

# Be a winter winner



This booklets contains eight steps, with useful information and tips, to keep yourself, your friends and family safe and well this winter.



GIG  
CYMRU  
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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
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# 1. Avoid the winter blues

The winter blues can affect people of any age, including children. The following tips can help improve your mental wellbeing:

**Keep in contact with friends and family** - Make an effort to keep in touch with people you care about with regular phone calls and messages.

**Have a daily routine** - Set some simple goals.

**Keep active** – Exercise makes you feel good.

Try out a physical activity that you enjoy and suits your level of mobility.

**Get outside** - Go outdoors in natural daylight as much as possible and sit near windows.

**Focus on positive things** in your life

**Keep warm** - Being cold makes you unhappy.

**Eat healthily** - A healthy diet will boost your mood, give you more energy and stop you putting on weight over winter.

**Take up a hobby** - Keep your mind active with a new interest. Have something to look forward to and focus on.

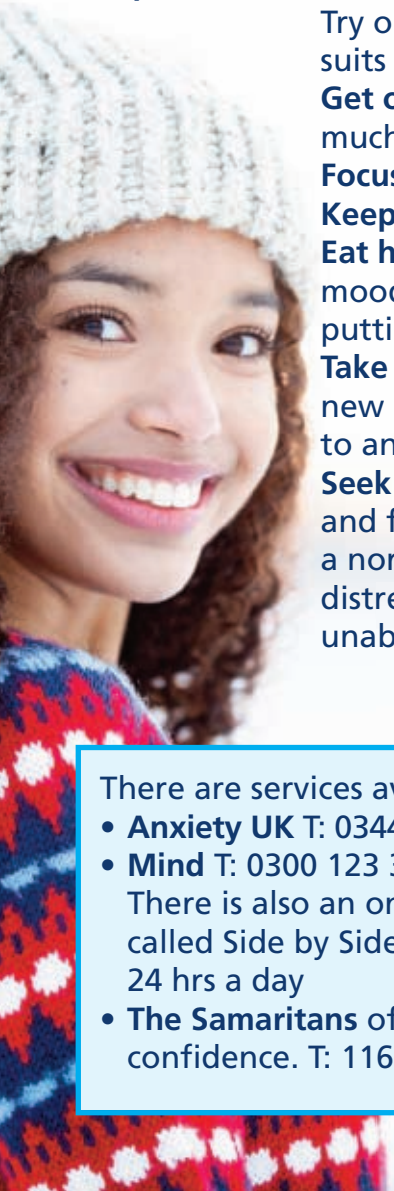
**Seek help** - Talk about your feelings to friends and family. If you feel so bad that you can't live a normal life, see your GP for help. If you are in distress and in need of immediate help and are unable to see a GP, call 111.

There are services available if you need additional support;

- **Anxiety UK** T: 03444 775 774 (Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 5.30pm)
- **Mind** T: 0300 123 3393 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm).

There is also an on-line support service operated by Mind called Side by Side where you can talk to other people, 24 hrs a day

- **The Samaritans** offer emotional support 24 hrs a day - in confidence. T: 116 123 (free) or email [jo@samaritans.org.uk](mailto:jo@samaritans.org.uk)



## 2. Stop the spread

**Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.**

Coronavirus and flu are very infectious and are spread by germs from coughs and sneezes, which can live on hands and surfaces.

**To reduce the risk of spreading the viruses:**

- use tissues to trap germs when you cough or sneeze
- wash your hands often with warm water and soap
- bin used tissues as quickly as possible
- follow Coronavirus guidelines



Be prepared by having a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home to enable you to self-care from the very start.

**People, who are at risk of complications from flu, should make sure they have the annual flu vaccine.** Flu symptoms can hit quite suddenly and severely. They usually include fever, chills, headaches and aching muscles and you can often get a cough and sore throat.

**If you are 65 or over, or in one of the other at-risk groups, it's important to get medical help and advice as soon as you feel unwell.** **Pharmacists** – can give treatment advice for a range of minor illnesses.

**your GP** – you may be able to speak to a GP online or over the phone, or go in for an appointment if they think you need to  
**NHS 111** – go to [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) or call 111 if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do

If you're 65 or over, you are also eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine, which will help protect you from pneumonia so ask your GP surgery.



### 3. Keep warm and well

One of the best ways of keeping ourselves well during winter is to stay warm – both inside and outdoors. Keeping warm in winter can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

Follow these tips to stay warm this winter:

- Heat your home to at least 18C (65F).
- Keep your bedroom window closed on winter nights – breathing cold air can be bad for your health as it increases the risk of chest infections.
- Draw your curtains as soon as it gets dark to help keep the heat in.
- Keep as active as possible when you're indoors; get up and mover around every hour or so.
- Wear several layers of light clothes. They trap warm air better than one bulky layer. Choose clothes made from wool, cotton or fleecy fabrics. Remember to keep your feet, hands and face warm with thermal socks, gloves, scarves and a hat.
- Have at least one hot meal a day and regular warm drinks.
- Get your heating system checked by a qualified professional
- Use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed (but not both at the same time)

#### **Help with Heating your Home - Winter Fuel Payment**

If you are eligible (i.e. you were born on or before 5 October 1954) you should get this payment automatically.

Telephone 0800 731 0160 for more information or go to the Age Cymru website <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/information-advice/money-legal/benefits-entitlements/winter-fuel-payment/>

## 4. Choose the right health service

If you are feeling unwell it is important to choose the right health service.

The sooner you get advice, the sooner you are likely to get better. If you are 65 or over, or in one of the other at-risk groups, it's vital to get medical help as soon as you feel unwell.

You can get help and advice from:

**a pharmacy** – pharmacists can give treatment advice for a range of minor illnesses and can tell you if you need to see a doctor.

