

# Information about doctors and pharmacists over the holidays

- ✘ **Take time to find out when your GP surgery and local pharmacy is open over festive period**

A national health campaign is this week reminding people in Scotland to be prepared and know when their local GP surgery or local pharmacy is open over the festive holidays.

The NHSScotland Be Ready for Winter campaign advises people to be aware that many GP surgeries and pharmacies will be open on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December, and closed for two days on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. They will be closed for two days again at New Year (Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> and Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January) before re-opening on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> January.

As well as knowing the holiday opening and closure times of your local GP and pharmacy, people are also being urged to re-stock their medicine cabinet with remedies to treat common winter ailments and to plan ahead for any required repeat prescriptions.

Professor George Crooks, Medical Director of NHS 24, said: "Many GP surgeries and pharmacies will be closed for two days over Christmas and again at New Year, so it is essential that everyone is prepared and knows exactly when their local services are available and how to access them."

He added: "If you are unlucky enough to get a cough, cold or flu, buying over the counter medicine, staying at home and keeping warm will make you feel much better. Of course, if your symptoms worsen, you should seek a routine doctor's appointment or contact NHS 24."

Many GPs will be working hard throughout the festive period

supporting local Out of Hours services and the Be Ready for Winter campaign has the backing of the British Medical Association (BMA) in Scotland.

Dr Alan McDevitt, Chairman of the BMA's Scottish General Practitioners Committee said "Winter is the time of year when a lot of people will develop a cold or flu and the best way to manage these ailments is to ensure that you stock up on the remedies that are available in pharmacies and supermarkets. For those who are eligible, it's important to get the annual flu vaccination from your GP surgery.

"While it's important to be prepared, patients should be reassured that over the holiday season they will be able to see a GP if they need to and in the most urgent cases, patients can still dial 999 for emergency health care. Anyone experiencing health problems during the holidays should contact NHS24 for advice."

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.

***The four key steps that Be Ready for Winter is recommending everyone take in preparation for their health this 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 Tuesday December 24<sup>th</sup> and closed for two days – Christmas Day and Boxing Day – and reopen on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December.*