

Why December 11th is the busiest for couples to break up



The busiest day for relationship break-ups is looming – so stock up on tissues and tubs of ice-cream before Sunday arrives.

Data has shown that two weeks before Christmas Day is the day of the year when most couples decide it's over.

That's according to data compiled by statisticians who studied Facebook posts featuring break-up messages.

But it seems people are quick to move on, with Match.com reporting

that peak surfing season starts on Christmas Day itself.

There are competing theories as to why a fortnight before the big day is most popular.

For new couples, some may decide they don't want their new squeeze to meet their family while money-minded lovers may decide that staying together and exchanging expensive gifts just isn't worth it.

Dr Dorree Lynn, a psychologist and author of *Sex for Grownups* told ABC News: "If you're not sure, particularly if you haven't been dating for several years, a lot of people have issues about gift giving and how intimate the gift giving is.

"They get frightened because they don't want to put pressure on the other person, but on the other hand they don't want to feel like a fool giving something and not getting anything back."

A similar situation occurs in the US ahead of Thanksgiving, with the issue so common that it's known as the 'Turkey Dump'.

Luckily, if you make it through the next two weeks, you should be safe until springtime.

Christmas Day is the day of the year when fewest relationships officially end – but the frequency of breakups increases until peaking again in spring

100 Hanukkah activities for kids of all ages

A wide variety of creative, family-bonding activities

are central to Jewish celebrations, especially Hanukkah.

“Judaism is a fully experiential religion: We eat matzah, hear the shofar, smell spices at havdalah, light candles for Shabbat and holidays,” says Ruchi Koval, the co-founder and director of the Jewish Family Experience, the creator of Out of the Ortho Box and a certified parenting coach. “Crafts and other experiential activities, besides for being fun, imprint unforgettable memories in young children that are likely to remain positive associations long after and into adulthood.”

Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, following the Maccabean Revolt. According to the Talmud, Maccabees found only enough olive oil to keep the Temple’s menorah’s candles burning for a single day, but the flames burned for eight nights.

That’s why the holiday lasts, as Adam Sandler put it, eight crazy nights, says lifestyle blogger Tori Avey.

“Throughout the years, we’ve found new and creative ways to keep the holiday spirit flowing all through those eight days and nights,” she says.

Interested in trying your hand at a variety of Hanukkah crafts, games, food and fun? Here are 101 cool, cute, creative and crafty Hanukkah activities kids and parents will love.

Hanukkah activities for Kids

1. Make a [sensory menorah for toddlers](#), says author Aviva Brown.

2. Make [recycled dreidel paper dolls](#).

3. Make an eight-night countdown calendar.
4. Create a menorah out of cardboard tubes.
5. Practice writing Hebrew letters.
6. Explore a [DIY Hanukkah sensory bin](#), like this one shown on [3Dinosaurs.com](#).
7. Play a color-matching game using different menorah candles.
8. Play with a toy cash register using Hanukkah gelt, says Melissa Kahn Wilkenfeld, of [Little Kosher Lunch](#).
9. Make a [Hanukkah playdate kit](#), like one Wilkenfeld has used with her children.
10. Allow your little one to use real candles or a child's wooden menorah for [Hanukkah candle play](#) and to work on fine motor skills, says Wilkenfeld.
11. Use [play dough to craft the four letters](#) that appear on a dreidel. Marti Kerner, of Everyday Jewish Mom says, "The dreidel has four Hebrew letters on it. Rolling out play dough to make the letters of these shapes is a great way to play and talk about the letters."
12. Wilkenfeld loves allowing her little ones to get imaginative and [create menorahs and dreidels out of felt](#).
13. Play a [number recognition game](#). "Hanukkah gives us so many great opportunities to count to eight," says Kerner. "For this activity, we have a numbered menorah with coordinating numbered popsicle sticks for matching. You can also put the correct number of small items climbing up each candle."
14. Let your child make their own menorah out of play

dough, says Wilkenfeld.

15. Play with a [Lego menorah](#), like this one from [ModernTribe.com](#).

16. The most classic Hanukkah game is, of course, [spinning the dreidel](#). “It is great practice for taking turns, counting, trying out the math concept of one half when you spin a ‘hey,’ developing fine motor skills for spinning the dreidel and dealing with the disappointment of not always spinning a ‘gimel,’” says Kerner.

