

NHS Update – January 2011

Government announces new vision for public health

The Government's new vision for public health, 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' was announced by Secretary of State, Andrew Lansley, this afternoon.

'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' also sets out how funding from the overall NHS budget will be ring-fenced for spending on public health in a recognition that prevention is better than cure.

Local government in Wiltshire will take charge of public health from a national budget which could be in the region of £4 billion. Wiltshire Council will continue to work with Corporate Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Maggie Rae, to provide professional advice and leadership around key challenges like reducing harm from tobacco and alcohol, improving sexual health and ensuring the local population is protected from the impact of major incidents and epidemics such as pandemic flu.

The Department of Health is seeking your views on these changes. Have your say by responding to the public consultation:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_122347.pdf

Investors in Carers scheme launched

They provide care for ill, frail or disabled family members worth £511 million a year in the UK, and yet carers often pay a price in terms of jobs, friendships and even health. Carers are twice as likely as others to become ill.

Now a new awards scheme will reward GP practices and others who give special attention to the needs of these unsung heroes and heroines. Aimed at GP practices who do a really good job of taking care of those who care, it awards bronze, silver and gold accreditation as a reward for some of the best practice that exists across the county, as well as acting as a spur to others to do better.

New mums happy with their care

The maternity service provided by Wiltshire Community Health Services has been rated highly by mums in an independent survey commissioned by the Care Quality Commission.

The survey looked at women's experiences of care provided by hospital and community staff, from early pregnancy to four weeks after the birth. Wiltshire Community Health Services provides maternity services at Princess Anne Wing at Bath Royal United Hospital, at the birthing units at Chippenham Hospital and Trowbridge Hospital and at the birthing centres in Frome and Paulton.

The national survey involved responses from over 25,000 women. In Wiltshire, 238 women responded, all of whom had had a live birth between 1st and 28th February 2010 and were aged 16 years or older. Women who had a home birth were also eligible.

Managing flu-like symptoms

The advice issued by Maggie Rae covers how best to protect yourself and your family against cold and flu viruses, how to treat symptoms as they emerge, and how to make best of use of the wide range of NHS services available if you need them, in order to ensure services like 999 and A&E are kept free for emergencies only.

“If you come into contact with droplets, either in the air, on hands, or hard surfaces, you can catch the viruses. Sneeze into tissues and wash hands afterwards. Remember: ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’. This advice works for all coughs, cold and flu-like illnesses.

“If you are over 65 years of age, a pregnant woman or under 65 years of age with a chronic medical condition you have not yet had your seasonal flu jab we would encourage you to contact your surgery to make an appointment.

“If you do get symptoms such as cough, fever, aching limbs and weakness, you can manage this at home by drinking plenty of fluids, taking over-the-counter medications containing paracetamol and resting.”

Please be mindful to think of other routes to medical treatment rather than calling 999. The following points should be helpful when deciding who to contact.

- Pharmacies offer over-the-counter medicines and advice. As well as being open during regular retail hours, they operate an out-of-hours service on a rota basis
- Call NHS Direct for advice on 0845 46 47 or go to www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk. They can give a wide range of advice and information about many conditions
- Use the minor injuries units at Chippenham and Trowbridge for cuts, breaks, burns and other injuries – but not for colds, flu or vomiting
- Make an appointment with your own GP. Your doctor may be happy to give you medical advice over the telephone if you are unable to make an appointment.
- An out-of-hours service is also available if your GP surgery is closed – the Wiltshire-wide service 0300 111 5717
- If it is a genuine emergency, go to your local A&E department or call 999 for an ambulance.
- NHS Choices is a website where you can find up-to-date and expert advice on a range of illnesses and complaints, as well as find your nearest NHS services. Visit www.nhs.uk
- NHS Direct provides a confidential telephone service, 24 hours a day, to give professional advice and guidance on health issues, call: 0845 46 47.

For further information or copies of documents referred to above, please contact Jo Howes, Community Engagement Manager, 01380 733929 or jo.howes@wiltshire.nhs