



Keep warm, safe and well this

WINTER

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We appreciate that it is a difficult time for many just now.

To help make sure you are looking after yourself, we have put together this booklet to provide you with information and advice and we hope you find it useful.

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If you require further advice or information on any of the information in this booklet, call the NHS Grampian healthline on freephone **08085 20 20 30** (Available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

This publication is also available in other formats and languages on request. Please call Health Information Resources Service on 01224 558504 or email: gram.resources@nhs.scot

Ask for publication CGD 220516

Useful Contacts



Emergency food, fuel or money

costofliving.campaign.gov.scot provides information on help and resources available in Scotland during the cost of living crisis.

Your local council may also be able to help if you need urgent help with heating, food, or electricity.

Visit **costofliving.campaign.gov.scot** and enter your local area and you will be directed to local sources of support including details of local food banks, warm spaces, emotional support and welfare advice or call:

- Aberdeen City Support Line
0800 0304 713 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).
- Moray Council
0300 123 4563 (Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 5pm).
- Aberdeenshire Council
03456 081 208 (Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 5pm).

Looking for help with your health?

The NHS Grampian healthline offers free and confidential health advice including practical ways to improve your health, such as weight loss, increasing activity, support to stop smoking and information on local support groups and organisations. (Please note that we do not give out medical advice).

- NHS Grampian healthline
Freephone **08085 20 20 30** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Know Who To Turn To when you are ill or injured

In Grampian there are a range of services available to help you get the right medical assistance when you are ill or injured. Going directly to the person with the appropriate skills is important. This can help you to a speedier recovery and makes sure NHS services are run efficiently. To find out more on the range of services available and how to access them see page 24 or visit www.know-who-to-turn-to.com

NHS Inform - self-help guides and symptom checker

NHS Inform provides a wide range of health information and advice, including ways to treat common health problems at home visit www.nhsinform.scot

Emergency numbers

- Emergency Services **999**
- Non-emergency police support **101**
- NHS 24 **111**
- Floodline Scotland **0345 988 1188**
- Loss of power **105**
- Gas emergencies **0800 111 999**
- Scottish Water **0800 077 8778**



Keeping Warm

How to keep the house warm

You should heat your home to a temperature that is comfortable for you. In rooms you mostly use such as the living room or bedroom, try to heat them to at least 18°C if you can, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. You should also keep your bedroom windows closed at night. Exposure to low indoor temperatures can have a serious impact on your health as you get older. Wearing several layers of clothing will keep you warmer than one thicker layer.

See if you are entitled to benefits

Many people are not claiming the benefits they are entitled to. You can check what benefits you may be entitled to at www.mygov.scot/browse/benefits or call freephone **0800 182 2222**.

As a resident of Scotland, you could also be awarded a grant of up to £5,000 to improve the energy efficiency of your home. Check your eligibility by visiting www.homeenergyscotland.org/warmer-home/ or call freephone **0808 808 2282** (lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm, and Saturday 9am to 5pm). Please note phone lines are often quite busy in the evenings and at weekends.



Look out for scams

It is an unfortunate fact of life that criminals prey on us when we are vulnerable. Stop and take a moment to think before parting with your money or information. If you are being pressured the likelihood, is it a scam.

Dress for winter

When going out and about this winter, think about the clothing you'll wear. Wearing extra layers will keep you warm and dry. This also applies to our winter footwear as we need to make sure it's comfortable, provides sufficient grip to help prevent trips or falls.

If you're cold inside the house, layer up on clothing.

Keeping your body covered with wool or cotton clothing even when inside, is a good way to stay warm.

You also may want to consider having a blanket, hot water bottle or microwaveable heat bag as an extra boost when it's cold.

A number of local warm spaces have been set up. Check your council's website (see useful contacts) to see where they are near you. This is a great opportunity to go out and meet other people and keep warm.

Keep Safe



Be prepared for emergency situations

The winter months can throw all sorts at us. It might bring snow or ice, high winds, power disruption or flooding.

During an incident you may be home bound for an extended period, potentially without electricity. It is useful to make sure you have basic supplies in stock if you can. This could include canned and dried food, bottled water, medicines, torches, radio and batteries, a portable gas cooker (please use it safely because there is a CO² risk if used wrong), pet food, and warm clothes. Plan supplies for as long as possible, up to 72 hours if you are able to.