17. Create your own [dreidel board game](#).

18. Play pin the candle on the menorah, says Brown.

19. Play [Hanukkah tic-tac-toe](#).

20. Play a [Hanukkah memory game](#).

Hanukkah crafts

21. Make your own Hanukkah wrapping paper, says Avey.

22. Create a [Hanukkah silhouette](#) using torn-up pieces of colorful craft paper, as explained by Sara Rivka, of [Creative Jewish Mom](#).

23. Make a [clothespin menorah](#), like this colorful one on the blog [Scrumdilly-do!](#)

24. Make [origami dreidels](#), following these directions from [Bible Belt Balabusta](#).

25. Make a [cupcake menorah](#), like this adorable white and blue one from Avey.

26. Build a menorah out of Legos.

27. Make Star of David sculptures out of popsicle sticks.

28. Hang those Star of David sculptures on a string to make a decorative garland.
29. Create a colorful [hardware store menorah](#) out of a block of wood, like this one created by blogger Sheri Silver.
30. Make a [Hanukkah goodie bag](#), like the one shown by Rita on the blog [Design Megillah](#).
31. Use materials like junk mail to make [recycled Hanukkah crafts](#), like those shown by Wilkenfeld on her YouTube channel.
32. Make a sparkling menorah garland.
33. Kerner says making a [washi tape menorah](#) and allowing kids' creativity to run wild.
34. Let your kids paint a free-form menorah or dreidels on a canvas.
35. Use pipe cleaners to make a Star of David.
36. Avey says making a [homemade cookies and hot cocoa gift bag](#).
37. Turn a used egg carton into an upcycled menorah.
38. [Make your own Hanukkah candles](#) with a kit from [ModernTribe.com](#).
39. Make festive finger puppets.
40. Organize a plate of fruit into the shape of a menorah.
41. Print out and fold a paper dreidel.
42. Make a dreidel out of a takeout box and cardboard tube.

43. Turn baby food jars into an [upcycled menorah](#), as suggested by [MomsandCrafters.com](#).
44. Mix your own [blue play dough](#) following this recipe from Tinker Lab.
45. Use Hanukkah-themed cookie cutters to mold your playdough into festive shapes.
46. Design a dreidel mobile.
47. [Make a dreidel](#) using cardboard and a pencil.
48. Make a menorah out of blocks and use tiny toys as “candles.”
49. Create Hanukkah cards using an array of art supplies.
50. Make [Hanukkah snow globes](#).
51. Use an old container to make a [tzedakah box](#) to remember those in need during the holiday season.
52. Tape up [paper chains in the shape of a menorah](#), like this one at Bible Belt Balabusta.
53. Cut felt into dreidel shapes.
54. Make a banner out of those felt dreidels.
55. Decorate a Hanukkah bandana for your family pet [using fabric pens](#).

Hanukkah recipes and cooking

56. Kerner loves following the tradition of [making jelly doughnuts](#), or Sufganiyot. Her easy-to-follow recipe features store-bought pizza dough or refrigerator biscuit dough.

57. Make [cookies with Hanukkah-themed expressions](#) letter-stamped on them, like these adorable ones done by Brown.

58. Cook up a batch of delectable [latkes](#), says Wilkenfeld. Along with other fried foods, latkes are traditionally served on Hanukkah, as we celebrate the [miracle of the Temple's lamp oil](#) lasting eight nights.

59. Make [edible dreidels](#) like these ones from Bible Belt Balabusta that use marshmallows.

60. [Dip-dye marshmallows blue](#), add to graham crackers and top with white chocolate to make Hanukkah s'mores.

61. Bake candle-shaped cookies.

62. Add the candle-shaped cookies to a menorah-shaped cake.

63. Whip up a batch of [blue velvet cupcakes](#).

64. Bake [sugar cookies in Hanukkah shapes](#), like the ones shown on Avey's site.

65. Make [Hanukkah lollipops](#), like the ones shown on Design Megillah.

66. Bake [blue and white crinkle cookies](#).

67. Bake [dreidel goodies](#) with a sweet surprise (shhh, it's gelt!) inside.

68. Push pretzel sticks through marshmallows to make another type of [edible dreidels](#), demonstrated by Avey.

69. Make [latke waffles](#) (yes, waffles), like those shown on Smitten Kitchen.

70. Use tissue paper to make a [stained glass menorah](#)

like the ones featured on [Upper West Side Mom](#).

