Long term conditions communications toolkit – Winter 2023-24

**Social media – for use during winter period**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Post** | **Image to use** |
| Managing asthma | Think! How can I get help living with asthma and keeping myself well? <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/living-with/> |  |
| Managing COPD | Think! How can I get help living with COPD? <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-copd/living-with/> |  |
| Managing diabetes | Think! How can I get help living with diabetes and keeping myself well?  Type One Diabetes: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-1-diabetes/living-with-type-1-diabetes/>  Type Two Diabetes: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-2-diabetes/food-and-keeping-active/> |  |
| Managing diabetes | The National Diabetes Prevention Programme #NDPP is a great way to prevent type 2 diabetes and helps with weight loss and lifestyle changes. It's a way of guiding you through the self-care behaviours you need #selfcaretogether #selfcareweek  <https://www.lancashireandsouthcumbria.icb.nhs.uk/our-work/diabetes/national-diabetes-prevention-programme> |  |
| Managing heart failure | Think! How can I get help living with heart failure? <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-failure/living-with/> |  |
| Cost of living | Think! How can I get help with the cost of living? <https://www.lancashireandsouthcumbria.icb.nhs.uk/our-work/your-local-services/cost-living-crisis> |  |

**Intranets/Newsletters**

Long-term conditions, or chronic diseases, are conditions that require ongoing care and often are managed by medications and other treatments. Examples include diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, epilepsy, asthma and heart or kidney disease.

During winter, damp and cold weather can aggravate existing health problems and make people more vulnerable to winter illnesses. This is particularly true for those who live with a long-term condition.

Everyone’s experience of living with a long-term condition is different but there are few things people can do to help them manage their condition, including:

* Get the flu vaccine.
* Stay protected against COVID-19 with an autumn booster vaccine.
* Make sure that you have had any planned reviews of your condition.
* Take your medication as prescribed and see your pharmacist for any medication concerns.
* Keep warm.
* If you smoke, consider steps to quitting.
* Eat a healthy and balanced diet.
* Exercise daily: even short walks and housework count as physical activity.

There are a few other things you can do too:

* If you feel unwell don’t wait – get advice from your nearest pharmacy.
* Think ahead - make sure that you have enough medication to last when your GP surgery may be closed. Don’t use A&E or 111 as a back-up pharmacy; plan ahead. But if you do need emergency advice, community pharmacies can often help.
* Eat well and wrap up warm - keep active and have regular hot drinks and nutritious meals. If you have breathing problems, even a small change in temperature can affect you.

For help with living with asthma: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/living-with/>

For help living with COPD: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-copd/living-with/>

For help living with type one diabetes: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-1-diabetes/living-with-type-1-diabetes/>

For help living with type two diabetes: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-2-diabetes/food-and-keeping-active/>

For help living with heart failure: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-failure/living-with/>

**Press release (and for websites)**

Press release one: 18 December 2023

**Health professionals are advising people to take extra precautions to look after their health this winter**

Winter conditions can be seriously bad for our health, especially for people aged 65 or older, and people with long-term conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, diabetes or heart or kidney disease.

Being cold can raise the risk of increased blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes.

The cold and damp weather, ice, snow and high winds can all aggravate any existing health problems and make us more vulnerable to respiratory winter illnesses. But there are lots of things you can do to manage your conditions and stay well this winter.

Miss Jane McNicholas, chief medical officer for University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, speaking on behalf of the NHS in Lancashire and South Cumbria, said: "People with long-term health condition really need to look after themselves as poor weather and colder temperatures can worsen your symptoms. The winter will continue to be very challenging for many so people need to plan ahead - make sure they have the medication they need and get vaccinated as this will help reduce the likelihood of needing urgent medical attention.”

The following simple steps will help you not only look after yourself but also understand how to use NHS services in the most effective way for you.

