

February update 2013

Keep warm and well

With the recent heavy snowfall and icy conditions, NHS Wiltshire is urging people to keep warm and well this winter:

“The cold can have serious consequences, increasing the risk of strokes and heart attacks as well as colds and flu,” says Medical Director Steve Rowlands “Wrapping up warm, keeping the heating turned up and keeping a well-stocked medical cabinet incase you do catch a cold or flu are all sensible steps to take.”

“It’s particularly important to stay indoors during very cold weather if you have a respiratory illness – and all elderly people should avoid going out on icy pavements. This means staying at home until later in the morning when the ice has melted. Even if you have a doctor’s appointment first thing, try and reschedule it for later – your surgery will usually be happy to help with this. It’s better to wait than risk falling on the ice.”

NHS Wiltshire has produced five top tips on staying warm and well this winter.

1. **Keep your home warm** – set your central heating to between 65 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit (18-21 degrees centigrade). Heat the room you sit in during the day to 70 degrees, and your bedroom to 65 degrees. When it’s very cold (as it is at present), set the heating to come on earlier so that you’re not waiting for your home to warm up.
2. **Have your flu jab.** Everyone over 65, or with a wide variety of health conditions, is entitled to one free of charge. Immunity takes effect almost immediately, so even though a flu outbreak is currently well underway, you can still protect yourself by getting the jab – just call your GP to make an appointment.
3. **If you do fall ill with flu, it’s best to stay at home.** Flu is caused by a virus, and cannot be treated with antibiotics – so a visit to your GP is not necessarily the best course of action.
4. **Vomiting and diarrhoea bugs** caused by norovirus are common and very infectious. This can be a very unpleasant condition, but the best advice is to stay at home and drink plenty of fluids until the symptoms pass. Norovirus is highly infectious, with an incubation period of between one and three days. For that reason, you should wait 48 hours after symptoms have stopped before going back to work or school.
5. **Keep a well-stocked medicine cabinet**, with supplies of ibuprofen, paracetamol and your favourite cold remedy at hand.

Where to go when you’re ill

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, burns and other injuries – but not for colds, flu or vomiting;
- Make an appointment with your own GP - an out-of-hours service is also available;
- If it is a genuine emergency, go to your local A&E department or call 999 for an ambulance.

Local campaign to increase teenage booster uptake

As you may know tetanus, diphtheria and polio vaccination is given to young people aged between 13 and 18 as part of the school leavers booster. Locally the vaccine is offered to Year 10 pupils attending Council maintained schools by school nurses. Children attending independent schools are normally vaccinated through their GP practice. Across Wiltshire coverage rates of slightly over 95% have been achieved, which is in line with national averages. However, uptake figures vary significantly between individual GP practices ranging from 76% to 100%. Furthermore there has been little improvement in uptake over recent years. In response to this the Wiltshire Public Health Department have embarked on a campaign to:

- Raise the awareness among both recipients - the teenagers themselves - and their parents;
- the general public and
- local clinicians.

The campaign has been developed in partnership with young people and involves texting, posters and signposting to pertinent websites including Sparksite and the Healthy Schools websites.

The campaign began on the 7th January 2013 for about three months, with around 14,500 texts going out to teenagers on 15th January 2013. A press release will also go out after this date and posters will be displayed in local libraries and schools throughout January, February and March. It is envisaged that the campaign will be evaluated mid 2013.

The next PCT Board Meeting will be held on **Thursday 27 February** – venue to TBC – please refer to the NHS Wiltshire website: www.wiltshire.nhs.uk
 Members of the public are welcome to attend. Papers are published a week before the meeting on or on request from Stacey Saunders, NHS Wiltshire, email: stacey.saunders@wiltshire.nhs.uk
www.wiltshire.nhs.uk