71. Make a [Hanukkah bento box](#), like the ones on [the Brass Paperclip Project](#).

72. Bake menorah-shaped bread – perhaps using Avey's [challah bread recipe](#).

73. Make [homemade dried apricot gelt](#).

74. Try Living Sweet Moments' [stained glass cookies](#) recipe.

75. Give Sufganiyot a New Orleans twist by baking [Hanukkah beignets](#).

76. Make your own [homemade gelt](#).

Hanukkah family activities

77. Create a hopscotch court featuring different Hanukkah symbols.

78. Spend the fifth night of Hanukkah making a difference by donating a night of gifts to a chosen children's charity, as suggested by the [organization Fifth Night](#). The organization's goal is to help the little ones better understand and appreciate the importance of their donations by learning about the charity and the families who will be benefiting from their gifts.

79. Write Hanukkah poems.

80. Put on a play about the story of Hanukkah.

81. Work your way through this [Hanukkah in a Box kit](#) from [ModernTribe.com](#).

82. Put on a holiday puppet show.

83. Sing traditional songs, like “O Chanukah” and “The Dreidel Song.”

84. Pass out gelt and other Hanukkah goodies to neighbors.

85. Go to a menorah lighting ceremony.

86. Play Hanukkah-themed charades.

87. Spend time as a family creating a Hanukkah memory book.

88. Have a [Hanukkah pajama party](#).

89. Play [Hanukkah Bingo](#).

90. Have a [treasure hunt for gelt](#).

91. Each family member can find a treat in this [Hanukkah Punch Box](#) for that particular night of the holiday.

92. Draw cartoons of the Hanukkah story.

Hanukkah stories, books and movies

93. Write your own Hanukkah book.

94. Have the oldest person at the table – maybe bubbe or zayde – tell their first Hanukkah memory. Then, the second eldest, until the youngest shares theirs.

95. Read this [kid-friendly version of the Hanukkah story](#).

96. Watch Adam Sandler’s animated holiday movie “Eight Crazy Nights.”

97. Read a multicultural indie children’s book “[Queen of the Hanukkah Dosas](#),” by Pamela Ehrenberg and Anjan Sarkar.

98. Read “[Dreidel Day](#),” written and illustrated by Amalia Hoffman, in which a sweet and playful cat encourages the reader to count to eight to celebrate Hanukkah.

99. Explore Hanukkah rituals with the help of whimsical bunnies in the charming, rhyming board book “[Hanukkah Delight!](#),” written by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Amy Husband.

100. Check out “[Judah Maccabee Goes to the Doctor](#),” written by Ann Koffsky and illustrated by Talitha Shipman.

www.care.com

Where Did the Tradition of the Christmas Tree Come From?

Each year, when the weather gets colder and December approaches, many Americans who celebrate Christmas will get together to decorate a [Christmas tree](#). But why in the world do we decorate these (often artificial) fir trees in the first place?

It turns out, the meaning behind Christmas trees as holiday decor goes back further than you might realize.

Both the ancient Egyptians and Romans saw the bright hue of plants that remained green all year, such as palm rushes and evergreen boughs, as a way to give warmth and hope to people during the winter, according to [History.com](#).

Ancient people would mark the winter solstice (the shortest

day and longest night of the year, which typically falls on December 21 or December 22) by using evergreens. These plants served as a sunny reminder that other greens would grow again once spring and summer returned.

People in some countries believed evergreens stood for everlasting life and even had the ability to ward off evil spirits and illnesses—another reason for the tradition of hanging evergreen boughs above doorways and inside homes.

1444

[Some say](#) the first-ever Christmas tree was in London, near what is now Leadenhall Market. However, it seems it was a one-time trend, as Christmas trees wouldn't be back in Britain until the 19th century.

1500s

Many believe Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, began the tradition of adding lighted candles to a tree, which is why we decorate trees with strands of lightbulbs today. The story goes that while Luther was walking home one winter evening, he saw twinkling stars among evergreens and wanted to re-create the magical moment for his family.

1771

While Christmas trees were appearing in Germany years earlier, the trend really caught on after writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe [visited Strasbourg](#), near the German border, and included the concept in his novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

1820s

The first record of a decorated evergreen tree in America was that of German settlers in Pennsylvania.

1846

Queen Victoria, German Prince Albert, and their children were shown standing around a Christmas tree in the [*Illustrated London News*](#). Because Victoria was very popular with her subjects at that time, the Christmas tree trend took off in both Britain and the East Coast of the United States.



