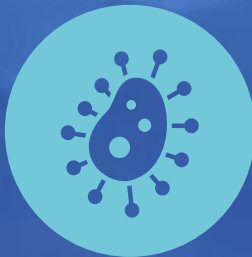


Keep warm and well this winter



**HELP US
HELP YOU**
STAY WELL THIS WINTER

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Keep warm and well this winter

The cold and damp weather, ice, snow and high winds can all aggravate any existing health problems and make us more vulnerable to respiratory winter illnesses. But there are lots of things you can do to stay well this winter including keeping your home warm.

If you, or the people you care for and support do fall ill, even if you think it's just a cold, please take advice from your pharmacist, GP or NHS 111 before it gets more serious. This can be the best and quickest way to help you recover and get back to normal.

If you're worried about your symptoms or think you may have coronavirus but are not sure what to do, use the NHS 111 online service (<https://111.nhs.uk>) or call 111 if you cannot get help online.

The flu virus strikes in winter and it can be far more serious than you think. That's why the flu jab is free if you're aged 65 or over, or if you have a long-term health condition. If you work in the care profession or are the main carer of an older or disabled person you may also be eligible for the free flu jab via your GP or employer.

Make sure you and those you care for have prescriptions and medicines before your pharmacy or GP practice closes for Christmas and make sure they're stocked up with enough food supplies for a few days, in case they can't go out.

Be prepared this winter, visit www.leicestershire.gov.uk/winter-weather for the latest information from the County Council.



Flu vaccinations

The Flu vaccination is available every year to help protect adults and children at risk of flu and its complications.

Flu can be unpleasant, but if you're otherwise healthy, it'll usually clear up on its own within a week.

But flu can be more serious in certain people, such as:

- anyone aged 65 and over pregnant women
- children and adults with an underlying health condition (such as long-term heart or respiratory disease)
- children and adults with weakened immune systems

Anyone in these risk groups is more likely to develop potentially serious complications of flu, such as pneumonia (a lung infection) so it's important that they have a flu vaccine every year to help protect them.

It is safe to have the winter **Covid-19 booster** and flu vaccinations at the same time.

Who should get the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is routinely given on the NHS to:

- are 65 and over (including those who will be 65 by 31 March 2024)
- have certain health conditions
- are pregnant
- are in long-stay residential care
- receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
- live with someone who is more likely to get a severe infection due to a weakened immune system, such as someone living with HIV, someone who has had a transplant, or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis
- all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2023
- school-aged children (from Reception to Year 11)

For more information visit

www.nhs.uk/getflujab



Stopping the spread of infection

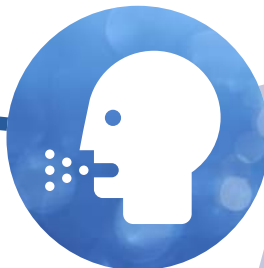
Effective hand hygiene is the single most important thing you can do to help reduce the spread of infections and protect you and those you support and care for along with getting your vaccinations if you are eligible.

There are some simple precautions which can be taken to prevent healthy people catching germs. They include:

- When coughing or sneezing, use tissues which should be disposed of immediately and hands washed
- If no tissues are available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve not your hands
- If possible, avoid contact with people who are sick
- Clean and frequently disinfect hard surfaces at home or work, especially when someone is ill
- Strengthen your immune system – get plenty of sleep, keep physically active, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food

For latest government advice on stopping the spread of infection, please visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/preventing-and-controlling-infections

For the latest government advice for adult social care please visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-health-and-social-care-act-2008-code-of-practice-on-the-prevention-and-control-of-infections-and-related-guidance



Prepare your vehicle for winter

Severe weather can arise when least expected. Driving can become hazardous and it is important to be prepared and to be aware of how to drive in different circumstances.

Some tips for drivers:

- Always check the weather forecast ahead of your journey
- Prepare an emergency kit for your vehicle. This should include: a torch and spare batteries, warm clothes and blankets, first-aid kit, jump start leads, road atlas, mobile phone and car charger, sunglasses and shovel
- Check oil, anti-freeze screen wash and brake fluid levels and that tyres have sufficient tread e.g. more than 2mm
- Wiper blades should be in good condition and do not leave streaks / smears on your windscreen
- Batteries may require additional charging in winter. Ensure that all electrical features in your car are switched off until the engine is running

For more information and advice on driving in severe weather conditions, visit highwaysengland.co.uk and www.metoffice.gov.uk

Gritting

Gritting is usually done in the evenings and overnight when temperatures are at their lowest, we don't normally go out gritting during the day, but we do if it is snowing.

