

# NHS Scotland urge you to take your medicine and Be Ready for Winter

A major NHSScotland campaign to encourage people to prepare for the winter period was launched today as it was revealed only 8% of people in the Lothians have a well stocked medicine cabinet.

Research carried out on behalf of the Be Ready for Winter campaign has revealed that many people are not as well prepared as they could be to look after themselves or their families if they have coughs or colds this winter.

✘ Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Nicola Sturgeon, today joined forces with NHSScotland to highlight the simple steps that people, particularly parents, carers and the elderly, can take to keep themselves and their families well during the cold months.

Launching the national campaign in Glasgow, the Health Secretary was joined by Eunice Muir, Executive Nurse Director with NHS 24, as they visited a mother and toddler group at Bellcraig Community Centre in Maryhill.

Independent research shows that 8% of people in the Lothians have the most common remedies – including items such as paracetamol, cough mixture, throat lozenges, and cold and flu treatments – in their medicine cabinet.

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon said: “Planning ahead can help ensure that coughs, colds and minor ailments don’t become a big problem this winter. That’s particularly important over Christmas and New Year when access to GPs and pharmacists will be limited.

“As well as making sure you have sufficient supplies of regular medication you should make sure your medicine cabinet is well stocked with things like painkillers, cough bottle and antiseptic.

“Nobody can promise that Christmas will be stress-free, but a little preparation can really pay off to make sure that minor health problems don’t become a major headache for you and your family.”

The research into winter remedies showed that less than a half (42%) of people in the Lothians area have just one or two of the usual items, with paracetamol being the most common remedy stocked at home. The survey also revealed that elderly people are least likely to be well stocked with home remedies for winter health.

Commenting on the findings, Dr Charles Swainson, Medical Director, NHS Lothian, said: “Falling ill in winter is really miserable, especially if your medicine cabinet is not stocked up with the right medicines.

“Having a properly stocked medicine cabinet means there’s a lot less to worry about when you just need to rest and get better. Your community pharmacists can provide the best help and advice on how to treat coughs, colds and flu.

“It is also important that people who rely on prescription medication ensure they get any requests to their GP or pharmacist as far in advance of the Christmas closures as possible.”

The four key steps that Be Ready for Winter is recommending everyone should take in preparation for the winter are:

Restock your winter medicine cabinet

Many children and adults pick up common winter ailments such as a cold or flu-like illness. These can often be effectively treated at home with readily available medicine. Parents are

reminded to restock their medicine cabinet with remedies suitable for children.

Use your local pharmacy

Your local pharmacy is an accessible resource for you and your family. Your pharmacist can offer advice or help if you have run out of any prescribed medication. You can also collect medicine for minor ailments or illnesses.

Make sure you have repeat prescriptions.

If you or someone you care for requires medicines regularly, make sure you order and collect repeat prescriptions in good time to ensure you or your family have enough medicine to last over the Christmas holiday period.

Know when your GP surgery will be open

Your local doctor's surgery will be open on Friday 24th December, then closed for four days during the Christmas period and it will reopen on Wednesday 29th. The surgery will be shut from 1st-4th January at New Year, and reopen on Wednesday 5th January.

Many GPs will be working hard throughout the festive period supporting local Out of Hours services and the campaign also has the backing of the British Medical Association (BMA) in Scotland.

The national Be Ready for Winter campaign is supported by NHSScotland in partnership with NHS 24, the Scottish Ambulance Service, all 14 Scottish Health Boards, Community Pharmacy Scotland.

The campaign also includes television, radio, print and outdoor media across Scotland. Leaflets offering information about health services and how to treat common winter ailments are being distributed across the country during November and December.

General advice and information on how to stay healthy this

winter can be found at [www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk) or contact NHS  
inform on 0800 22 44 88.