



Here for you
this winter

NHS



Hertfordshire



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All county council services can be accessed via **HertsHelp** (see back page) if not stated.

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01

Welcome

Richard Roberts
Leader of Hertfordshire
County Council

Improving the health and wellbeing of Hertfordshire residents, and supporting those who face the biggest challenges to living healthy lives, is at the heart of everything we do.

We know many factors impact on someone's health - their home, finances, opportunities for education, access to transport and public services.

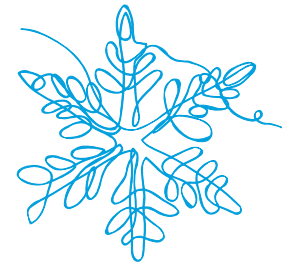
This year we have the added challenge of the rising cost of living. Here at Hertfordshire County Council we care, we get it and we are on your side. We're committed to creating a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire, where everyone has the opportunity to live healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives in thriving communities.

I believe this is more important now than ever.

This winter, we are working with our NHS partners to ensure that advice and support is available to help every resident navigate the rising cost of living and to stay well as we continue to adjust to life with COVID-19. There is also practical and financial help available for people who need it most. Read on to find out more.



Winter traditionally brings many respiratory illnesses, like colds and flu. These days, of course, we add COVID-19 to that list.



Covid hasn't gone away, but together we're finding ways to live with it. Most of us have reduced our risk by keeping up with the vaccinations we're offered, but we must continue to protect ourselves and others who are more vulnerable.

Earlier this year, I shared six steps for living with COVID-19. We're sharing them here again (opposite) as they remain the best way for us all to stay well and avoid respiratory illnesses of all kinds this winter. There are also handy tips on protecting you and your family this winter (page 9).







Thank you for continuing to play your part in keeping us all safe and well.

Jim McManus,
Director of Public Health
for Hertfordshire

02

Physical health

Follow these six steps to reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses

-  **Be kind:** Respect people wearing masks or keeping their distance – they may be vulnerable to infection.
-  **Be informed:** Know your level of risk and take advice to manage it.
-  **Be vaccinated or boosted:** Make sure you and those around you are vaccinated when invited.
-  **Be prepared:** If you're ill, stay at home and get early treatment if you need it.
-  **Be safe:** Manage your risk when you mix with people (hands, face, space, fresh air).
-  **Be supported:** As well as your family and friends, **HertsHelp** can offer support.



See back page for contact details.

Coping with respiratory illnesses

Physical health

In winter, we see a lot of illnesses which affect our breathing and cause symptoms like coughing, sneezing, a runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, headache, muscle ache, breathlessness and fever.

They can affect:

- **Our sinuses, nose and throat**
(colds, tonsillitis, laryngitis and sinusitis)
- **Our airways and lungs**
(chest infections, pneumonia or bronchitis).

Flu, COVID-19 and a cold can fall into either, or both groups. These illnesses generally get better with rest and at-home treatment. If symptoms aren't clearing up or you're worried they're getting worse, seek medical advice.

Visit **NHS.uk** for medical advice.



Your COVID-19 jab this winter

One of the most important ways to protect yourself from illness this winter and continue to play your part in the fight against COVID-19 is to get your vaccine.

Everyone aged 50 and over will be offered a COVID-19 jab this autumn. Also invited to get their booster will be:

- people aged five to 49 years in a clinical risk group, including pregnant women
- people aged five to 49 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- people aged 16 to 49 years who are carers
- residents and staff working in care homes for older adults

- frontline health and social care workers.

When it's your turn to get your booster, you'll be invited by phone, text or letter.

You could make an appointment at a pharmacy or vaccination centre through the national booking service, or be invited to a clinic run by your GP. Look out for pop-up vaccination clinics in your local area too.

Find out more at
www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine
or call 119.

Protect yourself and others from flu

Flu is a highly infectious disease with symptoms that come on very quickly, making you feel quite unwell.

It's also easy to pass on the flu virus without realising, and some people are very vulnerable. If you're invited to get the vaccine, please say yes to protect yourself and your loved ones this winter.

The vaccination is safe and effective, and it's offered to people who:

- are aged 50 and over
- have certain health conditions
- are pregnant
- live in residential care

- care for or live with someone who's vulnerable
- work in frontline health or social care.

Children aged two to three, primary school children and eligible secondary school children can receive a nasal spray vaccine. Children under two at high risk will be offered a flu vaccination.

Find out more and see the full list of who's eligible at www.nhs.uk/flu vaccine or contact your GP practice.

Physical health



Joe Milbourn (pictured), 19, has asthma and gets the vaccine every year.