For further information on how to prepare for an emergency situation including flooding, bad weather or power disruptions visit www.ready.scot/

Winter fire safety

During winter most of us will be spending more time at home. We want to ensure your home is as safe from fire risk as possible.

- Keep portable heaters away from curtains and furniture.
- Never leave an electric blanket switched on when you're in bed unless it's marked 'suitable for all night use'.
- Check your smoke and heat alarms are working. Replace batteries if necessary.

For further information on winter fire safety visit www.firescotland.gov.uk



Gas safety

Unsafe gas appliances can produce a highly poisonous gas called Carbon Monoxide, which has no taste, colour, or smell. Ensure that your boiler, stove, and any gas appliances are safe to use before the cold winter hits and fit a Carbon Monoxide detector in all rooms where there is a carbon-fuelled appliance such as boilers, fires (including open fires), gas or paraffin heaters, stoves, or a flue.

Gas boilers and appliances should be serviced once a year by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Visit www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk or call **0800 408 5500**.

Get your car “Winter Ready”

Top up your screen wash, check your tyres and make sure you have an emergency kit in the boot.

Emergency kit

Torch, first-aid kit, tow rope, blankets, jump leads, snow shovel, warning triangle, warm clothes, and something hi-vis in the boot just in case. Put safety well before punctuality when bad weather closes in.

Clear your paths

Make sure to clear your paths of snow/ice with sand or salt if you are able. If you have elderly neighbours who are unable to clear their own path, do it for them. Check your council’s website for the location of your nearest grit and salt bins.



Keep safe when out and about

Take extra care to avoid slips and trips by avoiding unnecessary outings when it is icy or snowy underfoot. Wear a pair of sturdy shoes with non-slip soles to help prevent a nasty tumble and potential injury and use a walking stick if needed to help steady yourself.

It is also important at night or in poor daylight, to wear something light coloured, bright, fluorescent, or reflective to help other road users see you and avoid accidents.

For further information on winter road safety tips visit www.getabout.org.uk

Keep up to date with the weather

Is your journey essential? With a bit of forward planning some journeys can be postponed until better weather. The weather can turn very quickly, keep up to date with the local weather forecast online, on TV or the radio.

Keep up to date with local weather warnings at www.metoffice.gov.uk



Look in on vulnerable neighbours and relatives

Please keep a check on your older neighbours and relatives even if they remain well during the winter months, they may welcome other support to keep their independence and prevent social isolation.

Make sure they:

- Are safe and well.
- Are warm enough, especially at night.
- Have stocks of food and medicines so they do not need to go out during the very cold weather.
- Have clear paths of snow and ice to avoid any slips and trips.

If you are looking for information or advice on how to support a relative or elderly neighbour call the Age Scotland helpline **0800 12 44 222** it's free to call and available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Domestic abuse

In an emergency situation, always call **999**.

If your situation at home is not safe or you are worried about you or your family's safety, you do not have to wait for an emergency situation to find help. If domestic abuse is happening to you, it's important to tell someone and remember you're not alone – even during the holidays.

The most important thing to remember is that domestic abuse is not your fault.

Scotland's Domestic Abuse Helpline

Support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for anyone with experience of domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as their family members, friends, colleagues, and professionals who support them.

You can call **0800 027 1234** (24 hours) or live chat at **www.sdafmh.org.uk**

For further information and support visit:

- **www.mygov.scot/domestic-abuse**
- **www.womensaid.scot/information-support/**

Keep Well



Keep active

Just a little bit of activity can help you to keep your strength and mobility, and you can build all kinds of simple exercises into your daily routine to help keep you moving. Try to reduce the amount of time you spend sitting down during the day by going for a short walk or on bad weather days walking around your home or office. Stay active for 30 minutes a day if you can, though something is better than nothing. Include some strengthening exercises as these can help you to stay strong and independent and reduce the risk of falls.

