

Keeping Well This Winter

Over a third of people in the UK aged over 65 say they dread the cold weather in winter.

This booklet is designed to help you 'Keep Well This Winter' with information on staying warm and safe, flu information (including your FREE flu vaccination), the NHS 111 service and help with fuel costs.



Second Edition

Blaby District



Staying Healthy Forum



the heart of Leicestershire

www.blabystayinghealthy.co.uk

www.blaby.gov.uk

NHS
East Leicestershire and Rutland
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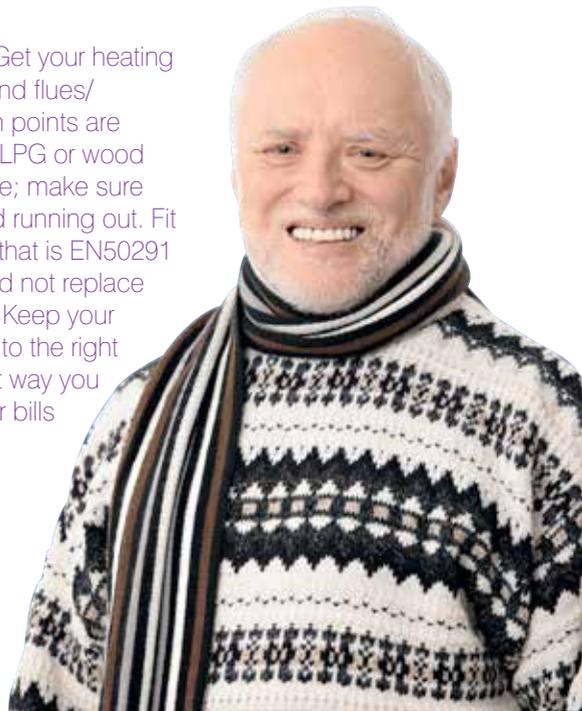
- Cold weather is linked to serious health problems such as flu, heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression
- Every winter in the UK 25,000-30,000 deaths are linked to the cold weather
- 9 in 10 winter deaths are in older people

The chances of these problems are higher if one or more of these apply to you:

- If you are aged over 65
- If you are on a low income (can't afford heating bills)
- If you have a long-term health condition, such as those affecting the heart, lungs or kidneys
- If you are disabled

Top 10 Tips For 'Keeping Well This Winter'

1. **Get your free flu vaccine:** Lots of people are entitled to a free flu vaccination. Groups include those aged over 65, those aged under 65 with underlying health conditions/undergoing certain treatments, those living in long stay residential accommodation, pregnant women and carers. This year 2-4 year olds will also be offered a free flu nasal vaccine in general practice. For more specific information and to find out if you are eligible for a free flu vaccination, please refer to page 5.
2. **Get your home ready for winter:** Get your heating and cooking appliances checked and flues/ chimneys swept ensuring ventilation points are not blocked. If you use heating oil, LPG or wood products as the main heating source; make sure you have sufficient supplies to avoid running out. Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm that is EN50291 compliant, but fitting an alarm should not replace regular maintenance of appliances. Keep your home warm by setting your heating to the right temperature (18-21°C 65-70°F), that way you can keep your home warm and your bills as low as possible.



Top 10 Tips For 'Keeping Well This Winter' Continued

- 3. Keep yourself safe:** Avoid becoming a victim of crime during the winter. Fit good window and door locks and always use them. Store your car keys out of sight and never leave your car running unattended. Don't let strangers into your home and always check the ID of anyone calling at your door, no matter how official they may look. You can report anyone suspicious to the Police on 101.
- 4. Keep yourself warm:** Layer your clothing to stay warm and wear shoes with a good grip if you need to go outside. Try to keep moving, it is important not to stay still for too long as movement generates heat to help keep you warm. Aim to spread your activities and chores out over the day to help keep you moving.
- 5. Eat well:** Food is a vital source of energy which helps to keep your body warm. Try to make sure that you have regular hot meals and drinks throughout the day.
- 6. Wash and clean your hands:**
Good hand hygiene (washing your hands regularly) can help prevent the spread of Flu, Norovirus and Pneumonia. Prevent the spread even further by covering your mouth/nose when you cough or sneeze.
- 7. Learn a few simple first aid steps:** Slips, trips and falls can increase in winter, especially in icy weather therefore knowledge of basic first aid could be very useful. A number of accredited first aid providers and useful educational resources are available.
- 8. Check the weather forecast:** Plan ahead for severe weather to ensure you have enough food and medicines. Avoid driving in severe weather and make regular checks of your vehicle, including tyres.
- 9. Prevent fires in the home:** Make sure you have a fitted and working smoke alarm. Unplug heaters/blankets when they are not in use. Do not leave candles unattended. Do not use portable heaters for drying clothes.
- 10. Look after yourself but also check on older neighbours or relatives:** Make sure they are safe, warm and well.



About The Flu

What is the flu?

