

Helping you stay warm, well and safe this winter



“Winter can be a testing time for all of us as we try not to catch colds and flu and to stay warm. Your local NHS is here to help you help yourself this winter, and have put together this newsletter with colleagues from the councils, emergency services and local doctors. These tips can help you keep warm, well and safe during the winter months. It is important that you act now on some of the tips such as getting your home ready for the cold and getting the flu jab in the lead up to winter and over the cold winter months.”

Dr Adrian Dawson, Director of Public Health, NHS Bournemouth and Poole

Dr David Phillips, Director of Public Health, NHS Dorset

Keep warm, keep well, keep safe

Cold homes can have a significant impact on health, and one of the best ways you can keep yourself healthy over the winter months is to keep your home warm.

Tips to maintain your health during cold weather include:

- Keep your home warm. If possible your main living room should be between around 18-21C (64-70F) and the rest of the house at a minimum of 16C (61F).
- Use a hot-water bottle or electric blanket (but not both at the same time) to keep your bed warm.
- Wrap up warm, inside and out. Several thin layers of clothes are better than one thick layer.
- Don't forget to wear hats, gloves and scarves. If possible, stay inside during a cold period if you have heart or breathing problems.
- Keep active. Move around at least once an hour and don't sit down for long periods of time. Even light exercise will help keep you warm.

Financial assistance and grants to insulate your home

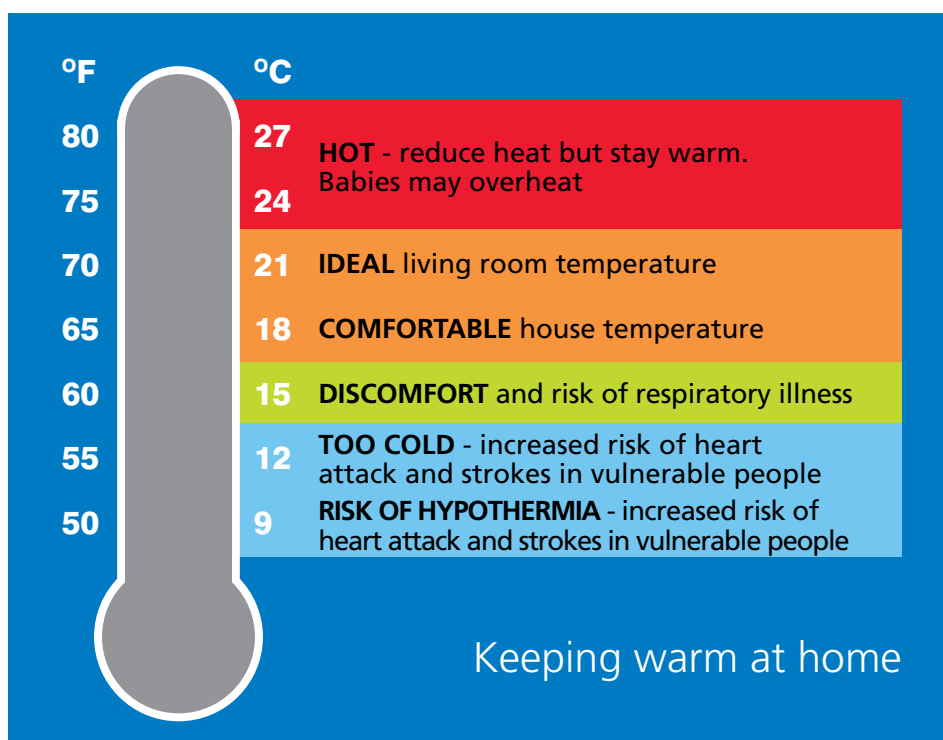
You may be able to claim financial and practical help with heating your home. Grants available include the Warm Front Scheme, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments. Speak to the **Dorset Energy Advice Centre on 0800 975 0166** for impartial advice on what is available to you.

Winter Fuel Payments of up to £400 are available if you were born on or before July 5 1950.

