

Advice for Patients/Carers

Keeping Healthy During the Winter Months

Last winter, about 31,000 people in England died as a result of cold weather. Most of these people were over 75, and many of these deaths could have been avoided.

NHS Choices, 2013

Health and Wellbeing

Vaccinations

Flu is highly infectious, spreads rapidly, and because it's a virus (not bacteria), it can't be treated with antibiotics. You may be at risk from the complications of flu if you are over the age of 65, have a serious medical condition, or are pregnant.



Eden

If you care for an elderly/disabled person, make sure they've had their flu jab. As a carer, you may be entitled to a flu jab too.

A flu jab can be arranged with your GP, who you can contact using one of the telephone numbers listed on the last page of this leaflet.

The 'pneumo' (or pneumococcal) jab is a one-off jab that helps protect you against pneumonia, meningitis and septicaemia. Ask your GP about it if you're over 65 and haven't had one.

Hot meals

The meals on wheels service provides hot meals, and can be arranged through your local authority. The cost of a two course meal is £3.20 per day. If you would like to find out more, you can contact your local Adult Social Care office using one of the telephone numbers listed below:

Adult Social Care (Cumbria County Council)

Office Hours Mon - Thurs 9am to 5pm, Fri 9am to 4.30pm

Eden West Office 01768 812243 or 01768 812233

Eden South Office 01768 812089 or 01768 812231

Eden North Office 01768 812241 or 01768 812253

In an emergency out of office hours, you can contact 01228 526690.

Alternatively (or as well), you could order frozen meals from Wiltshire Farm Foods. For more details, contact 0800 773 773.



Hearing

An over-the-phone hearing check is available from Action on Hearing Loss on 0844 800 3838 (charged at a local rate). Please note that this is just an initial screening test, and should not be a substitute for a full hearing test.

GPs can conduct short hearing tests, which usually take about 15 minutes. A full hearing test can take up to 1 hour, and your GP can refer you to a hospital clinic for this.



Vision

If you are over the age of 60, you are entitled to free NHS sight tests, and may be entitled to optical vouchers to help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses.

You can contact Specsavers Penrith on 01768 214690.

If you have difficulties getting out of the house, Specsavers also offer an at home eye test, delivery and fitting service. Call free on 0800 198 1132 to book.

Foot care

A GP can arrange free treatment through the NHS from a podiatrist or chiropodist if you have trouble looking after your feet, including anything from cutting toenails to attending to corns, blisters and bunions.

Please contact your GP for a referral, or for an alternative toe cutting nail service, contact Age UK Carlisle and Eden on 01768 863618.





Keeping Active

Participating in any amount of physical activity has some health benefits, for example, maintenance of good physical and cognitive function.

Depending on health conditions and mobility, older adults should aim to be active daily, partaking in 2½ hours of moderate intensity activity over a week (in bouts of 10 minutes or more).

If you are at risk of a fall, you should incorporate physical activity to improve balance and coordination at least two days a week.

To find out what's on at your local NCL leisure centre, call: 01768 351212 for Appleby; 01768 863450 for Penrith.

Home Warmth

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

Some tips to keep warm include:

- ❁ Get ready for the cold weather – have your heating system serviced and/or your chimney swept; think about fitting a handrail if you have steps at your front or back door; have plenty of food in the house, just in case it gets too cold to go out; make a list of emergency numbers (including your utility providers); get to know how the timer and thermostat on your heating system work
- ❁ Keep your main living room heated to 18-21°C (65-70°F), and your bedroom heated to approximately 18°C (65°F). Keep your bedroom window closed during the night, and use a hot water bottle or electric blanket (making sure not to use both at the same time)
- ❁ Draw your curtains at dusk and close your doors. This will help to keep the heat in and block draughts out!
- ❁ Eat well, and make sure you have hot meals and drinks throughout the day
- ❁ Wrap up warm – when you're inside and outside! Wear plenty of layers and make sure you have a shawl or blanket handy at home. It's important to keep your hands and face warm, as they can trigger a rise in blood pressure if they get cold
- ❁ Keep as active in your home as possible
- ❁ Make sure you have some warm footwear with non-slip soles if you need to go outside on cold days
- ❁ Check on any older neighbours and relatives you have, making sure they have stocks of food and any medicines they need. If you're worried about an elderly relative or neighbour, you can call Age UK on 01768 863618
- ❁ DON'T block up air vents, as fires and heaters need ventilation