Flu is a highly infectious illness that spreads rapidly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are carrying the virus. An estimated 11,000 deaths were attributable to Flu in the 2012/13 season, the highest since 2008/09.

What are the main symptoms?

Flu symptoms can hit quite suddenly and severely. They usually include fever, chills, headaches, aching muscles and extreme tiredness. You can often get a cough and sore throat. Flu is caused by a virus (not bacteria), therefore antibiotics will not treat it.

Who can get the flu?

Anyone can catch flu, but it can be more serious for certain groups of people, such as:

- People aged over 65
- People who have a serious medical condition
- Pregnant women

If you are in one of these groups, you are more vulnerable to the effects of flu (even if you're fit and healthy) and could develop flu complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia (i.e. more serious illnesses which could result in hospitalisation).

Will there be any side effects from having the flu vaccine?

The injected flu vaccine given to adults contains inactivated flu viruses so cannot give you flu. Your arm may feel a bit sore where you were injected, and some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards, other reactions are very rare.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia disease increases in the Winter and affects the very young, elderly and those with health problems. If you are aged over 65 you are entitled to one dose of the free pneumococcal vaccine to protect you from pneumonia. It is not necessary to have this vaccine yearly. If you are aged under 65 and in a 'risk' group, you will also be entitled to the vaccination. Ask your surgery GP/ practice nurse for more details.



Get Your Free Flu Vaccine

Contact your GP surgery to get your free vaccine if you are in one of the following groups:

- Aged over 65
- Aged under 65 (including children and babies over six months of age) who has one of the following medical conditions:
 - ▷ Heart problems
 - ▷ Chronic respiratory disease or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis or emphysema
 - ▷ Kidney disease
 - ▷ Liver disease
 - ▷ Previous stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
 - ▷ Diabetes
 - ▷ Neurological condition, for example multiple sclerosis (MS) or cerebral palsy
 - ▷ Spleen problems, for example sickle cell
 - ▷ Lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment)
- Household contacts of anyone immunocompromised (i.e. with any of the conditions above)
- All pregnant women, at any stage of pregnancy
- All two, three, and four-year old children
- Those living in a residential or nursing home
- Those caring for an older or disabled person
- Frontline health and social care workers

Get your vaccine as early as possible this winter to get the best protection but it will be available at any time so don't worry if you think you have missed out.

For more information please speak to your GP/practice nurse or visit:
www.orderline.dh.gov.uk



NHS 111

NHS 111 is a service that has been introduced to make it easier for you to access local NHS healthcare services in England. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help when you need it.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation.

Call 111 if:

- You need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
- You think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service
- You don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call
- You need health information or reassurance about what to do next

For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacist in the usual way. If a health professional has given you a specific phone number to call when you are concerned about your condition, continue to use that number.

For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, continue to call 999.



Heating Your Home

There is a possibility that the lack of affordable heating, particularly in homes that are more difficult to heat, could be contributing to excess winter deaths. Please contact the council in the first instance to see how we can help, it may be that we ask you to speak to the Energy Savings Trust. Emergency heating grants are also available for repairing or replacing broken heating systems for vulnerable people in Blaby District. The funding is limited and is offered on a first come, first served basis.

To qualify you:

- Must live in the Blaby District and
- Be an owner occupier or Private Tenant and
- Be age 60+ or
- In receipt of a disability benefit or
- Have a child under 5 and
- Be in receipt of a means tested benefit or
- On a low income

For full details or to talk to a grant officer please call **0116 272 7536** or email housing@blaby.gov.uk.

Grants are limited and are on a first come first served basis.

Contact the Energy Saving Trust on **0300 123 1234** or visit their website at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk.

Other Useful Contacts

Emergency Services – 999

Police (Non-emergency number) – 101

Adult Social Care Services, Leicestershire County Council – 0116 305 0004

Age UK Leicestershire & Rutland (Advice and Information) – 0116 299 2278

Blaby District Council Community Services Team – 0116 272 7725

Blaby District Council Environmental Protection Team – 0116 272 7555

Blaby District Council Housing Options Team – 0116 272 7770

Community Action Partnership – 0116 278 4230

Citizens' Advice Bureau – 0844 848 9009

Alzheimer's Society – 0116 231 1111

Leicestershire Support for Carers – 0845 689 9510

Lifeline Personal Alarm Service – 0300 123 0701

Blaby District Over 50s Forum – 0116 272 7566

Red Cross First Aid Training – 0845 163 3707

This document can be made available on request, in other languages and formats (large print, Braille or on audio tape) by contacting:

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Sportsfield Lane, Huncote, Leicester, LE9 3BN
Tel: 0116 272 7703 Email: leisure@blaby.gov.uk
Website: www.blabystayinghealthy.co.uk

This booklet has been produced by Blaby District Council to provide information about services in the local area. Whilst every effort has been made to verify entries, Blaby District Council cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of the data.

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