To find out more about Winter Fuel Payments, call 08459 151515 (8.30am-4.30pm Monday-Friday, textphone 0845 601 5613) or visit www.direct.gov.uk/winterfuel

Cold Weather Payments may be available to you if you receive certain benefits or have a child who is disabled or under the age of five.

To find out more about Cold Weather Payments contact Jobcentre Plus (you can find the nearest office in the phonebook) or visit www.direct.gov.uk/coldweatherpayment



Keeping warm at home

Keep warm, **keep well**, keep safe

Be a flu fighter – get the jab now

Flu can be very uncomfortable and come on quite suddenly. Symptoms usually include fever, chills, headaches and aching muscles as well as a cough and sore throat. It can be very severe; last year over 600 people died from flu.

Some people are more susceptible to flu and the complications that go with it. If you are in an 'at-risk group' you can get yourself protected by visiting your GP.

'At risk' groups who are entitled to a free seasonal flu jab are:

- those aged 65 or over
- those who have a serious illness, including:
 - chronic heart conditions
 - chronic respiratory conditions (including asthma)
 - chronic kidney disease or diabetes
- lowered immunity due to HIV, steroid medication or cancer treatment
- those who live in a long-stay residential home
- main carers of an older or disabled person
- mums to be
- health care workers

To find out more about the seasonal flu vaccination talk to your GP or pharmacist, call NHS Direct on **0845 46 47** or go to **www.nhs.uk**



Bust those myths

I have an egg allergy, therefore I cannot have the jab

The flu vaccine is cultivated using eggs, however only people who are genuinely allergic to eggs, not simply those who do not or cannot eat them, are unable to have the jab. So if you eat cake then you can still have the jab. An egg free alternative can be made available in genuine circumstances.

I've never had the flu and have never had a jab

Even though you may not feel ill does not mean you aren't carrying it. You could pass the virus on to a vulnerable family member, which could have serious consequences. There is no such thing as natural immunity as the strains of flu virus constantly change.

The effects of the jab are worse than getting flu itself

There are some common side effects to the vaccination, however these are usually mild. They include:

- sore arm
- neck pain
- local reaction at the site of vaccination
- temperature

I don't want to have the jab because it contains the swine flu vaccine

Each year the **World Health Organization** (WHO) decides which three flu viruses are likely to be the greatest threat that year and these strains are included in the vaccination. This year the swine flu vaccine is included; however it is important to know that there have been no serious side effects reported as a result of someone receiving this vaccine.



Help stop the spread

The flu virus is spread in the small droplets of saliva coughed or sneezed into the air by an infected person. It can also spread if someone with the virus touches common surfaces such as door handles with unwashed hands.

Preventing the spread of germs is the most effective way to slow the spread of flu. Always:

- carry a tissue
- cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue
- bin the tissue as soon as possible
- clean your hands as soon as you can or use a sanitiser gel

Put simply - catch it, bin it, kill it

The winter vomiting bug - Norovirus

Norovirus is the most common stomach bug in the UK, affecting people of all ages and tends to be more common in the winter. If you get it, please stay inside to prevent the spread of infection. Although not normally dangerous, norovirus is contagious and spreads very easily.

The first sign of norovirus is usually a sudden sick feeling followed by forceful vomiting and watery

Could you be a good neighbour this winter?

Look out for elderly friends and neighbours. Check they're safe and well through the winter. If you are worried contact your local council or ring the Age UK helpline on 0800 00 99 66.

diarrhoea. Some people may also have:

- a raised temperature (over 38C/100.4F)
- headaches
- stomach cramps
- aching limbs

Most people make a full recovery within a couple of days. Apart from the risk of dehydration, the illness is not generally dangerous and there are usually no long-lasting effects.

The main risk is dehydration from your body losing water and salts from vomiting and diarrhoea. Keep drinking fluids whilst you are unwell to prevent dehydration.



Treatment

It's best to let the illness run its course and your body usually fights off the infection within a couple of days. You don't need to see a doctor. It is important to have plenty to drink and try to eat foods that are easy to digest, such as soup, rice, pasta and bread. Babies should continue with their normal feeds.