We have regular gritting routes and grit all A and B roads across the county. We also try to ensure that we grit one route into most villages where possible. If you do need to head out, check out our interactive gritting map showing our first priority and second priority road gritting routes. You can also search by road, postcode and priority level.

Another useful resource for checking whether there are issues that could affect your journey is www.one.network

Always consider whether your journey is essential.

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/winter-weather



Protect your property this winter

Regular maintenance

- Ensure heating systems receive regular maintenance
- Check and ensure all at risk water pipes and taps are properly lagged
- Check for leaks and drips especially from overflows
- Ensure you are familiar with the location of stopcocks for your property including external buildings

Unattended property

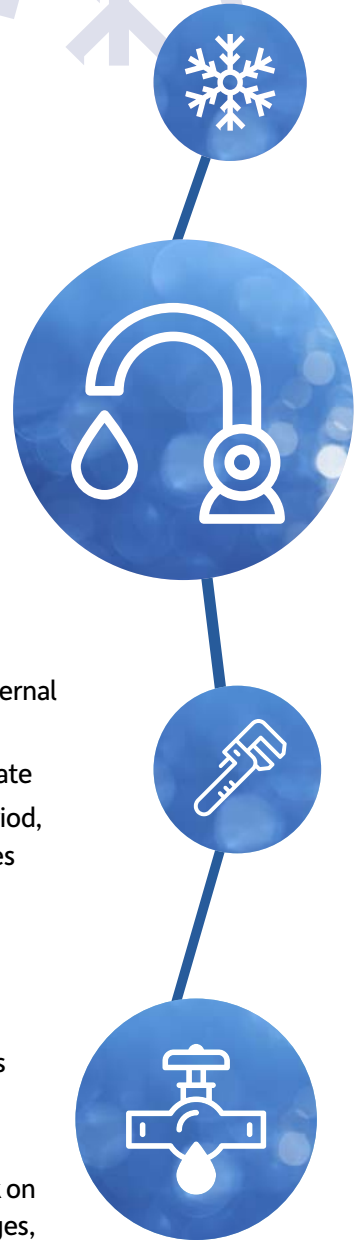
- Ensure heating system thermostats are working and remain on, at or around 10°C during the day or that there are sufficient levels of Oil/LPG in the tanks to fuel the heating system
- Turn off the water supply at the stopcocks and at any external isolation valves to other external buildings
- Open hatches to loft spaces to allow warmer air to circulate
- If the property is going to be unattended for a longer period, open taps in toilets and kitchens to drain water from pipes

On your return to the building

- Keep water supplies turned off until temperatures are at normal levels and check for leakage as pipes warm up
- Close all taps and open the stopcocks and check for leaks

In the event of an emergency

- If a pipe had fractured, do not turn the water supply back on and contact a plumber. Use local newspapers, yellow pages, the internet or personal recommendations for contact details.



Five ways to stay healthy this winter

It may be cold outside, but winter needn't be the unhealthiest time of year for you and your family. Here are five ways to make sure that, even when your body is telling you to hibernate, you can keep healthy and fit, no matter what the weather's like.

Banish winter tiredness

Many people feel tired and sluggish during winter. It is helpful to:

- get outdoors in natural daylight as much as possible
- get a good night's sleep – go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- destress with exercise or meditation – stress has been shown to make you feel tired

Due to the lack of sunlight in the winter months most people do not make enough vitamin D and adults should take a 10 microgram supplement of vitamin D daily between October and April to help their overall health and wellbeing.

Eat more fruit and veg

When it's cold and dark outside, it can be tempting to fill up on unhealthy comfort food. However, it's important to ensure you still have a healthy diet and include five portions of fruit and veg a day. Add extra vegetables to your soups, casseroles and slow cooker meals.

Have protein at each meal

You are more likely to get a cold in winter, so make sure your immune system is in tip-top condition. Meat, fish, chicken, beans, nuts and pulses as well as dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais are great sources of protein, and essential vitamins and minerals which help look after our muscles and bone health.

Try new activities for the whole family

Don't use the cold winter months as an excuse to stay in and lounge around. Instead, get out with the whole family to try out a new activity – maybe taking a bracing winter walk in a local the park, following the latest government guidelines.

Regular exercise helps control your weight, boost your immune system, and is a good way to break the tension that can build if the family is constantly cooped up inside the house.

Have a hearty breakfast

Make time for breakfast, winter is the perfect season for porridge. Eating a warm bowlful on a cold morning isn't just a delicious way to start your day, it also helps boost your intake of starchy foods and fibre.

