

Stay well this winter with the help of a new NHS website

Winter is traditionally a very busy time for GPs and hospitals. It brings with it illnesses and ailments such as flu, coughs and colds and Norovirus (the winter vomiting bug.)

That's why it pays to be prepared so that you can stay well during this period. And a new campaign, launched by doctors in Bradford and Airedale, will help you do exactly that.

Listen out for adverts which will be aired on local radio stations and take a look at the new site online, www.nhsstaywell.org

Here you'll find great health advice which will enable you to enjoy a happy and healthy winter, Christmas and New Year. And if you are unfortunate enough to become ill, there is a wealth of information which will help you make the right choices.

Is your medicine cabinet stocked up?

If the contents of your medicine cabinet or first-aid kit amount to nothing more than a tube of out-of-date insect repellent, then it's time to stock up! Did you realise that many illnesses such as coughs and colds cannot be treated with antibiotics? There's no need to bother your GP. Instead you can treat yourself successfully and safely at home with self care.

You never know when you might fall ill, so it's always best to keep a range of everyday medicines at home just in case. Make sure you have remedies for colds and sniffles, such as painkillers like paracetamol and ibuprofen, as well as cough linctus and lozenges and sprays for sore throats. Your local pharmacist will be able to advise you on the best remedies. You can read all about treating winter colds on the new website.

Use your pharmacist

Don't forget: Your pharmacist is a great source of advice and help when you are feeling unwell – and you don't even have to make an appointment. Find out when your local pharmacy is open and keep a note of the times. Check out the website www.nhsstaywell.org to see the services your pharmacist offers.

Plan ahead with prescriptions

Do you take pills or medication regularly? If so, make sure you are well stocked up over the winter period, particularly if the weather is bad and you cannot get out. Plan ahead with prescriptions. Don't leave things until the last minute and risk the danger of running out of your medicines.

Check your symptoms

The new website will also help you check your symptoms if you do begin to feel unwell. The NHS Symptoms Checker is simple and quick to use and will enable you to diagnose and

recognise your problem. You can also use it for a family member or friend, and it will tell you what kind of treatment you may need.

Slips and trips

Winter is the time of year when many of us fall victim to slips and trips because of the icy weather and the slippery conditions under foot. Use your head when it comes to your feet! Invest in sensible footwear with good grips. But if you do take a tumble, many aches and sprains can be treated with self-care at home without an unnecessary trip to A&E. Read all about PRICE – Protection, Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation – on the new website and how to avoid HARM – Heat, Alcohol, Running, Massage.

Beat those winter aches and pains

Winter can bring on aches and pain or even make your arthritis seem worse. The colder weather can also mean cold hands and feet due to a common condition called Raynaud's syndrome. The new website has advice on how to treat these conditions. It also has great tips about staying active – exercise is not just for the summer! And you can also read about the best foods to beat the winter blues and avoid winter weight gain.

Where and when to get help

Self-care is the perfect solution for many minor ailments but if you need medical help fast, there are lots of solutions. You can call your GP surgery. Outside of normal surgery hours you'll be directed to the out-of-hours service. You can also call NHS 111, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and for minor injuries there are MIUs (Minor Injuries Units) or Walk-In centres. The new site also has advice about dental emergencies.

A&E is for real emergencies

Did you know every year millions of people go to A&E when they don't need to? Make sure your visit is really necessary or you could either face a lengthy wait or stop someone who really needs the service from being seen. Head to the website www.nhsstaywell.org for help and advice about what to do when feeling unwell or in an emergency.

There's no need to worry about the winter months if you wrap up warm and are prepared. And the www.nhsstaywell.org campaign will help you enjoy them. Keep dropping by to see new information and advice being added and updated. Make sure this website is your new winter friend!