Christmas with Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, their children and Queen Victoria's mother, in 1848 as depicted in the Illustrated London News. Getty Images

1882

When Edward H. Johnson, the vice president of Edison's Electric Light company, decorated a tree with 80 red, white, and blue lightbulbs and displayed it in his New York City window, a newspaper in Detroit helped him earn the title "[Father of the Electric Christmas Tree.](#)"

1895

Some Americans were still skeptical about using electric lights on their Christmas trees, although apparently not President Grover Cleveland. He is said to have introduced [the first electrically lit White House Christmas tree.](#)

1903

General Electric began selling Christmas light kits so that people could decorate their Christmas trees more easily than ever.

1917

But it was [Albert Sadacca](#) who is believed to have really made Christmas tree lights mainstream. The New York teenager had heard about a candlelit tree that burst into flames and started stringing lights for his family's novelty business. Painting the bulbs proved to be the ticket—and one day his business became NOMA Electric Company (National Outfit Manufacturer's Association), the largest Christmas light manufacturer in the world for many years.

1931

The [first Christmas tree went up in Rockefeller Center](#)—only it was a lot smaller than the ones debuted these days. And

instead of an official lighting before a crowd of spectators, this one was orchestrated by construction workers.

1933

Two years later, a lighted tree was placed in Rockefeller Center, sparking the city's annual tradition.



The Christmas tree at Rockefeller Plaza on December 20, 1934. Getty Images

Today

After a rich history, [Christmas trees](#) (both real and artificial) have become the centerpiece of the season—and a classic Christmas tradition that doesn't appear to be going anywhere anytime soon.

Winter Darkness, Season Depression

Winter depression is still a mystery to scientists who study it. But researchers agree that people who suffer from seasonal affective disorder are particularly sensitive to light, or the lack of it.

A wistful feeling comes over us in late autumn, as the last remaining leaves drop, morning frosts cover the ground, and the sun sets earlier each day. Hot cider and the warmth of a favorite old coat may be all you need to face the coming winter with good cheer, but for many people, fall melancholy deepens to winter [depression](#).

Winter [depression](#) is still a mystery to scientists who study it. Many things, including [brain](#) chemicals, ions in the air, and genetics seem to be involved. But researchers agree that people who suffer from winter [depression](#) – also known as “[seasonal affective disorder](#),” a term that produces the cute acronym SAD – have one thing in common. They're particularly

sensitive to light, or the lack of it.

Many studies have shown that people with seasonal affective disorder feel better after exposure to bright light. It seems simple enough: In higher latitudes, winter days are shorter, so you get less exposure to sunlight. Replace lost sunlight with bright artificial light, and your mood improves. But it's actually far more complex. Alfred Lewy, MD, a seasonal affective disorder researcher at the Oregon Health & Science University, says it's not only a matter of getting light, but also getting it at the right time. "The most important time to get light is in the morning," he says.

He thinks seasonal affective disorder is due to a "phase-shift" of the circadian rhythm. The wall clock may tell you it's time to get up and at 'em, but your body's internal clock says you should be resting. Bright light in the morning resets your circadian clock.

This is relevant to the "fall back" time change, which happens in places that observe Daylight Saving Time. You might think that setting back the clock one hour would make seasonal affective disorder symptoms worse, because the sun sets one hour earlier. "Actually, I think it's the opposite," Lewy says. "The problem is waking up before dawn."

Lewy says he suspects that "true winter depressives," the people whose problem is biological and not related to other factors, might feel better after the time change. But the improvement would only be temporary, as days continue to shorten.

Arctic Winters

In Fairbanks, Alaska, in the dead of winter, less than four hours separate sunrise and sunset. With so little sunlight, it seems like no one could escape winter [depression](#); but in fact,

many Alaskans fare just fine. One study found that about 9% of Fairbanks residents had seasonal affective disorder. That's about the same percentage another study found in New Hampshire.

Mark D., who lives near Fairbanks, says he doesn't suffer from seasonal affective disorder, even though he rarely sees the sun. He pulls 12-hour shifts working in a power plant.

He stays active in winter, so "cabin fever" isn't a problem for him, either. "If you sit around the house and do nothing all day I suppose it could eat at you," he says. "But there is always something for me to do – snow-machine, cut firewood ... or just going into town and have a cup of coffee with friends at the cafe.

"There are people, though, that will have a ten-yard stare in a five-yard room," he says. Some seek comfort from a bottle, too. "In lots of the smaller villages, that does happen. Drinking is a big problem."

Seasonal affective disorder researcher Michael Terman, PhD, at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, offers some possible explanations for why seasonal affective disorder isn't more common in the arctic. For one, people with seasonal affective disorder may be genetically predisposed to [clinical depression](#) and [light sensitivity](#). Most people, in any place, wouldn't have both genetic traits. "Another way to look at it is that those are the people who are still in Alaska," he says. People who can't cope might not stay.