You can find out more about keeping active at:
www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/keeping-active



Eat well

Preparing meals and making sure we eat a healthy, varied diet can sometimes be difficult, but it's really important that we eat well, particularly during the winter months. Good nutrition is vital to help keep us healthy and well. Eat meals with a mix of protein, carbohydrates, fruit, and vegetables. Drink lots of water (and warm drinks or soup in cold weather) and try not to exceed recommended alcohol limits. Alcohol can increase your risk of falling and has other negative effects in cold weather.

You can find out more about eating well at:

www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/healthy-eating/eat-well-your-way



Leek and Potato Spanish Omelette

Ingredients (serves 1)

- 1 teasp olive oil
- 1 small leek (washed and chopped)
- 2 eggs
- Pinch of black pepper (optional)
- 2 tabsp semi skimmed milk
- 1 medium potatoes (peeled, cubed and boiled)

Method

1. Pre-heat the grill.
2. Heat half the oil in a small frying pan and cook leek till soft, remove from pan.
3. In a bowl beat the eggs, black pepper and milk together.
4. Heat the remaining oil in a small frying pan, add the potatoes and leek. Pour over the egg mixture and cook over a medium heat till egg starts to set.
5. Place the pan under the grill till the egg is cooked.
6. Tip onto a warm plate and serve.



Carrot and Potato Soup

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 onion (peeled and chopped)
- 2 potatoes (peeled and diced)
- 2 carrots (peeled and chopped)
- 1 litre boiling water with 1 vegetable stock cube
- Pinch of black pepper (optional)

Method

1. Place onion, carrots and potatoes in a large saucepan, pour in the stock, bring to the boil and leave to cook over a low heat for 30 minutes or until the vegetables are soft and tender.
2. Puree or mash the soup to desired consistency.
3. Season with black pepper and serve.

For more recipes ideas visit:

- www.confidence2cook.co.uk/recipes
- www.parentclub.scot/articles/easy-cheap-and-tasty-family-recipes

Food hygiene

There are an estimated 2.4 million cases of food poisoning in the UK each year. Anyone can get food poisoning but over 65s are at greater risk of serious side effects.

The body's immune system weakens as you age increasing the risk of getting food poisoning, which can lead to serious illness, hospitalisation or even death.

Whether cooking at home, or reusing leftovers, it's important to maintain good food hygiene by following the '4Cs':

Cleaning

Effective cleaning removes bacteria on hands, equipment, and surfaces. This helps to stop harmful bacteria and viruses from spreading onto food.

Chilling

Ensure you chill, freeze, and defrost food safely.

Cooking

Cooking food at the right temperature and for the correct length of time will ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed. Always check the advice on food packaging and follow the cooking instructions provided.

Avoiding cross-contamination

Bacterial cross-contamination is most likely to happen when raw food touches or drips onto ready-to-eat food, utensils, or surfaces.

For further information visit:

www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety

Stock up on essentials (bread, milk, toilet roll)

Keeping a few extra store cupboard items i.e., tins and long-life milk at home to reduce the need to go food shopping in poor conditions. Bread and milk can be placed in the freezer for later use. Buy a few extra essentials like toilet roll and washing up liquid. You do not want to be forced out and about in poor conditions for non-food items either.

Get vaccinated

COVID-19 has not gone away. The COVID-19 vaccine dose helps improve the protection you have from your previous doses of the vaccine, giving you longer-term protection against getting seriously ill from COVID-19.

Flu vaccines are now also being offered to eligible groups. The flu vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine. Because of the restrictions under the coronavirus pandemic, during the last few winters there hasn't been much flu circulating, but we're expecting higher levels this year as more people return to their places of work and they mix more in social groups. Every year millions of people, including children and those at risk, get this seasonal vaccine to help protect them from getting seriously ill from flu. It also helps protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

Check your eligibility and find out how to get your vaccine at www.grampianvax.com/flu-and-covid-19-vaccinations/



Stop the spread of winter illnesses

COVID-19, colds, flu, and Norovirus can all spread more easily in the winter.

We all still need to keep playing our part to protect ourselves and others. Stay well and make it safer for everyone this winter.

Lessen the risk by choosing to:

- Get vaccinated - this is the best way to protect yourself.
- Wash your hands regularly, and cover your nose and mouth if coughing or sneezing.
- Maintain good surface hygiene by cleaning regularly.
- Stay at home if you feel unwell and avoid spreading viruses to others.