**your GP** – you may be able to speak to a GP online or over the phone, or go in for an appointment if they think you need to

**NHS 111** – go to [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) or call 111 if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do.

**If you or someone in your family is seriously ill or injured ring 999**

Hospitals get very busy during winter so please think carefully before you choose this service. If you do need emergency medical care, make sure you know where to go:

- Minor Injury Units treat adults and children over one year old, with a wide range of injuries that are not life-threatening.

- The Emergency Department at the Grange University Hospital treats life-threatening injuries and very serious illnesses. The vast majority of patients who need the Emergency Department at The Grange University Hospital will arrive by ambulance.

To find out more about health care services, information sheets are available at

<https://abuhb.nhs.wales/files/clinical-futures/clinical-futures-documents>







## 5. Prevent slips, trips and falls

The risk of falling is a common problem, which can often be avoided by following a few safety tips:

**Falls at home** are often due to tripping hazards that are easily overlooked but simple to fix: tidy up clutter, trailing wires and remove frayed carpets; use non-slip mats; mop up spillages straightaway; do not climb up on ladders or chairs if you are unsteady and make sure all rooms and staircases are well lit.

### To keep yourself safe:

- Avoid walking on icy or slippery surfaces.
- Some medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy. Follow the instructions for taking your medicines and regularly review your medication with your doctor or pharmacist.
- You may experience a sudden fall in blood pressure or dizziness after getting up from lying or sitting positions. See your GP to ensure there is no medical reason for your symptoms. Don't get up too quickly.
- You may trip or fall due to sight or hearing loss so please ensure you have both regularly checked by a professional.
- Regular physical activity, such as walking and strength exercises, helps to strengthen muscles and bones. Check with a Doctor or Nurse before starting a new activity, build up activity levels slowly.
- Footcare is important. Don't ignore minor foot troubles, if you are in any doubt see your Doctor or a registered Chiropodist or Podiatrist, especially if you have diabetes mellitus.
- Wear well-fitting shoes and slippers with a gripping sole and low or flat heel.
- Always take a mobile phone with you when you leave the house.



## 6. Stay fit and healthy

Even when the weather turns colder winter needn't be the unhealthiest time of year. You can keep healthy and fit, no matter what the weather is like.

Follow these simple tips to keep your body healthy and help boost your immune system:

**Get plenty of sleep** - having enough sleep is essential for a strong immune system

**Drink plenty of water** - staying hydrated is important for a healthy body.

**Take regular exercise** - this is a good way to help control weight, boost your immune system and get some fresh air. Exercise also helps with your mental wellbeing.

The NHS recommends that adults aged 16 – 64 years and older people aged 65 years should do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity if you are already very active; or a combination of both.

You should do strength exercises at least twice a week, especially if you are not very active normally.

To get health benefits from strength exercises, you should do them to the point where you need a short rest before repeating the activity.

Always speak to your GP first if you have an existing health condition or you are concerned about exercising

**For general tips on keeping active go to:**  
**[www.nhs.uk/keepactive](http://www.nhs.uk/keepactive)**  
**or, [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**



## 7. Eat Well

During the winter months you need to eat enough to keep warm and help you to keep active. Having a healthy, balanced diet can also support your immune system.

Make sure you eat at least one hot meal a day and have cups of tea or warm soup in between.

Try to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day, so that you're getting plenty of nutrients and vitamins

It's important to eat enough, so if you're worried about your appetite, or feeling off your food, speak to your GP

If you are struggling to afford food there are food banks that will help you. Call the free helpline on 0808 2082138 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm) and an advisor will help you.

### **To have a healthy, balanced diet, you should aim to:**

- Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day
- Base your meals on higher fibre starchy foods like baked potatoes, wholemeal bread, brown rice or wholemeal pasta
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks) everyday
- Eat a portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs and other protein with each main meal
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads, and eat them in small amounts
- Drink plenty of fluids (at least 6-8 glasses a day).





## 8. Stay Connected

It is very unusual for us all to be asked to stay at home and not to meet up with friends and family. Some people may feel very lonely or isolated so it is important to stay connected.

- Telephone or message family and friends
  - Join an online social group through Zoom or Microsoft Teams
  - Take part in online activities with other, like cooking or games
  - Stay connected through social media
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- **The Mix** charity helps young people aged 13-25 and will give support and tools needed to take on mental challenges. Telephone 0808 808 4994
  - **Age Cymru** is offering a check in and chat telephone service for people over 70 years in Wales who live alone. Telephone 08000 223 444
  - **The Silver Line** is the confidential, free helpline for older people across the UK open every day and night of the year. Telephone 0800 4 70 80 90
  - **Re-engage** helps older people to stay connected. Telephone free on 0800 716543 or, <https://www.reengage.org.uk/latest-news/call-companions-keep-communities-connected/>
  - If you are a carer, you can chat to other carers online for support through the **Carers Trust** <https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/forum>

Check on older and vulnerable neighbours and relatives, especially if they live alone, to make sure they:

- are safe, warm and well
- have stocks of food and medicines so they do not need to go out during very cold weather

# COVID-19 and winter

Winter weather conditions could result in a higher risk of COVID-19 infection so it is important to continue to follow the government guidance;

- stay at home as much as you can
- always observe social distancing
- wash your hands regularly
- do not meet anyone you do not live with
- work from home if you can
- wear a mask in shops and other enclosed spaces
  
- Self-isolate if you or, anyone in your household:
  - has a new continuous cough
  - has a high temperature
  - has a loss of or change to sense of smell or taste
  - is waiting for a test result
  - has tested COVID-19 POSITIVE

## To request a COVID-19 test:

Go to <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test>  
or, call 119

If you need more help or support phone your local council,  
or go to <https://gov.wales/find-support-affected-coronavirus>



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