

This leaflet covers the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area

Make sure you Choose well

...and you may be feeling better quicker.



Choose well and be prepared

The information in this leaflet will help you find the right expert care to meet your needs. Picking the service most appropriate to your symptoms means you get the right treatment in the right place.

www.nidirect.gov.uk/choosewell

For the very young, the over 65s and all people with long term health issues, the cold weather can contribute to serious health problems. The good news is that by following a few tips, you can give yourself the best possible chance of staying well.

Get your free flu jab

Remember, if you're over 65, pregnant or with a long term health problem, you can get a free seasonal flu vaccination from your GP. This year the free flu vaccine is being offered to pre-school children aged two years and over, and all primary school children. For more information about the flu vaccine visit www.fluawareni.info

Recover properly

If you do catch a cold or flu, make sure you:

- Stay at home, drink plenty of fluids and rest
- Eat if you feel able to
- Let a friend or neighbour know you are ill.

Stop things spreading

To prevent the spread of germs to others:

- Catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue
- Regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water.

Stay warm

- Keep room temperature warm and comfortable
- Have regular hot drinks and hot meals that include fruit and vegetables.

Remember to watch out for vulnerable neighbours.

Health and Social Care is committed to making information as accessible as possible and to promoting meaningful engagement. Requests for this leaflet in another format or language will be considered. This leaflet is also available in other Health Trust areas across Northern Ireland.

The information in this leaflet is provided as an information resource only and is not to be used or relied on for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. All information is correct at time of printing. If you are concerned about your medical condition, you should seek medical advice from your GP or the relevant clinical team.

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Choose well

for expert help and advice

Self-care

Self-care is the best choice to treat minor illnesses, ailments and injuries. A range of common illnesses and complaints, such as aches and pains, coughs, colds, upset stomachs and sore throats can be treated with over-the-counter medicines and plenty of rest. Remember, whether treated or not, most of these will get better.

Some self-care essentials

The following are available to buy over-the-counter:

- Paracetamol, aspirin, ibuprofen
- Rehydration mixtures
- Indigestion remedies
- Plasters
- Thermometer.

Always follow the instructions on the pack.

Your local Pharmacy

Your local pharmacist can provide confidential, expert advice and treatment for a range of common illnesses and complaints, without you having to wait for a GP appointment or going to your emergency department. Check with your local pharmacy for more details.

Remember: collect repeat prescriptions from your daytime GP surgery before the weekend or a public holiday. GP out of hours will only provide repeat prescriptions in exceptional circumstances.

More Information

Details of pharmacy rotas in your local area are published online at www.nidirect.gov.uk/choosewell

Your GP

GPs provide a range of services including medical advice, examinations, prescriptions and ongoing care for more longstanding or chronic conditions.

Out of hours

GP out of hours is available if you require urgent medical care when your GP surgery is closed. GP out of hours services operate from 6pm each weekday evening until your GP surgery opens the next morning and 24 hours on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. Remember to telephone the service first. The doctor or nurse will give you advice over the telephone, decide if you need to be seen by a doctor or will refer you to another service if required. Your GP surgery will have the contact details for your area.

More Information

Urgent GP out of hours care can be found by contacting your local GP surgery and also online at www.nidirect.gov.uk/choosewell

GP out of hours

Phone First

If you need GP assistance outside of surgery hours, you can call the GP out of hours service:

Telephone: 028 9079 6220 (in South and East Belfast)

Telephone: 028 9074 4447 (in North and West Belfast)

Minor Injuries Unit

A Minor Injuries Unit can treat injuries that are not critical or life threatening, such as:

- Injuries to upper and lower limbs
- Broken bones, sprains, bruises and wounds
- Bites – human, animal and insect
- Burns and scalds
- Abscesses and wound infections
- Minor head injuries
- Broken noses and nosebleeds
- Foreign bodies in the eyes and nose.

More Information

If you suffer a minor injury you can go to a Belfast Emergency Department – listed in the Emergency Department section.

Mental Health

If you are experiencing mental health difficulties, it is important to talk to your GP. Your GP will assess your needs and together with your GP, you will be able to determine the best course of action. Your GP may decide to treat you directly or refer you to Mental Health Services. If you are referred to Mental Health Services, they will determine your level of priority and contact you to make an appointment to discuss your needs. If your mental health problems are compromising your personal safety, mental health services will see you as soon as possible.

Mental health services will work with you to develop a Personal Wellbeing Plan. This is a single integrated care plan which summarises your needs and brings together all treatment and care interventions which are needed to help you recover from your problems.

Mental Health Emergency

If a person's mental or emotional state quickly gets worse, this can be called a mental health emergency or mental health crisis. In this situation, it's important to get help quickly.

If you have a care plan, it has names and numbers to call in an emergency. If you have been or are being treated for a mental illness, you should have a care plan.

If you **don't have** a care plan, you should:

- Make an emergency appointment with your GP or the GP out of hours if the emergency is at night, weekend or a public holiday (see section on GP Out of Hours for further information)
- Go to the Emergency Department at a hospital

Mental Health

What to do if you are caring for someone in a mental health emergency

If you are caring for someone and are concerned for their safety, you can consider the options. However, if you cannot get the person to an Emergency Department and you cannot keep them safe, you can call 999.

If you, or someone you know, needs help, and you would like to speak to someone by telephone, **you can also call Lifeline free, in confidence, 24/7 on 0808 808 8000.**

More Information:

- Minding Your Head: www.mindingyourhead.info
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Directory of Services to help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing: www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Mental_Health_Z_Card_BelfastArea_07_15_Updated.pdf
- New regional mental health care pathway: www.hscboard.hscni.net/mentalhealth

You should always call 999 if you cannot get the person to an Emergency Department and you cannot keep them safe

Emergency Department

Emergency Departments provide the highest level of emergency care for patients, especially those with sudden and acute illness or severe trauma. Use the service appropriate to your need.

More Information

Emergency Departments: open every day.

Emergency Department

Royal Victoria Hospital

274 Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 6BA.

ED Reception (adults): 028 9063 2250.

Open 7 days a week, 24 hours.

Children's Hospital (Royal site)

274 Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 6BA.

ED Reception (children): 028 9063 3755.

Open 7 days a week, 24 hours.

Mater Hospital

45-54 Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT14 6AB.

Contact ED through the main switchboard: 028 9074 1211.

Open 7 days a week, 24 hours.

999

**You should always call 999
if someone is seriously ill or
injured and their life is at risk.**