Mental wellbeing

The winter months can be difficult for many of us and our mental health.

With dropping temperatures and shorter days, we might feel the need to sleep for longer, notice a change in our appetite, or find it difficult to do things we normally enjoy.

Below are five things that, according to research, can really help to boost our mental wellbeing:

Five steps to mental wellbeing

Connect

Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.

Be active

You don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.

Keep learning

Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?

Give to others

Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

Be mindful

Be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body, and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

For further advice and support on mental wellbeing visit:
www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing

Stop smoking and save

The average cost for a packet of 20 cigarettes continues to increase and currently sits at over £12. If you smoke a packet or more every day you will be spending over £300 each month on cigarettes. As well as saving money, stopping smoking is one of the best things you can do for your overall health and wellbeing. If you would like help and support to stop smoking, then you can contact the NHS Grampian Public Health Healthpoint service. Call our healthline on **08085 20 20 30** and speak to an advisor who can help you find the right support for you including access to free stop smoking medications such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). You can also e-mail healthpoint on gram.healthpoint@nhs.scot and an advisor will get back to you. The healthpoint service is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

You can also get support to stop smoking along with free access to NRT from your local community pharmacy. So, stop in past any pharmacy whenever you can and speak to one of the staff who will help you find the right support for you.

For more information on stopping smoking visit Stopping Smoking
www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/stopping-smoking

Vitamin D

In Scotland, we're unable to get enough vitamin D from sunlight during the winter months. Take the recommended daily dosage of 10 micrograms of vitamin D over the key winter period to support bone and muscle health.

Why is this important?

Vitamin D helps improve bone and muscle health. Some groups are at a higher risk of vitamin D deficiency and are recommended to take a supplement year-round. These include:

- Pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Infants and children under five years old.
- People who have low or no exposure to the sun, for example those who cover their skin for cultural reasons, are housebound, confined indoors for long periods or live in an institution.
- People from minority ethnic groups with dark skin such as those of African, African Caribbean and south Asian origin, who require more sun exposure to make as much vitamin D.

Support and guidance

Healthy Start vitamins, which contain vitamin D, are available free to all pregnant women in Scotland.

Free vitamin D supplements are also available for mothers who breastfeed, in addition to infants and children up to three years old.

Ask your midwife, health visitor or family nurse for further information.

Visit the Food Standards Scotland website for more information about the importance of vitamin D

www.foodstandards.gov.scot/Vitamin-D



Medication

If you take regular medication, make sure you order enough medication to last, especially this year when the Christmas and New Year bank holidays are longer than usual. Always remember though to only order what you need. If you do run out of prescribed medication, please contact your local pharmacist who should be able to assist with an emergency supply.

Find where you can get more medication when your medicine supplies have run out. Visit NHS Inform and search 'accessing medicines'.

www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-accessing-medicines

Check your medicine cabinet

Make sure you have some over-the-counter remedies for common seasonal illnesses in your medicine cabinet.

You can buy useful remedies for lots of minor illnesses from your local pharmacist or supermarket, often at very little cost. Own-brand versions are often cheaper but just as effective. It's important to ensure you have enough in case you can't leave the house for whatever reason in the winter.

Things to have in your medicine cabinet include:

- Paracetamol and ibuprofen for pain relief (check the label or speak to your pharmacist to check it's suitable for you).
- Anti-histamines to help allergies.
- Indigestion remedies such as an antacid.
- Mild laxative for constipation.
- A first aid kit.
- Medicines specifically for children (your pharmacist can advise on the most suitable ones to keep in the house).

Remember that medicines go out of date, so don't overstock your medicine cabinet. Always follow the advice on the pack, and if your symptoms continue (or are severe) get further advice.



Self-care advice and support

www.nhsinform.scot provides a wide range of health information and advice. Use their self-help guides to check your symptoms and find out what to do next including how to treat common health problems at home.

Looking for help with your health?

The NHS Grampian healthline offers free and confidential health advice including practical ways to improve your health, such as weight loss, increasing activity, support to stop smoking and information on local support groups and organisation. (Please note that we do not give out medical advice)

Call freephone **08085 20 20 30** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).



