

# Why choose well?

During winter, more people get ill or are injured than at other times of the year.

This means that the services provided by the National Health Service (NHS) are needed more than ever.

This leaflet will help you decide if you need medical attention if you get sick. It explains what each NHS service does, and when it should be used.

Choosing well means you will get the best treatment this winter. It also allows busy NHS services to help the people who need them most.

# Useful information

There are some easy ways you can lower your risk of getting ill this winter:

- When you cough or sneeze use a tissue, and then put it in the bin and wash your hands.
- Stay warm by making sure your home is heated, and by wearing lots of layers of clothing.
- Have many hot meals and drinks to keep your temperature and strength up.
- If you smoke, consider quitting to improve your circulation and general health. In case you do get ill, it is good to be prepared with essential medicines:
  - Paracetamol or aspirin.
  - Anti-diarrhoeal medicine.
  - Oral rehydration mixture.
  - Indigestion remedy.
  - Plasters.
  - A thermometer.

Remember, if you need any extra advice contact NHS Direct:

## 0845 4647

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

FREEVIEW channel 108, or page two on Sky Digital's interactive service.

# Your guide

to choosing the right NHS service if you become ill or are injured this winter.



[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

NHS



**Choking.  
Chest pain.  
Blacking out.  
Blood loss.**

**A&E or 999**

Accident and Emergency departments are found at most hospitals. They help people who show signs of being very ill or are badly injured. If you telephone 999 and tell the operator that there is a medical emergency, a response vehicle will be sent to your location.

**When and Why?**

Emergency services are very busy. They should only be used in very serious or life-threatening situations. Choosing well ensures that essential treatment is given, in the shortest possible time



**Cuts.  
Strains.  
Itches.  
Sprains.**

**NHS minor injuries units and walk-in centres**

They can treat minor illnesses and injuries and give you health advice. Most are open from early in the morning until late in the evening. You do not need an appointment, and you will be seen by an experienced nurse.

**When and Why?**

Use your local minor injuries unit or walk-in centre if you need medical treatment or advice which does not need a visit to A&E or a medical appointment. Choosing well ensures you receive the best possible treatment, leaving emergency services to those who need them most. For details of your local minor injuries unit or walk-in centre call **0845 46 47** or visit **www.nhsdirect.co.uk**



**Vomiting.  
Ear pain.  
Stomach ache.  
Back ache.**

**GP Surgery**

GP surgeries can be found locally. You can phone or make an appointment with a GP surgery for medical advice, examinations, and prescriptions. In an emergency, a GP may also visit your home outside of opening hours – if you need this service telephone your local surgery and follow the recorded instructions

**When and Why?**

Make an appointment with your local GP surgery when you have an illness or injury that will not go away this winter. Choosing well ensures that you get the treatment you need, and reduces the demand on emergency services. For details of your nearest GP surgery call **0845 46 47** or visit **www.nhsdirect.co.uk**



**Diarrhoea.  
Runny nose.  
Painful cough.  
Headache.**

**Pharmacist**

Pharmacies can be found in local areas. Your local pharmacist can give you advice on common winter illnesses and the medicines you need to treat them.

**When and Why?**

Visit your local pharmacy when you are suffering from a common winter health problem which does not require being seen by a nurse or doctor. Choosing well ensures you get the treatment you need in the shortest possible time, reducing the pressure on essential NHS services. For details of your nearest pharmacy call **0845 46 47** or visit **www.nhsdirect.co.uk**



**Unwell?  
Unsure?  
Confused?  
Need help?**

**NHS Direct**

NHS Direct offers confidential health advice and information by telephone, on the Internet and through digital TV, 24 hours a day. Contact **NHS Direct** on **0845 4647** or visit **www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk** FREEVIEW channel 108, or page two on Sky Digital's interactive service.

**When and Why?**

Contact NHS Direct if you are ill and have any questions about health. The service can also help you to find health services in your local area. Choosing well ensures you get expert advice in the shortest possible time, meaning busy NHS services can help those who need them most.



**Hangover.  
Grazed knee.  
Sore throat.  
Cough.**

**Self-care**

A lot of winter illnesses can be treated in your home by using medicine and getting plenty of rest.

**When and Why?**

Self-care is the best choice to treat very minor illnesses and injuries. Choosing well ensures you receive the rest and recovery you need, meaning busy NHS services can help those who need them most. For advice on self care call **0845 46 47** or visit **www.nhsdirect.co.uk**