

FRESSINGFIELD MEDICAL CENTRE

Information on how to stay well

December 2015

The NHS gets even busier over winter and in this letter there is advice we ask you to follow so that you access services only when you really need them. Take care of minor conditions at home and choose the right place to go, such as 111 or your GP practice.

You might want to put it somewhere you can find it again easily.

This is what you can do:

- *Be prepared* – stock up with cold remedies, pain killers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, stave off upset stomachs with anti-diarrhoea capsules and rehydration mixtures, and keep plasters and bandages on hand for any cuts or scrapes.
- *Get a free flu vaccination if you are aged 65 or over or have a long term condition* – it will keep you from having a long recovery from this nasty illness, so book an appointment to get one if you haven't already.
- *Seek help from your pharmacist* – they're qualified health professionals who can advise on everything from a cold to long-term conditions. This is often the best and quickest way to get well. Your pharmacist will let you know if a GP appointment is required.
- *Eat well and drink at least eight cups of fluids a day* - it keeps your brain and body working well.
- *Beat the winter blues* - talk to someone. Talk about your anxieties with someone else, a friend, relative or a group such as the free NHS Suffolk Wellbeing Service on 0300 1231781 or the Samaritans on the free 116 123 number. Talking about the things that are worrying you can make a big difference.
- *Wash your hands thoroughly* – for the time it takes you to sing happy birthday, use hot water and soap to wash away all kinds of bacteria or viruses from colds, diarrhoea and so on.
- *Keep your home warm* – It is important to keep warm throughout the cold winter spells. By setting your heating to the right temperature (between 18°- 21°C or 64°- 70°F), this can help you keep well especially helping to stop chest infections. If you have a disability or long term condition or are over 63 or live with children aged under 5, ring this local rate number for free advice on heating your home, loan of heaters or emergency fuel payments: 03456 037 686. Look up Suffolk Warm Homes for more information on the internet if you have access.

KEEP THIS SOMEWHERE SAFE OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

- If you have very recently visited your surgery, optician or dentist, and have concerns relating to the same condition which they have treated you for, ask for their help first instead of attending A&E.
- *If you are unsure if you need urgent or emergency care, please call NHS 111 – trained professionals are on hand to guide you.*
- *If you need a dentist – out of normal dentist practice hours call 111.*

You really do have the power to help us and to help yourself, and by following this advice you will be helping enormously. If you have access to a computer, there are some additional helpful hints and tips on looking after yourself this winter on this website www.nhs.uk/staywell.

Please remember that A&E is for serious conditions or life-threatening emergencies. If you're not sure if it is an emergency, call 111 first.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of the doctors at this practice