

NHS Wiltshire Update– December 2011

1. Free NHS Health Checks

Everyone between the ages of 40 and 74 will be invited for a NHS health check once every five years.

The check will take about 20 minutes and individuals will be asked some simple questions, for example about family history, diet and medication currently being taken. Height, weight, age, blood pressure, sex and ethnicity will be recorded and individuals will also have a simple blood test to check cholesterol levels.

This information will assist in highlighting whether someone is at risk of a heart attack, stroke, kidney disease or diabetes.

Individuals will be taken through their results and discussion will take place, if necessary, on support needed to reduce risks and improve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

2. New campaign launched to raise awareness of illegal tobacco

A campaign has been launched to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal tobacco and the associated crime it brings into communities across the South West.

The campaign is part of the South of England Tackling Illegal Tobacco for Better Health programme, which is a joint initiative between Smokefree South West, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), Trading Standards departments, Police forces and other enforcement and community safety partners.

Illegal tobacco brings increased harm into some of our poorest areas and as no taxes or duty are paid on the tobacco it is offered to children at pocket money prices, making it easier for them to become addicted to smoking.

Figures from a survey undertaken by NEMS Market Research shows:

- Three in five agree that illegal tobacco is a danger to kids
- Nearly four in five think that it brings crime into the community
- Over two thirds who buy illegal tobacco do so from friends, family or colleagues

As part of this awareness, NHS Wiltshire is promoting its Stop Smoking Service in newspapers from January 2012. Stopping smoking provides significant benefits, as the risk from most smoked related illnesses decrease after quitting.

NHS Wiltshire Stop Smoking Service offers free support and advice. Medication is available on prescription and is free for those who do not pay prescription charges. The service provides support in over 100 venues across Wiltshire including GP surgeries, pharmacies and walk-in clinics.

3. Breastfeeding Peer Supporters Training

Volunteers, who passed their breastfeeding training course, supported by NHS Wiltshire are now based at Children's centre in the South West of Wiltshire.

Having trained breastfeeding peer supporters offer new mums advice and support in breastfeeding. Peer supporters play a key role in NHS Wiltshire's strategy to promote and sustain breastfeeding in the county.

Areas are being identified, where breastfeeding rates amongst young mothers is traditionally lower than average, and to encourage breastfeeding further training has been arranged to provide more breastfeeding peer supporters.