I am not a fan of needles but I get the flu jab as I could get very sick from flu – it's the best way to protect myself."

Think 111

NHS 111 advisors will assess and direct you to the right care, from the right person, in the right place, at the right time.



If you're assessed as needing treatment, NHS 111 will book you an appointment at an urgent treatment centre, or connect you with a pharmacist, community nurse or mental health help," says GP Vishen Ramkissoon. "They can also refer you to out-of-hours GPs in Hertfordshire."

You might also be directed to your local out-of-hours GP, minor injuries unit, community nurse, or pharmacist.

Health help on your high street



Your local pharmacists are experts in medicines and are trained to help you manage minor illnesses like colds, sore throats, tummy trouble, allergies, aches and pains.

If they think it's more serious, they'll direct you to the right health professional. They can also explain how to take medicines your GP has prescribed.

There are around 200 pharmacies in Hertfordshire.

Protect yourself and your family

Ways to stay well



Wash your hands

several times a day
for at least 20 seconds

with soap and warm water

(hand sanitiser is good but
does not kill all germs so
washing is better). This is the
simplest and best way to avoid
getting sick and spreading
illnesses.



Keep hands away

from your eyes, nose
and mouth unless

you have **just washed your
hands.**



Consider wearing a

face mask if you're
somewhere crowded.



Catch your cough

or sneeze with a tissue,
then **throw it in the bin.**



Keep surfaces like

door handles and **toilet
flushers** clean with

anti-bacterial cleaner.



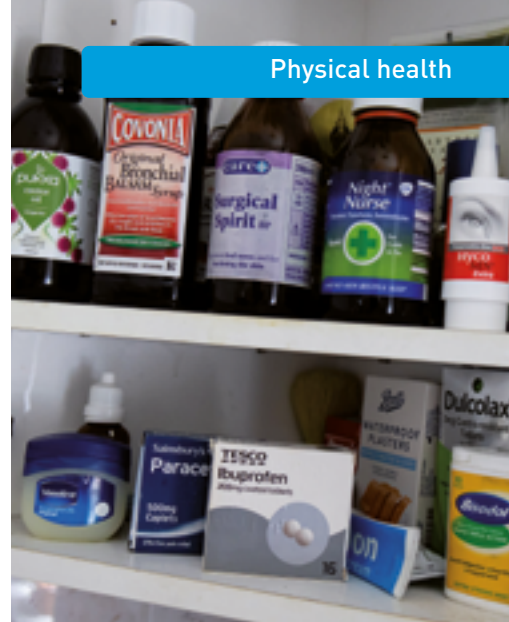
If you or your children are
offered **vaccinations**,
opt in (see pages 6 and 7).



Visit a pharmacist for

advice on medicines
that **don't need to be**

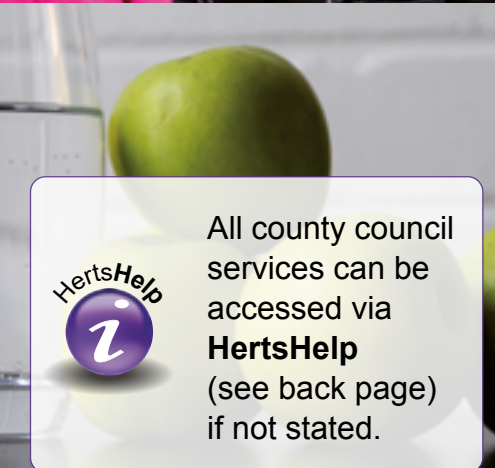
prescribed by a doctor
(see page 8).



Physical health

If you do get ill:

- **For a cold or flu**, rest, keep warm, drink plenty of fluids and take painkillers if you need them.
- **For sickness or diarrhoea**, rest and drink plenty of fluids, and stay at home.



All county council services can be accessed via **HertsHelp** (see back page) if not stated.

Get winter ready

Ten ways to stay fit and healthy this winter



Eat well and stay hydrated

Eat balanced,

nutritious meals that include protein, dairy, carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables.

Drink plenty of water

and try to keep within the recommended alcohol limits.

Local healthy hubs can also give you free advice to help you stay fit and healthy.



Sleep well

Get into a regular **bedtime routine** and use **relaxation exercises** to get good quality sleep.



Get active every day

Just 30 minutes a day, including strengthening

exercises, can help you stay strong and independent.

Where possible, try out health walks (see opposite) and other ideas on page 13.



Keep warm

Try to heat your home (or the room you're in)

to at **least 18 degrees**.

Keep energy bills down by closing doors and using heavy curtains to retain heat, turn off lights when you're not using them and save hot water with short showers.