Make sure you have enough of your medicines to last over the bank holidays, and if the weather gets particularly cold. REMEMBER:

- ❁ Drug reviews, medication updates and medical records should be discussed with your GP
- ❁ Prescription home delivery service will be provided by most pharmacies who will collect and then deliver you medication often for a small nominal charge for delivery

Your local pharmacies:

Boots Penrith	01768 862735
Boots Appleby	017683 51410
The Co-operative Pharmacy	01768 862695
Joseph Cowper Limited	01768 862063
Morrisons Penrith	01768 862055
Penrith Health Centre	01768 864761



Help and Support

Financial Help

There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills:

- ❁ Winter Fuel Payment – If you were born on or before 5th January 1952, you could get between £100 and £300 to help pay your heating bills. To find out more about Winter Fuel Payments, call 08459 15 15 15
- ❁ Energy Company Obligation – Under the new Energy Company Obligation (ECO), the largest domestic energy suppliers are obligated to fund energy efficiency improvements in the homes of certain consumers. If you are a homeowner or are living in privately rented accommodation, and are in receipt of certain benefits and/or tax credits, you may be entitled to free or financial help with: boiler repair or replacement; loft and cavity wall; insulation, draught proofing or pipework insulation; and tariff advice. Eligible individuals could also get a Warm Home Discount, a rebate worth £135. To find out more, including what type of support you could be eligible for, contact the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234
- ❁ Cold Weather Payment – These are made during periods of very cold weather to help people to pay for extra heating costs, and equate to £25. You may be able to get Cold Weather Payments if you are in receipt of certain benefits/support. To find out more about Cold Weather Payments, contact your local Jobcentre Plus on 01768 242888

If you're struggling to pay your energy bills, there are plenty of sources of help. Remember to contact your energy supplier in the first instance, as they may be able to offer you a special tariff or payment plan to help you to stay on top of your bills.

You could also:

- ❁ Compare and switch energy suppliers
- ❁ Change your payment method



If you would like to talk to someone about financial support, you can contact your local Age UK on 01768 863618.

Care and Support

You (or the person you care for) may be eligible for several types of support from social services.

So that the social services department can assist you, it must carry out an assessment of what your care needs are. This can include:

- A community care assessment, which considers what type of services are needed by the person being assessed (from aids and adaptations in the person's own home to care workers or residential care)
- A carer's assessment, which gives individuals the opportunity to discuss any help that would maintain their own health and balance caring with other aspects of life, such as work and family



Once an assessment has been completed, the local authority will make a decision about whether or not it will provide or arrange services for you.

Whether you (or the person you're looking after) will have to pay for the service will depend on what that service is. Some services may be free of charge, some grants may be available to you, you may have to make a financial contribution (financial assessment will take your income and savings into account), or you may have to pay for all of the costs.

If you would like to find out more, or arrange for an assessment, you can contact your local Adult Social Care office using one of the telephone numbers listed below:

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If your local authority is not able to help fund your care, it will be able to make an assessment of your care and support needs. From this, the local authority will be able provide you with access to a range of information and advice available locally.



Safety Recommendations

- Have a cordless phone/mobile on the person at all times
- Ensure rugs and mats are slip resistant and are stuck down to prevent trips or falls
- Secure and hazardous wires and remove clutter from walkways
- Make sure adequate lighting is installed
- Dressing or mobility aids, and trolleys may help people move around more easily
- Check fire and carbon monoxide alarms are installed and working correctly. The fire brigade may be able to fit and check fire alarms free of charge

Eden GP Practices

Alston Medical Practice	01434 381214
Appleby Medical Practice	017683 51584
Birbeck Medical Group	01768 214620
Court Thorn Surgery	016974 73548
Glenridding Health Centre	017684 82297
Kirkoswald Surgery	01768 898560
The Lakes Medical Practice	01768 214345
Shap Medical Practice	01931 716230
Temple Sowerby Medical Practice	017683 61232
Upper Eden Medical Practice	017683 71369

For more information on any of the above topics, please refer to the NHS Choices website.