But not everyone affected by seasonal changes has full-blown seasonal affective disorder, so estimates of how many people do have it may be low. "Winter depression is a spectrum of severity," Lewy says. You may have trouble getting up, have bouts of [fatigue](#) during the day, or feel compelled to overeat, without feeling depressed.

These symptoms can be treated with the same therapy given to

seasonal affective disorder patients. Bright light – generated by a special light box that’s much brighter than a normal lamp – is the first option. It’s proven to work, but not for everyone. Also, the right time for it differs from person to person, Terman says. For a night owl, taking light therapy too early could make seasonal affective disorder worse.

New Ideas

Tom Wehr, researcher at the National Institute of [Mental Health](#), has proposed a new explanation for seasonal affective disorder: It may stem from too much [melatonin](#). When the [brain](#)’s pineal gland starts pumping out [melatonin](#), we get sleepy. During winter, animals secrete melatonin for longer periods than they do at other times of the year. Wehr discovered that people do, too – but only those who suffer from seasonal affective disorder.

Light therapy would still work if melatonin were the main culprit, because light controls melatonin levels. Researchers are also testing a drug called propranolol, which they hope will improve seasonal affective disorder symptoms by curtailing melatonin flow in the morning hours. Lewy is studying the effects of small melatonin doses given in the afternoon, hoping that they will adjust circadian rhythms.

Raymond [Lam](#), MD, researcher at the University of British Columbia, Canada, and others are studying the role of [brain](#) chemicals like serotonin and dopamine. “We know there are interactions between the serotonin system and the circadian system,” Lam says.

Some [antidepressants](#) like [Paxil](#) and [Prozac](#) work for some seasonal affective disorder sufferers. But Lewy says he prefers light therapy to [antidepressants](#), which he says “are probably more of a Band-Aid,” because they’re not specific to winter depression.

Terman has been testing yet another new way to treat seasonal affective disorder. This therapy involves aiming a stream of negatively charged ions at a person sleeping on a special conductive bed sheet. The discovery that high-density negative ions (not the same ions produced by home air filters) helped people with seasonal affective disorder came accidentally from a previous study. A second study, which will end later this year, has also found a beneficial effect.

The air is full of negative ions in springtime, and not in the winter. But that doesn't explain how ion therapy works. "We don't yet have an answer to that question," Terman says; nevertheless, "We're now convinced that it's real."

Track Santa

Kelly Preston lost fight against cancer

Kelly Preston, who appeared in films including "Mischief," "Twins" and "Jerry Maguire," has died after a two-year battle with breast cancer. She was 57.

John Travolta, her husband of 29 years, confirmed her death on his [Instagram account](#).

“It is with a very heavy heart that I inform you that my beautiful wife Kelly has lost her two-year battle with breast cancer,” Travolta wrote. “She fought a courageous fight with the love and support of so many. My family and I will forever be grateful to her doctors and nurses at MD Anderson Cancer Center, all the medical centers that have helped, as well as her many friends and loved ones who have been by her side. Kelly’s love and life will always be remembered. I will be taking some time to be there for my children who have lost their mother, so forgive me in advance if you don’t hear from us for a while. But please know that I will feel your outpouring of love in the weeks and months ahead as we heal. All my love, JT.”

Born Kelly Kamalelehua Smith in Honolulu, she changed her name to Kelly Preston before securing her first film role in the 1985 romcom “Mischief,” then appeared in another teen comedy, “Secret Admirer.”

Naya Rivera Missing on SoCal Lake ... Son Found Alive on Boat

Naya Rivera is missing on a Southern California lake after her toddler son was found alive, but alone on a boat ... TMZ has confirmed.

Ventura County Sheriff’s deputies found the 4-year-old boy on the boat – presumably rented by Naya – shortly before 5 PM on Lake Piru, but Naya was not there. Law enforcement sources tell us her son, **Josey Hollis Dorsey**, told deputies his mom had jumped in the water ... but didn’t come back up.

Divers immediately started searching the lake, but so far

there's no sign of the "Glee" star. The search was suspended due to nightfall, but it's expected to resume Thursday, shortly after sunrise.

TMZ was told Rivera's life jacket was still in the boat and Josey was asleep when the boat was first found. Josey is okay and is now with family members. Naya and the boy's father, **Ryan Dorsey**, divorced in 2018 and **share custody** of Josey.

