If you are feeling overwhelmed, you could try to change the topic, or let them know that you do not want to answer the questions right now.
- You might say something like, “I don’t want to answer those questions right now. You can ask me again later. What did you watch on TV last night?”



REMEMBER

- Your health is just one part of you and you are not alone.
- Everyone has things about them that make them different. If they didn't, everyone would be the same and the world would be boring.
- Your health is something that makes you different, and your friends have their own things that make them different.

