

NHSScotland recommend getting ready for winter

A major NHSScotland campaign visited Edinburgh today to highlight the importance of looking after your health this winter.

NHSScotland's Be Ready for Winter campaign visited Craigentinny community centre to remind people they can take a few simple steps to look after their health at this time of year.

A local pharmacist, Kaye Greig, was on hand at the road show to offer advice on how to stay well and to answer questions from the public about winter health issues.

Road shows have also taken place in Aberdeen, Inverness, Glasgow and Dundee.



Photo caption: Community pharmacist Kaye Greig (far right) met with parents and toddlers at Craigentinny community education centre playgroup to highlight the key messages of the NHSScotland Be Ready for Winter campaign.

NHS 24 Medical Director Dr George Crooks, OBE, said: "With the cold weather we have had recently, we are all aware that winter is still very much upon us and the NHS across Scotland is dealing with cases of coughs, colds and other seasonal illness which affect many people at this time of year.

"We would remind people that they can take a few simple steps to look after their own and their family's health this winter. Minor illnesses can be treated at home and community pharmacies are also a good source of information and advice."

Dr Crooks also advised that those people in vulnerable groups, who are entitled to receive a free flu vaccination, should make an appointment with their GP.

He added: "Following simple hygiene measures, such as washing your hands regularly and disposing of tissues properly after a single use, can help prevent the spread of illness. There is also a huge range of information and quality self care advice for the winter period available at www.nhsinform.co.uk "

Chair of Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Scotland, Dr John Gillies, said: "GP surgeries are seeing lots of patients with cold and flu symptoms so it is a good idea to stock up with remedies from your pharmacist so you can self-care at home and avoid visiting your GP unless necessary.

"At this time of year it's also important to remember the basics of keeping warm and looking out for your elderly neighbours."

There are key steps that Be Ready for Winter is recommending everyone should take. They 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 and do not run out unnecessarily.

The national Be Ready for Winter campaign has the backing of the British Medical Association (BMA) in Scotland and is supported by NHS Scotland in partnership with NHS 24, the Scottish Ambulance Service, all 14 Scottish Health Boards and Community Pharmacy Scotland.

Public information leaflets about the seasonal flu campaign are available from healthcare staff in GP surgeries, pharmacies, health boards and voluntary health organisations.

Leaflets offering information about health services and how to treat common winter ailments are also being distributed across the country.

General advice and information on how to stay healthy this winter can be found at www.nhsinform.co.uk or contact NHS inform on 0800 22 44 88.

You can also keep-up-to-date with all the news on the NHS inform blog (<http://blog.nhsinform.co.uk/>) or on twitter (@NHSinform) and Facebook ([facebook.com/nhsinform](https://www.facebook.com/nhsinform))