To reduce the risk of passing the virus onto others, wash your hands regularly and stay at home until you are clear of symptoms for 48 hours.

If you need medical advice you can telephone NHS Direct or your GP practice rather than visiting in person.

NHS Direct: 0845 46 47

GP out of hours: 0845 600 1013

Eat healthily

During the winter it is important to keep a balanced diet and ensure you eat healthily. Here are some top tips to help you eat well over the winter:

- try to include a good variety of foods, eating something from each of the five food groups every day (see the eatwell plate)
- eat regularly - for people with small appetites, eating little and often is best
- have at least one hot meal a day
- take hot drinks throughout the day - especially one before bedtime
- drink plenty of fluid - aim for 6-8 cups per day of a variety of fluids including tea, coffee, fruit juice, cordial and water

Keep active to beat the winter blues and the winter bulge



Dark evenings and winter weather don't exactly encourage you to get out and exercise but regular activity is an essential part of any lifestyle whatever the season. Getting active can improve your energy levels, help strengthen your immune levels and even improve your mood.

If the shorter days are affecting your mood, being active can improve your sense of well-being.

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Department of Health in association with the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

Keep warm, keep well, **keep safe**

Winter driving

Road and weather conditions can vary dramatically during the winter so follow some simple advice to help you keep safe on the roads.

Get advice and travel info from www.highways.gov.uk

Avoid trips and falls

Anyone is capable of falling, but the likelihood of this happening increases as we get older. There are many reasons why people fall. Some of the more common causes are side effects of medication, poor vision, hazards in the home, foot problems, feeling dizzy or lack of exercise.

The tips listed below can help to prevent you falling:

- take regular exercise to keep muscles strong and supple
- on stairs and in bathrooms and toilets, consider having grab rails fitted
- ensure your home is well lit, particularly on stairs and landings
- take care of your feet and cut, or have your toenails cut regularly
- avoid poorly fitting shoes
- ensure you have your medications reviewed every year
- never allow flexes or wires to trail across the floor and avoid clutter on the ground
- replace worn rugs and carpets

- minimise bending and climbing. Keep items that are used a lot in easy reach

If you fall – don't panic. You will probably feel a little shocked and shaken but try to stay calm.

If you are hurt and unable to get up:

- try to summon help
- move to a soft surface
- keep warm
- try to keep moving

Always tell someone if you have had a fall and call your GP practice if you are worried.

In severe weather

When the weather is very cold and icy, it is best if you try to stay in so you are not at risk of falling.

Keep salt by your front door and if you do need to go out, spread the path with salt before you walk on it.

You can't be sued if someone slips on a path you have cleared. People walking on snow and ice have responsibility to be careful themselves so it is unlikely you would be prosecuted if someone falls on an area you have cleared. For more information have a look at the snow code on www.direct.gov.uk

If you know there is snow and ice forecast, make sure you plan ahead and rearrange non-urgent appointments, arrange for any medication to be delivered and



make sure you have enough food in your house. So you won't need to go out to the shops prepare a winter store cupboard containing:

- long-life or dried milk
- tinned milk puddings
- tinned corned beef/ham
- tinned sardines/pilchards/tuna
- cocoa powder
- tea/coffee
- tinned fruit and vegetables
- baked beans
- long-life pure fruit juice
- instant mashed potato
- lentils
- tinned/packet soups
- breakfast cereals
- crackers
- plain biscuits
- pasta
- rice

For more local information

www.bp.nhs.uk – health advice and information from NHS Bournemouth and Poole

www.dorset.nhs.uk - health advice and information from NHS Dorset

www.sourcedirectory.org.uk – information, advice, and support directory for adults in Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset

For more information about keeping warm, well and safe this winter call **01202 541585** or **01305 361285**

This newsletter is produced jointly by NHS Bournemouth and Poole and NHS Dorset who are working together to keep you warm, well and safe this winter.