Kanye West In Midst of Serious Bipolar Episode ... Family Very Concerned

Kanye West is in the throes of a serious bipolar episode, our Kanye sources say, and those around him are concerned it has impacted his decision-making and some of the things he's said in the last week ... sources close to Kanye tell TMZ.

Our Kanye sources tell us, he suffers a serious bout with his bipolar disorder, usually once a year ... and our sources say Kanye's in the midst of one now.

As you know, Ye announced he's **running for president** via Twitter over the weekend, and also did a rambling interview with Forbes ... which drew **harsh criticism**, confusion and concern.

Our sources say his family and those close to him are worried, but they believe things will stabilize as they have in the past. The problem here, we're told – Kanye's proclamations are causing problems.

Of course, Kanye's apparent bipolar episode hasn't kept him from garnering presidential campaign support from the likes of **Elon Musk** ... who hung with the rapper just days prior to his announcement.

Others are much more skeptical, and that skepticism likely grew in the wake of Kanye's wide-interview with Forbes ... in which he dumped **Trump**, slammed **Biden**, revealed he's running as part of a new party called the "Birthday Party," claimed he

had COVID-19, pushed an anti-vaxx narrative and talked a lot about God.

What the interview didn't touch on, weirdly, was Kanye's mental health.

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England's senior Reform rabbi, Laura Janner-Klausner, is stepping down

([JTA](#)) – England's senior Reform movement rabbi, Laura Janner-Klausner, has led the movement in supporting refugees, fighting anti-Semitism, working for LGBT rights and making the progressive case for Israel.

Now Janner-Klausner, who has led Reform Judaism since 2012, is leaving that post. She will step down on Oct. 1, the movement announced.

Reform Chair Geoffrey Marx said she “has made Britain better.”

Janner-Klausner will begin working on a doctorate in digital theology at Durham University at the start of the coming academic year, according to a statement posted on Reform Judaism's website.

She said her research “will be looking at the experience of Jewish young adults who are involved in online communities and seeing how this impacts on their perception and participation in our in-person community activities. I am also going to be training leaders in resilience, especially in times of

crisis.”

The statement said “Reform Judaism will now take a period of time to review and consult before announcing its intentions.”

Applicants to nursing courses in England up 16% as NHS employs record number of nurses and midwives

A record number of nurses and midwives are employed in the NHS, as the Nursing and Midwifery’s Council reports its largest ever annual increase of registered nursing and midwifery professionals.

Around 18,370 more nurses, midwives and nursing associates are now on the Nursing and Midwifery Council’s permanent register to work in the UK compared to a year ago, bringing the total number to 716,607 by 31 March 2020. The number of people trained in the UK leaving the register has also fallen to a five-year low.

The number of nursing and midwifery applicants to English universities has also risen for the second year running as the Government works towards delivering 50,000 more nurses by the end of Parliament.

The latest UCAS stats show that applicant numbers for nursing and midwifery courses are up 16% year-on-year, reaching 47,320 by the end of June.

This is the second year in a row that applicant numbers have

risen. In 2019 there was a 6.4% increase in people accepted onto nursing and midwifery courses in England compared to 2018.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I'm delighted to see record numbers of nurses and midwives now working in our NHS as we work towards delivering 50,000 more nurses in this parliament.

As we continue our battle with this deadly disease, our world leading healthcare system has never been more important. We will continue to give it the support it needs today, as well as protecting it for generations to come.

Nurses have saved countless lives during the pandemic, and the NHS simply couldn't function without them.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

This pandemic demonstrated just how talented and valued our brilliant nurses and midwives are, and it is fantastic to see an explosion of applications for nursing and midwifery courses.

As well as a hugely rewarding career in one of the world's best healthcare systems, degree students will benefit from at least £5,000 a year from the Government in free additional support during their studies.

With over 12,000 more fully qualified nurses working in our NHS compared to last year, we are well on our way to delivering 50,000 more by the end of this Parliament.

The number of new applicants between January and June was 68% higher than the same period last year (11,360 in 2020,

compared to 6,750 in 2019).

Nearly two thirds of nursing and midwifery applicants living in England are mature students aged 21 or over, a 24% increase on last year.

New applicants or those without an offer can still seek a place at university via the clearing process which runs from the 6th July to 20th October.

Student nurses and midwives starting courses from September will benefit from new guaranteed, additional support of at least £5,000 a year to help with their living costs, which they won't have to pay back.