

## Winter Pressures Briefing 2017/18

### Why tell people about Stay Well This Winter Messages?

The campaign aims to support people to stay well during winter months when demand on GP and hospital services is at its' highest.

Many people are not fully aware of the range of services available to them when they feel unwell and will sometimes use services inappropriately.

Giving people simple messages about available services and how to look after their health, particularly during the winter months, can have dramatic impacts on freeing up services for real emergencies.

#### • **Self-Care and Wellbeing**

- **Eating healthily** – hot meals help keep you warm and you should have at least one hot meal per day alongside plenty of hot drinks. Include a good range of food in your diet including fruit and vegetable each day. It's also a good idea to keep basic food items in your cupboard and freezer in case it is too cold to go shopping
- **Keep Moving** - getting plenty of exercise and fresh air are important factors to help you look after your health. If it's not too cold, take a short walk in the middle of the day and look for ways to keep active - get up and walk around, make yourself a warm drink and spread any chores throughout the day.  
Chair-based exercises are helpful if walking is difficult, along with moving your arms and legs and wiggling your toes.
- **Living with a Long Term Condition** – Research shows that people with long-term conditions who take more control of their health and wellbeing feel more able to cope with their health problem, have better pain management, fewer flare ups and more energy. Self-care can help you make the most of living with your condition, rather than avoiding or missing out on things because of it. Self-care puts you in control. Living with a long-term condition brings challenges and it's important to have the confidence, support and information to manage your health. Find out more on from the [Self Care Forum](#)

- **Keep Warm and Keep Well** – It is important to keep homes warm if an individual has a long term health condition, for some disabilities and if someone in the household is over 65. To qualify as warm the home should be at least 18C (64.4F). People should try and have at least one hot meal per day and move around as much as they are able. Following these simple tips can help prevent risk of colds, flu, heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and even depression. If people have difficulty with keeping their home warm, Ealing Healthy Homes project might be able to help. Call them on FREEPHONE number 0800 083 2265.

- **Flu Vaccinations** – If someone is eligible for the flu vaccination – they should get it done! Flu can turn serious very quickly and in extreme cases can be fatal. People are eligible for a free vaccination if they are:

- Over 65
- Pregnant
- Living with an underlying health condition (e.g. heart or lung disease)
- Living with a weakened immune system
- A child who was aged two, three or four on the 31st of the preceding August of the same year
- A child in school year 1,2 or 3
- A carer for someone with an underlying health condition or frontline health or social care worker

#### • **Flu, coughs and cold recovery times**

- **Antibiotics.** They do NOT work on these ailments
- **Cold.** Expect symptoms to last around 1 and a 1/2 weeks
- **Cough.** Expect symptoms to last up to 3 weeks
- **Sore Throat.** Symptoms last around one week
- **Nasal Congestion.** Symptoms last for around 2 and a 1/2 weeks
- **Flu.** Illness from uncomplicated flu can last for three to seven days in most adult although you may feel tired or weak for up to two weeks after this. Complications such as pneumonia can occur in some people and may cause a more prolonged illness.

- **111** is the NHS non-emergency number. It's fast, easy and free. People should call 111 to speak to a highly trained adviser, supported by healthcare professionals. They will ask a series of questions to assess symptoms and immediately direct the caller to the best medical care. If required, they might even suggest the caller sees one of the out of hours GP's available in Ealing.
- **Evening and weekend GP services in Ealing** If someone feels unwell when their GP is closed, they should call NHS 111. If the trained advisor thinks they need a GP weekend or evening appointment they may be referred to a local GP practice. Using this service will not affect their registration with their own GP.
- **Pharmacy** – Pharmacists are highly trained and can provide expert advice on appropriate medicines and when to take them. They are qualified to be able to tell a person which medicines should or should not be taken with medicines already prescribed and being taken. Many pharmacies are open when GPs are not and they don't require an appointment. Many medicines prescribed by a GP are available over the counter from a pharmacist.
- **Keep Your Medicine Cabinet Stocked Up** – A range of common winter illnesses and injuries can be treated at home simply by combining a well-stocked medicine cabinet with plenty of rest. Useful items to keep in a first aid kit or medicine cabinet include:
  - Paracetamol or aspirin (for headaches and other pain)
  - Decongestants (for a stuffy nose)
  - Antacids (for indigestion and heartburn)
  - Antiseptic cream (for minor cuts and grazes)
  - Bandages and plasters (for minor injuries)
  - Clean tweezers (for removing splinters)
  - A thermometer

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<http://www.ealingcvs.org.uk/health/>