



Hertfordshire and
West Essex Integrated
Care System



Health advice for you this winter



Vaccinations

It is important to have vaccinations that are offered to you.

Vaccinations are free. They help to keep you and your family safe and protect you from serious illnesses.

You can have a free flu and Covid vaccination if you are in one of these groups:

- Aged 65 years old or more
- Have a health condition that affects your kidney, liver, lungs or brain
- Have a learning disability
- Live in a care home for older people
- Pregnant

If you are a carer for a family member you can also have a free flu vaccination only.

You need to have a free flu vaccine every year as the viruses change.

Your GP might contact you and invite you in, you might get an email or text from the NHS, or you can call 119 to make an appointment at a pharmacy near you. It's OK to have the flu and Covid vaccines at the same time.

If you have access to the internet, you can also book vaccinations online: www.nhs.uk/vaccinations

If you are nervous about needles, let them know when you get to your appointment.



If you are aged 75 – 79 years old your doctor will also ask you to have an RSV vaccination.

RSV is a virus that affects the lungs. It can cause a cough and sore throat and makes some people so unwell that they need hospital treatment. Please have this vaccination if you are invited.

Having all your vaccinations is one of the best things you can do to keep well this winter.

www.nhs.uk/vaccinations

Ask at your appointment to speak to a translator if you need to. If you have difficulties communicating or hearing you can use textphone **18001** or www.signvideo.co.uk/nhs119 if you use British Sign Language.



Get help from a pharmacy

You can get help for minor health problems at a pharmacy (chemist).

A pharmacist can tell you about the right medicines to take for illnesses like colds or earache. They can even give you some medicines you used to have to go to a doctor for.

Lots of pharmacies are open late and at weekends.

Just turn up and ask to speak to a pharmacist in private. You don't need to make an appointment.

If you have questions about medicines you take, a pharmacist can also help with this. Many pharmacies can also take your blood pressure.



Feeling ill?

If you feel ill, it is better to get help straight away. Don't wait until you get worse.

Get in touch with your GP practice first. They will try to get you an appointment as soon as they can.

Ask your GP practice if you can see a doctor or nurse in person. You may need to have a phone call first.

When your GP is closed, call **111**. It is free to call from any phone. An adviser will ask you some questions so that you can get help from the right person.

Call **999** and ask for an ambulance if you are having bad chest pains, can't breathe properly, have a serious injury or think you have had a stroke.



Eating well

As you get older, you might feel less hungry or thirsty and forget to eat and drink.

If you don't eat and drink regularly, you will become unwell and are more likely to fall over and hurt yourself. Try to have at least one hot meal a day. Soups are a good choice if you don't feel like cooking.

Frozen or tinned food, fruit and vegetables are just as good for you as fresh, and will last longer.

Cheaper products are not always at eye level on supermarket shelves. Own brand products often taste as good as branded items, and are cheaper too!

Have regular drinks - keep a jug of water or squash close by and aim to drink 6-8 cups a day. Tea or coffee are also good and will warm you up too.



Keeping warm and healthy

In the winter it is important you keep warm when you are inside or outdoors.

Being cold isn't just uncomfortable – it can also be bad for your health.



Tips for keeping warm

- Heat just your living room and bedroom to 18-20 degrees, if you can't afford to heat all of your home
- Have hot drinks or eat soup or hot food to warm you up from inside
- Wear lots of layers of thin clothes. This will keep you warmer than one big jumper
- Move around indoors and try not to sit still for more than 1 hour at a time
- Close the curtains when it gets dark to keep the heat in
- Shut doors of the rooms that you're not using



Stopping trips and falls

Falling over when we're older can be dangerous. There are things you can do to try and stop a fall happening.

- If you often feel dizzy, talk to your doctor. It might be because they need to check the medicines you are taking
- Don't sit down all day – try and move around and it will help you to keep your balance
- Try to walk outside each day, even if only for a short time
- Throw away slippers and shoes that are loose or slippery
- Use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower
- Keep a light or torch, and a mobile phone if you have one, by your bed in case you need to get up in the night
- Eat a balanced diet to help keep your bones strong. Milk, cheese, bread and green leafy vegetables like broccoli are good foods for strong bones
- Keep your home tidy – especially the floor in your hall, landing and stairs. Keep lights on so you can see where you are going



What to do if you fall over

- Don't try to move straight away
- Check whether you are hurt
- Sit for a while and rest
- Look for something stable to hold on to and slowly get up if you're not hurt

If you can't get up:

- Keep warm – reach for a blanket or cover yourself with a coat or rug
- Make some noise to attract attention
- If you have a personal alarm, use it! Don't worry about bothering people
- If you don't have an alarm and can reach a phone, call 999



Being safe with medicines

Take your medicines in the way your doctor or pharmacist has told you to.

It is important to follow their instructions so that your medicines work properly.

- Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to explain anything that you do not understand.
- Make a list of all the medicines you take and what time of day you should take it.



- If you collect your medicine yourself, check what you have been given before you leave the shop and ask for help if you're not sure.
- Try not to run out of medicines. Order your new prescription at least a week before you need it.
- Ask your pharmacist if they can deliver your medicines, if you find it hard to get out.
- Don't keep too much medicine at home – only order what you need from your prescription each month.
- Take your pills with water – it can help to lean forward slightly when you swallow.

If you find it hard to swallow pills, talk to your doctor.



Help with money

If you're struggling to cope with bills or you're finding it hard managing your money, there are people who can help.

They can help make sure you are getting the benefits you are entitled to. They can also put you in contact with local groups who can help.



If you live in Hertfordshire, call HertsHelp on **0300 123 4044**.

If you live in Essex, call one of these numbers:
Citizens Advice Bureau, Harlow: **0808 278 7856**
(10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday)

Citizens Advice Bureau, Uttlesford: **01799 618840**
(9.30am – 3.30pm, Monday to Friday)

Citizens Advice Bureau, Epping Forest: **0808 278 7855**
(9.30am – 2.30pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)

Tell the person who answers the phone what you need help with. They will then ask you some questions about yourself and help you to get further support.



Feeling sad or low

Everyone feels a bit down from time to time.

If you are feeling very sad, angry or worried, speak to your doctor or call a helpline such as:

The Silver Line:
0800 470 8090

Samaritans: **116 123**

If you need help with your mental health urgently, please call **111** and choose option 2. You will be put through to a trained advisor who can help.

Cold winter weather and dark evenings can make it harder to stay in touch with people, but phoning family or friends can help you to stay connected and start to feel better.

Calls HertsHelp **0300 123 4044** or the Essex Wellbeing Service **0300 303 9988** who can help you find groups and activities.