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing

Staying warm inside

There are simple measures you can take to prevent you or the people you care for or support getting hypothermia, which is when a person's body temperature drops below 35°C (95°F). Normal body temperature is around 37°C (98.6°F). A healthy diet with plenty of fluids, warm drinks and regular meals can help provide energy so your body can generate heat. In warm environments (indoors) we can lose more fluid, so aim to drink at least 1,500ml or more every day. Avoiding alcohol, caffeine and smoking can also help as they all increase the rate at which the body loses heat.

In terms of helping others, keep an eye on any elderly or ill neighbours, relatives and people you support to ensure that they are keeping their house warm during cold weather. The government offers a winter fuel allowance for older people living alone.

If you have a baby, put a room thermometer in the room where they sleep in order to monitor the temperature. Keep it at 16-20°C (60.8-68°F).

Staying warm outside

Make sure you and the people you care for and support are prepared for cold weather by checking the forecast and weather warnings on the news or on www.metoffice.gov.uk

Multiple thin layers of clothing trap air, keeping you warm more effectively than one thick layer. It helps to keep active when it's cold. Appropriate footwear, waterproof and windproof clothing gives the best protection.



What is Hypothermia?

Hypothermia is a dangerous drop in body temperature below 35°C (95°F). Normal body temperature is around 37°C (98.6°F).

Hypothermia can be serious if not treated quickly. You should call 999 and give first aid if you notice signs of hypothermia.

Who's at risk?

Some groups of people are more vulnerable to hypothermia. They include:

- babies and children – they lose heat faster than adults
- older people who are inactive and don't eat well
- heavy alcohol and drug users – their bodies lose heat faster

Check in on people you care for, support and elderly neighbours regularly during cold weather to make sure their home is warm.

Symptoms of hypothermia

Early signs of hypothermia include:

- shivering
- slurred speech
- tiredness
- cold and pale skin
- slow breathing
- confusion

If their temperature drops to 32°C or lower, they'll usually stop shivering completely and may pass out. This is a sign that their condition is getting worse and emergency medical help is needed.

Hypothermia in babies

Babies with hypothermia may look healthy, but their skin will feel cold. They may also be limp, unusually quiet and refuse to feed.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/hypothermia

Where to go for the right medical care

999 - For life threatening emergencies call 999

Call 111 - If you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency, call NHS 111 for clinical advice, assessment and for direction to the most appropriate services for treatment.

GP, Pharmacy, www.nhs.uk - For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacist. You can also access NHS advice at www.nhs.uk

Staying warm

If you need advice about keeping your home warm, heating it safely or if you are struggling to pay your bills visit www.firstcontactplus.org.uk/our-services/warm-homes or www.leicestershire.gov.uk/home-energy-grants

If you are concerned that the people you care for or support may be in a heating crisis, then please refer them to the Warm Homes service.



Warm homes

Need more help?

The Warm Homes service provides free, impartial advice and support on how you can improve your home and health. This can include:

- Understanding your living conditions to help you save money on energy.
- Looking at your energy suppliers and tariffs to make sure you are getting the best deals
- Making sure you are getting any grants and benefits you are entitled to
- Identify measures to improve the energy efficiency of your home



The Warm Homes Service can be accessed via First Contact Plus

Call: ☎ **0116 305 4286**

Visit: ➡ www.firstcontactplus.org.uk

Have you been contacted out of the blue?

Scam calls and e-mails can be difficult to spot – try these dos and don'ts to help protect yourself:

- **Don't** click on links or attachments in suspicious e-mails or text messages.
- **Don't** respond to messages asking for personal or financial details.
- **Do** be suspicious of cold callers offering 'technical support' and don't install any software, or grant remote access to your computer.
- **Do** challenge - genuine companies don't ask for financial information, passwords or log in details when contacting you. Your bank wouldn't ask you to move money to a 'safe' account.
- **Don't** send money to someone you don't really know – for example, someone you have only met online.
- **Caller at the door?** Bogus Callers may look and sound the part but will often give false details.
- **Do** use a door chain if you decide to open the door and make sure your back door is locked.
- **Do you know who they are?** – check identity with the head office, a number from the telephone directory or recent bill.
Don't use any number on their ID badge.
- **Don't** agree to any work at the door.
- **Do** be scam aware; talk to family, friends and neighbours and learn more www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/training/friends-elearning
- **Don't** feel embarrassed if you have been a victim of a scam – anyone can get caught out.

To report a scam, contact the following organisations:

Action Fraud – www.actionfraud.police.uk

Citizen's Advice Consumer Helpline – 0808 223 1133

For up to date scams information and advice follow Leicestershire Trading Standards Services at www.facebook.com/leicstradingstandards