

## **Press Release**

### **Life saving advice for elderly and vulnerable in the expected cold weather**

A cold weather warning have been issued with the Met Office expecting that temperatures will fall below freezing.

During this time, the elderly and those who are vulnerable are reminded of the simple life saving tips about how to stay warm and well in colder weather.

In Cambridgeshire alone there are an average of 182 deaths per year linked to cold weather.

Keeping warm in colder temperatures is particularly important for older more frail people, those with ongoing illnesses such as heart and lung conditions and the very young as the cold can affect their health. Icy ground is also a hazard that can lead to falls and broken bones.

There are six top tips to help keep you warm and safe this winter. Some may seem obvious, but they could help you to stay healthy during the colder winter months.

#### **1. Heat your home well**

**By setting your heating to the right temperature, a minimum of 18 °C (65 °F) day and night, you can keep your home warm and your bills as low as possible.**

#### **2. Get financial support**

**There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It's worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to. To find out about grants, services and organisations that call help you, your family or neighbour, please call 0345 650 0280.**

#### **3. Eat well and have plenty of fluids**

**Food is a vital source of energy which helps to keep your body warm. Try to make sure you and your family have hot meals and drinks regularly throughout the day.**

#### **4. Get a flu jab**

**People are more likely to catch flu in cold weather. It's not too late to get a free flu vaccination if you are: aged over 65, pregnant, aged six months to under 65 years with an on-going illness such as a heart or lung condition or are a carer. Flu jabs are available from your GP or some local pharmacists. All children aged two, three and four years are also entitled to a flu immunisation delivered by nasal spray at their GP Practice.**

#### **5. Look after yourself**

**Keeping active is important for your health. If you do go out in cold weather it is important that you wear extra clothes to make sure that you are wrapped up warmly. During very cold and icy weather conditions it is safer for older people, very young children, and anyone with health problems to avoid going out where possible.**

#### **6. Look after your family and neighbours**

**If you have an older or vulnerable relative or neighbour look out for them during winter to ensure that they are warm and safe and avoid the need for additional medical care.**

Dr Liz Robin, Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "Cold snaps can be life threatening if you are elderly and frail or if you have an ongoing health condition. You are more susceptible to colds, flu, pneumonia and circulatory problems when the weather is cold, and icy ground can cause people to fall and break bones. Please take notice of these simple tips to help you or a vulnerable relative or neighbour to stay well, over the forecast period of cold weather."

Cambridgeshire County Councillor Kilian Bourke, Chairman of the Council's Health Committee, added: "No one should take the cold weather lightly as it can kill. We will be working with local health services and local community organisations to make sure those at risk are helped, supported and receive advice. We can all play our part though. If you have a vulnerable person living near you, I'd urge you to check on them to make sure they are okay during the cold snap."

Dr Fiona Head of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "It's important that patients with long term conditions or who are old or vulnerable keep themselves well hydrated and eat well. If you are concerned call 111."

Dr Keith McNeil, CUH chief executive, said: "Colds are called 'colds' for a reason. It is important that the frail and elderly, especially those with multiple health conditions, keep warm and well during this cold snap. Following these tips for dealing with cold weather, and checking up on family and neighbours, will help keep vulnerable people well and out of hospital. The hospital is always extremely busy when the temperature drops, so keeping warm and well helps everyone."

More advice about staying healthy during cold weather is available on the winter health pages of NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

See list of local pharmacies providing flu vaccination jabs

[http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3288/pharmacies\\_providing\\_flu\\_vaccines\\_on\\_nhs](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3288/pharmacies_providing_flu_vaccines_on_nhs)