

Dear Parent(s) / Carer(s),

Keeping your family healthy this winter

Every winter we see rises in illnesses such as colds, flu, Covid-19 and other respiratory illnesses.

While it's not uncommon for viruses to spread at this time of year, there are simple steps you can take to reduce your chance of being ill.

- **Boost your immunity this winter.** It is not too late for you and your children to receive a vaccination against COVID-19 and flu this year. It is one of the best ways to protect you, your friends and family. To find out how to book, speak to your GP practice or local pharmacy, or visit the NHS [website](#).
- **Pharmacy first.** If you or your child start to feel unwell with a winter illness, your local pharmacy can be a good source of support and can advise you on what steps to take to relieve symptoms.
- **Wash your hands often.** Please remember it is important to encourage your child to regularly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to help prevent the spread of winter illnesses.
- **Try to stay at home.** If you or your child are feeling unwell it is important to avoid contact with other people until you are well enough to undertake your normal activities.

Managing symptoms and when to get help

If you or your child develop flu-like symptoms, such as a fever, feeling tired or exhausted, a cough, a sore throat, or a headache, there are some things you can do to help get better more quickly:

- rest and sleep
- keep warm
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower your temperature and treat aches and pains
- drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration

Most respiratory illnesses are mild and clear up within 2 to 3 weeks without the need for treatment. If in doubt, please refer to [NHS 111 online](#).

When to seek additional help

If your child has any of the following symptoms, seek medical help the same day (either by calling your GP or NHS 111):

- Laboured or rapid breathing
- Dehydration (sunken eyes, drowsy or has not passed urine for more than 12 hours)
- A persistent high temperature of 38 degrees or above
- Seems very tired or irritable

If your child has any of the following symptoms seek URGENT help (either by calling 999 or going to A&E):

- Pauses in their breath or irregular breathing or grunting
- Severe difficulty breathing (so they can't eat)
- Tongue or lips are blue

Other useful information online:

[Flu - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Bronchiolitis - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Common cold - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Head of Service – Health Protection, Lincolnshire County Council