* **Get a flu jab**

It can protect you all winter. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to get the flu jab. If you are in a risk group, are pregnant or aged 65 or over, it is really important to get vaccinated; contact your GP surgery and make an appointment. The flu virus strikes in winter and it can be far more serious than you think. Flu can lead to serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia, and it can be deadly. That’s why the flu jab is free if you’re aged 65 or over, or if you have a long-term health condition. If you have children or grandchildren they too may also be eligible for a free flu vaccination. And if you are the main carer of an older or disabled person you may also be eligible for the free flu jab. Just speak to your GP practice or pharmacy.

Also, don’t forget that if you’re aged 65 or over, you are eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine, which will help protect you from diseases such as pneumonia. For more information on staying well this winter visit [www.nhs.uk/flujab](http://www.nhs.uk/flujab)

* **If you feel unwell don’t wait – get advice from your nearest pharmacy**

At the first sign of a winter illness, even if it’s just a cough or cold, get advice from a pharmacy, before it gets more serious. Act quickly. The sooner you get advice from a pharmacy, the better. Pharmacists are fully qualified to advise you on the best course of action. This can be the best and quickest way to help you recover and get back to normal. If you can’t get to a pharmacy yourself, ask someone to go for you or call your local one. You can find out which pharmacies are close to you by visiting [www.nhs.uk/find-a-pharmacy](http://www.nhs.uk/find-a-pharmacy).

* **Think ahead**

Make sure that you have enough medication to last when your GP surgery may be closed. Don’t use A&E or 111 as a back-up pharmacy; plan ahead. But if you do need emergency advice, community pharmacies can often help.

* **Know when NHS services near your home are open**

A&E and GP aren’t your only options. Check out <https://www.nhs.uk/> for your nearest pharmacy, walk-in centre or minor injuries unit if you’re not sure what to do.

* **Cold outside? It’s the perfect excuse to eat well and wrap up warm**

Keep warm inside and out, by keeping active and having regular hot drinks and nutritious meals. If you have breathing problems, even a small change in temperature can affect you, so take extra care. [Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/) can help around available benefits. Call 0800 144 8848 if you need advice.

* **A&E is only for emergencies. The right NHS services are everywhere – we just need to stop and think – and then choose the right one.**

**ENDS**

Press release two: 8 January 2024

**People across Lancashire and South Cumbria living with a long-term condition are being urged to take extra precautions this winter**

Long-term conditions, or chronic diseases, are conditions that require ongoing care and often are managed by medications and other treatments. Examples include diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, epilepsy, asthma and heart or kidney disease.

During winter, damp and cold weather can aggravate existing health problems and make people more vulnerable to winter illnesses. This is particularly true for those who live with a long-term condition.

Everyone’s experience of living with a long-term condition is different but there are few things people can do to help manage their condition, including:

* Get the flu vaccine.
* Stay protected against COVID-19 with an autumn booster vaccine.
* Make sure that you have had any planned reviews of your condition.
* Take your medication as prescribed and see your pharmacist for any medication concerns.
* Keep warm.
* If you smoke, consider steps to quit.
* Eat a healthy and balanced diet.
* Exercise daily: even short walks and housework count as physical activity.

Miss Jane McNicholas, chief medical officer at University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, speaking on behalf of the NHS in Lancashire and South Cumbria, said: “If you have a long-term health condition it’s really important that you look after yourself, especially as the weather gets colder.

“A decrease in temperature and damp conditions can aggravate any existing health problems and make us more vulnerable to respiratory winter illnesses, while shorter, darker days can affect our mood. However, by planning ahead and taking a few simple steps, you can help yourself to stay healthy and on top of your condition.

“No one likes being ill or wants to spend time in hospital, so we all need to take responsibility and look after ourselves as best we can.

“If you do need help this winter, the NHS is here for you. There’s also plenty of information and support available to help you to take care of yourself on a daily basis.”

* For help with living with asthma: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/living-with/>
* For help living with COPD: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-copd/living-with/>
* For help living with type one diabetes: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-1-diabetes/living-with-type-1-diabetes/>
* For help living with type two diabetes: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-2-diabetes/food-and-keeping-active/>
* For help living with heart failure: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-failure/living-with/>

**ENDS**