Top up on vitamin D

It can be hard to get enough vitamin D in winter, so make a point of getting out in the **sunshine** for **15-20 minutes** a day and taking a **vitamin D supplement**.



Keep your home safe

Check your home for trip hazards and electrical concerns, and always have a **working smoke alarm**.

The right aid, such as a handrail or alarm, can help you feel safer. Contact **HertsHelp** (see back page).

A free **Safe and Well** visit can also help (see page 23).



Prevent falls

Gentle exercise and **moving around regularly** will help you stay strong. Wear **slip-resistant shoes**, secure rugs and mats, move obstacles, and don't forget to replace worn-out slippers. Get a free new pair of slippers: **www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/slipperswap**



Be prepared

Keep a list of **emergency contacts** in or by your phone. **Stock up** on store cupboard items like **tins and long-life milk** in case weather or illness keep you at home for a few days.

If you have a car, keep an **emergency kit** in the boot.



Stay connected

Keep in touch with **friends and family**, look out for **your neighbours** and consider volunteering.

You could also find a new hobby, meet new people at a community group or try something new. Speak to your GP about 'social prescribing' or call **HertsHelp**.



Stock up on home medicines

Your **pharmacy** or **supermarket** is a great place to buy remedies for minor illnesses, often at little cost.

Own-brand versions are often cheaper and just as effective as the big names.



Just Talk Herts

Winter can be a difficult time and, with the rising cost of living, more people than ever may struggle.



The Just Talk website has lots of resources to help children and young people understand their emotions and boost their wellbeing,” explains Jen Beer (pictured) from Hertfordshire’s public health team. “There’s also a section for parents and carers, full of reliable information and resources to help them support children and teenagers.”

If you are worried about your or someone else’s mental wellbeing, the wellbeing service is a good place to start.

You can self-refer for their services online or call them on **0800 6444 101** if you need more urgent help.

Your GP or practice nurse can also advise you.

The Samaritans can be contacted 24/7 free on **116 123**.

03

Mental
health

Get active in the great outdoors

Hertfordshire is full of green spaces and countryside, and being active is a great way to stay fit and look after your mental health.

We're making it safer and easier to walk and cycle around the county so you can do your bit for the environment, leave the car behind and enjoy the fresh air.

Hertfordshire resident Jenny Dalton has started walking her children to school regularly (pictured on front cover).



The walk gives me a clearer head to start the day, and I'm grateful for the fresh air and exercise," she says. "It also means I'm back working at my desk sooner than I would be from driving in, so I'm actually more productive."



See back page for contact details.

Here are a few ideas:

- **Join a volunteer-led Health Walk.**
There are options for people of all abilities and fitness levels.
- **Try using shorter journeys** as a chance to walk, cycle or even ride a scooter. Trips to the shops, doctor or school are the perfect place to start. Our new campaign, Healthy Little Trips, aims to help residents do just that, with a webpage of hints, tips and news of events.
- **Take advantage of new and improved cycle and walking routes** across the county, including the disused railway line Cole Green Way.
- **Find your local park run** and either run or walk.



Cost of living support

Whether you live alone, with others or have children, we're providing advice and guidance for all residents, plus extra help for those who need it most. There are also charities and other organisations who stand ready to support you.

You can get help with:

- **Finance** through our partners at Citizens Advice, who are on hand to talk you through the support available to you and check you are getting the help you are eligible for. Many people are missing out!

You can contact them on **0800 144 8848**.

For more information go to
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/

04

Financial support



- **Debt** through charity StepChange, who can help get your finances back on track. They are on 0800 138 1111. Advice is to first speak to the organisation you owe money to as they might let you pay back smaller amounts or take a break. But never ignore bills.



- **In a crisis**, such as if you are facing homelessness or are struggling to cope, you can also contact **HertsHelp** on **0300 123 4044** (see back page). There is also support on staying connected, mentioned on page 11.

The support available nationally is changing all the time. It includes monetary support with bills and food, extra payments for lower-income pensioners and an energy price guarantee.

To find the latest advice, you can go to **www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/wintercostofliving**



If you can't access information online, you can call **HertsHelp** to get a copy of the latest Financial Information Factsheet printed and posted to you.



05

Help for your family

Support for families

Through a mix of drop-in sessions, small groups and 1-1 support, the Family Centre Service helps children and families have the best start in life, develop well and thrive.

They are open to all Hertfordshire families and there's lots going on.

Come along for advice on topics like pregnancy, first aid, feeding your baby and your child's development needs. Join us for baby groups, play and family fun sessions.

Find out more at
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/winterfc
or call 0300 123 7572.

Hertfordshire Local Offer



The Local Offer lets parents, carers and young people know what SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) services are available in Hertfordshire, and who can access them.

Visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/wintersend or call **01992 555 847**.

Help for your family



Domestic abuse

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, such as violent or controlling behaviour, there is help and support available.

Contact Hertfordshire's Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy service on **0300 790 6772** or visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/wintersunflower

In an emergency, always call **999**. If for any reason you can't speak, **press 5**, followed by **5 again** when prompted.

Health information at your fingertips

The NHS app is a secure way to:

- check your symptoms
- order repeat prescriptions
- access health advice
- view test results and other information on your record, like your NHS Covid vaccination status
- and more!

The app works on smartphones and tablets. On other devices, you can use the web version. For the app, you must be registered with a GP in England and be 13 or older.

Find out more at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app

Your GP practice is here for you

GPs are busy. Watford GP Simon Hodes explains how we can all help services go further:



“Be prepared for us to ask questions so we can arrange the right help. Alongside GPs and nurses, many practices have pharmacists, physician associates, physiotherapists, social prescribers and paramedics. You might be offered an appointment in-person, online, via text, telephone or video.



You can do a lot online, from non-urgent queries to ordering medication or checking test results. This leaves phones for people who need urgent care.

“If you have symptoms of suspected cancer, insist you’re seen urgently.

This includes unexplained weight loss or tiredness, blood in your poo or wee, or when you cough, or a new growing lump or skin lesion.

“If we look after ourselves and use the NHS wisely, care will go further for everyone!

Thank you for your patience and support.”

Bronchiolitis in children – what you need to know



In children under two, viruses which cause coughs and colds can lead to bronchiolitis, an infection of the airways.

This can be more severe in babies who were premature or are under two months old, and in infants with conditions that make them vulnerable to illness. Most cases aren’t serious and will clear up in two to three weeks, but the symptoms can be concerning.

Help for your family

Contact your GP or call NHS 111 if you’re worried about your child or they:

- have taken less than half their usual amount at the last two or three feeds
- have dry nappies for 12 hours or more
- have a persistent high temperature (38°C or higher)
- seem very tired or irritable.

Dial 999 for your baby if:

- they’re finding it hard to breathe
- their tongue or lips are blue
- there are long pauses in their breathing.



06

**Safe, secure
& connected**

Meals on wheels (and more)

Every day, Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (HILS) delivers hot, nutritious meals straight to the door of many older and vulnerable Hertfordshire residents 365 days a year.

That's not all. They also provide nutrition and wellbeing support, medication prompts and an in-home exercise programme, helping residents stay happy, healthy and independent at home.

Support for carers

Caring for a loved one can be demanding. We work with partners like Carers in Hertfordshire, Age UK and Turning Point to try to make life a bit easier.

From information and advice to carers local groups and respite care, the right support can really make a difference and this winter we encourage carers to think about what would happen if you were unexpectedly unable to care. You can talk to us for help making a plan.



See back page for contact details.



Safe, secure & connected

Joan's husband has dementia and received respite care so that she could take a break.



It's that little bit of time to do the things everybody takes for granted," says Joan. "Just taking a break makes a huge amount of difference"

Safe, secure & connected



When did you last visit your local library? Hertfordshire libraries are welcoming, warm and safe spaces. As well as finding your next great read, you can use our libraries to study (we have free wi-fi), find reliable information or to use a computer. You can also come along to one of our groups for a chat and a cup of tea.”

Richard Pécout,
Senior Librarian



See back page
for contact details

Much more than just books



Do you need help to use a computer or a smartphone?

Your local library is also a great place to start if you want help to get confident with technology. Just book an hour on a computer (free if you're a library member) and staff will be there to help. We also have volunteer digital champions to help you learn to stay connected online.

Protect yourself from scams and fraud



Scams come in many forms - emails, by post, by phone, on social media or in person at your door,” explains Judith Gordon, Trading Standards Officer, “but all make false promises to get you to part with your money.

“This year we’ve seen scams around the cost of living, solar panels and insurance for white goods, but the picture changes regularly.”

To protect yourself and others, visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/wintertrading for more information, including how to report and how to obtain advice.

Safe, secure & connected



Free Safe and Well visits

Book a visit and our friendly staff will check your home for hazards, give you advice on fire safety, staying well, and preventing falls. They will make sure that your smoke alarms are working properly.

If needed, we can fit a new smoke alarm for free, including adapted alarms for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Here for you this winter



www.nhs.uk

Text relay: 18001 111

Call: 111 if you have urgent health needs



www.hertshelp.net/hertswinter

info@hertshelp.net

0300 123 4044



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/winterherts

contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk

0300 123 4040

Get email updates

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me**



Information in this guide was correct at time of printing on 7 October 2022.



Hertfordshire