

Newsletter – December 2023



With the chilly weather now here, this can be tough on our health especially for those aged 65 and older, and those with heart, kidney, COPD, asthma, or diabetes issues. Wintry weather increases risks of high blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes. Harsh weather conditions can also worsen health problems, increase falls, and make us more vulnerable to respiratory winter illnesses. Staying warm in the winter prevents illnesses like colds, flu, heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia, and depression.

***Keeping yourself and your home warm*** – as recommended by Age UK and UKHSA (UK Health Security Agency), heat your home to a temperature that is comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in rooms that are used such as living room and bedroom and keep bedroom windows closed at night. Layer clothing for warmth, eat well and drink hot beverages.

***Check for safety concerns around your home*** – ensure heating and cooking appliances are safe. Make home safety adjustments; move rugs and mats away from stairs, install a night light near the bed and remove trip hazards like wires and clutter. Install smoke alarms on every floor for early warning of a fire.

***Warm Welcome Spaces*** – visit [www.warmwelcome.uk/find-a-space](http://www.warmwelcome.uk/find-a-space) to access information on places to visit during the winter months, to meet other people, attend groups, read a book, get a warm drink.



**Winter Pressure**

Demands for services tend to increase significantly during the winter months. Most conditions and symptoms can be often treated without seeing a member of our Clinical Team.

***Common Cold*** *–* blocked or runny nose, sore throat, headache, muscle ache, cough, sneezing, raised temperature, pressure in ears and face, loss of taste and smell. To help you get better more quickly; rest and sleep, drink plenty of water, gargle salt water to soothe a sore throat. Take regular paracetamol or ibuprofen to ease aches and lower temperature, use a decongestant spray or tablets to relieve a blocked nose. For advice on treatments, please speak to your local pharmacist.

Doctors do not recommend antibiotics for colds because they will not relieve your symptoms or speed up your recovery. Antibiotics are only effective against bacterial infections, and colds are caused by viruses.

We would recommend carrying out a COVID test if you are experiencing the above symptoms.

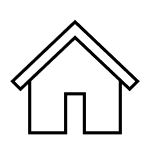
***Earache*** *–* ear pain can affect one or both ears. To ease symptoms of earache, use painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, place a warm or cold flannel on the ear. Do not put anything inside the ear, such as cotton buds, do not try to remove earwax, and do not let water get inside the ear.

***Cough*** – a cough will usually clear up on its own within 3 to 4 weeks. To help with symptoms of a cough, rest, and drink plenty of fluids, take regular paracetamol or ibuprofen. Speak to your local pharmacist about cough syrup, medicine, and sweets. These will not stop your cough but may help you cough less.



**Econsult**

Following feedback from patients, we are in the process of reviewing our econsult system. Planning meetings are taking place with members of our clinical team to establish a more streamlined process, with patients being contacted by the most appropriate clinician.



**Alcohol Advice Drop-In Service**

We are pleased to be able to offer a weekly drop-in service for patients, which starts in December and is being held every Friday 1.30 - 4.30pm. The service is being run by Pauline John, Specialist Alcohol Service, Inclusion.

*The Doctors and Staff would like to wish all patients a very*

*Happy Christmas*