When you are ill or injured

KNOW WHO TO TURN TO...

In Grampian there are a range of services available to help you get the right medical assistance when you are ill, injured or living with a long-term medical condition.

Going directly to the person with the appropriate skills is important. This can help you to a speedier recovery and make sure NHS services run more efficiently.

To find out more on the range of services available and how to access them visit www.know-who-to-turn-to.com



SELF-HELP

For a speedy recovery, self-help is the best option when you have a minor illness or injury. NHS Inform provides a wide range of health information and self-care advice, including ways to treat common health problems at home. For further information visit: www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides



PHARMACISTS

- Colds
- Cold sores
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Indigestions
- Aches and pains
- Help if you run out of your repeat prescription



GP

When you have an ongoing health condition or an illness that does not improve with self-treatment please contact your GP.

When your GP is closed and you feel your problem is urgent and cannot wait, call NHS 24 on **111** for advice.



MENTAL HEALTH

When you need help with your mental health or are finding it difficult to cope with things contact:

- Breathing Space **0800 83 85 87**
Weekdays Monday to Thursday, 6pm to 2am and weekends Friday 6pm to Monday 2am.
- Samaritans **116 123** open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



DENTIST

If you have an urgent dental need, you should contact your dental practice for assessment, advice and treatment if required.

If you are not registered with a dental practice, and you have an urgent dental problem, you should contact the Dental Information and Advice Line DIAL on **0345 45 65 990**.

Out of hours contact NHS 24 on **111**.



OPTOMETRIST/OPTICIAN

For emergency eye care (including sudden loss of vision, painful or red eyes or sudden flashes and floaters) please telephone your Optometrist/Optician or contact NHS 24 on **111**.

Please note if your Optometrist/Optician can not allocate an appointment within the advised time frame, they will arrange an alternative at another practice. You may need to travel.



SEXUAL HEALTH

Sexual Health Services provide:

Emergency and routine contraception including coils and implants, STI/BBV testing and treatment and HIV Pre- and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis in addition to abortion and HIV care.

Please call **0345 337 9900** for an appointment. For support and treatment for unplanned pregnancies, phone our Abortion Care team on **01224 655535**.

Condoms are available by post please contact **gram.freecondoms@nhs.scot**



ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES

If you are worried about your or someone else's drug and/or alcohol use. For support and advice please call

- Aberdeen City **0333 344 8355**
- Aberdeenshire **01224 558844**
- Moray **01343 610500**.



NHS 24

When your GP practice is closed, and you're too ill to wait until it re-opens, you can access appropriate out of hours services through NHS 24 on **111**.

If you have a health concern that is not urgent visit **www.nhsinform.scot** where there is trusted health advice and information available, including symptom checkers for many ailments and minor injuries.



MINOR INJURIES

For cuts, minor burns, sprains or suspected broken bones please call NHS 24 on **111** for advice or to book an appointment at the most appropriate service to treat your injury. You can also visit **www.nhsinform.scot** where there is trusted health advice and information available including symptom checkers for many ailments and minor injuries.



EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR 999

The Emergency Department is for:

- Severe injury.
- Breathing difficulties.
- Severe bleeding.
- Suspected heart attack or stroke.

NHS Grampian healthpoints offer free and confidential health advice from trained staff on a wide range of topics.

Our trained advisors offer free advice or information on:

- Your health concerns (please note that we do not provide medical advice).
- Practical ways to improve your health, such as weight loss, increasing activity, financial support.
- Mental wellbeing.
- Support groups and organisations, and the services they offer.
- How to access appropriate NHS services.
- Self-management advice for long term conditions e.g. Asthma, Diabetes.
- Specialist stop smoking support.

How to contact us:

Healthline

Call our free healthline on **08085 20 20 30**
(Available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Healthtext

Text the word INFO to **82727**. A healthpoint advisor will call you back during office hours. Texts cost your standard network rate.

Email healthpoint **gram.healthpoint@nhs.scot**

healthpoint
WALK IN FOR INFORMATION

healthline 08085 202030
CALL FREE FOR INFORMATION