



AYLESBURY SURGERY HEALTH & ENGAGEMENT FORUM

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The Elderly and vulnerable

It's the time of the year when the weather turns cold and the Flu and Colds come into force not to mention the ongoing spread of COVID-19. The old and vulnerable with underlying health risks and conditions need to take extra care. It is important to remember that other people, such as older neighbours, friends and family members, may need some extra help over the winter.

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression. It is important to keep in touch with your friends, neighbours and family and ask if they need any practical help, or if they're feeling unwell.

There's a lot you can do to help people who need support. Make sure they eat well and stay hydrated by ensuring they're stocked up with enough food supplies for a few days, in case they cannot go out. By checking on them from time to time can make a huge difference to the quality of their life

If they do need to go out in the cold, encourage them to wear warm clothing, dress in layers and wear shoes with a good grip. Wearing a scarf around the mouth can help to protect them from cold air, and to reduce their risk of chest infections. Encourage them to get a flu shot and COVID booster.

Make sure they get any prescription medicines before the holiday period starts and if bad weather is forecast.

If they need help over the holiday period when the GP surgery or pharmacy are closed or they're not sure what to do, go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111. If you're worried about a relative or elderly neighbour, contact your local council or call the Age UK helpline on [0800 678 1602](https://www.ageuk.org.uk) (8am to 7pm every day). You can [find your local council on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

If you're concerned the person may have hypothermia, go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111.

If you or some one you know is struggling financially You can find out more from GOV.UK about benefits and financial support if you're on a low income



**Mr Rajash Mehta—Chairman
of the Aylesbury Surgery
Health & Engagement Forum**

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WHY THE FLU VACCINATION IS IMPORTANT

PATIENT'S RECOMMENDED TO HAVE A FLU VACCINE

They include:

- everyone aged 65 years and over
- everyone under 65 years of age who has a **medical condition** listed below, including children and babies over 6 months of age
- all pregnant women, at any stage of pregnancy
- all children aged 2 and 3 years (provided they were aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August before flu vaccinations starts in the autumn)
- all children in primary school
- some secondary school-aged children (Years 7 to 11)
- everyone living in a residential or nursing home
- everyone who receives a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person
- all those living with someone who has lowered immunity due to disease or treatment
- all frontline health and social care workers

For advice and information about flu vaccination, speak to your GP, practice nurse, pharmacist

WHAT CAUSES THE FLU

Flu is caused by influenza viruses that infect the windpipe and lungs. And because it's caused by viruses and not bacteria, antibiotics won't treat it. However, if there are complications from getting flu, antibiotics may be needed.



How you catch flu

When an infected person coughs or sneezes, they spread the flu virus in tiny droplets of saliva over a wide area. These droplets can then be breathed in by other people or they can be picked up by touching surfaces where the droplets have landed.

How we protect against flu

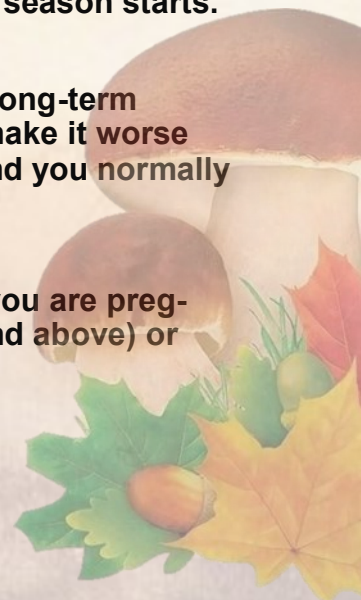
You can prevent the spread of the virus by covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and you can wash your hands frequently or use hand gels to reduce the risk of picking up the virus.

But the best way to avoid catching and spreading flu is by having the vaccination before the flu season starts.

Flu can affect anyone but if you have a long-term health condition, the effects of flu can make it worse even if the condition is well managed and you normally feel well.

You should have the free flu vaccine if you are pregnant, seriously overweight (BMI of 40 and above) or have a long-term condition, such as:

- a heart problem



- a chest complaint or serious breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or some people with asthma
- a kidney disease
- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment)
- liver disease
- had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- diabetes
- some neurological condition, such as multiple sclerosis (MS) or cerebral palsy
- a learning disability
- a problem with your spleen, such as sickle cell disease, or you have had your spleen removed



Children's flu vaccine

The children's nasal spray flu vaccine is safe and effective. It's offered every year to children to help protect them against flu.

Flu is caused by the influenza virus. It can be a very unpleasant illness for children. It can also lead to serious problems, such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

Children can catch and spread flu easily. Vaccinating them also protects others who are vulnerable to flu, such as babies and older people.

WHO SHOULD HAVE THE NASAL SPRAY FLU VACCINE

The nasal spray flu vaccine is free on the NHS for:













- children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2023 (born between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2021)
- all primary school children (Reception to Year 6)
- some secondary school aged children (Year 7 to Year 11)
- children aged 2 to 17 years with certain long-term health conditions
If your child is aged between 6 months and 2 years and has a long-term health condition that makes them at higher risk from flu, they'll be offered a flu vaccine injection instead of the nasal spray.

This is because the nasal spray is not licensed for children under 2 years old.

The nasal spray vaccine offers the best protection for children aged 2 to 17 years. They'll be offered a flu vaccine injection if the nasal spray vaccine is not suitable for them. Injected flu vaccines are also safe and effective.

COVID –19 VERSES FLU AND COLD - WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES?

COVID-19, the common cold, seasonal allergies and the flu have many similar symptoms. Find out about some of the important differences between these illnesses.

COVID-19 vs. FLU vs. COLD			
SYMPTOMS	COVID-19*	FLU	COLD
SYMPTOMS ONSET AFTER EXPOSURE	2 - 14 DAYS	1 - 4 DAYS	1 - 3 DAYS
 Fever	Common	Common	Rare
 Cough	Common Usually dry	Common	Mild to moderate
 Fatigue	Common	Common	Mild
 Shortness of breath/diffculty breathing	Common Severe cases may develop pneumonia	Rare	Rare
 Body aches	Sometimes	Common	Mild
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
 Headache	Sometimes	Common	Rare
 Digestive issues	Sometimes	Sometimes	Rare
 Chills	Sometimes May experience repeated shaking with chills	Sometimes	Rare
 New loss of smell and taste	Sometimes	Rare	Rare
 Sneezing	Rare	Sometimes	Common
 Runny or stuffy nose	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a medical emergency, just like a stroke or a heart attack.

Hypothermia is a dangerous drop in body temperature below 35C (normal body temperature is around 37C). It's a medical emergency that needs to be treated in hospital.

CHECK IF IT'S HYPOTHERMIA

Symptoms of hypothermia include:

- shivering
- pale, cold and dry skin – skin and lips may turn blue or grey (on black or brown skin this may be easier to see on the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet)
- slurred speech
- slow breathing
- tiredness or confusion

A baby with hypothermia may be:

- cold to touch
- Floppy

unusually quiet and sleepy and may refuse to feed

If you think someone has hypothermia, there are things you can do while waiting for medical help.

YOU CAN:

- move the person indoors or somewhere sheltered as quickly as possible
- remove any wet clothing, wrap them in a blanket, sleeping bag or dry towel, making sure their head is covered
- give them a warm non-alcoholic drink and some sugary food like chocolate if they're fully awake
- keep them awake by talking to them until help arrives

- make sure you or someone else stays with them

DO NOT:

- do not use a hot bath, hot water bottle or heat lamp to warm them up
- do not rub their arms, legs, feet or hands
- do not give them alcohol to drink

If you have hypothermia, you'll usually be treated in hospital.

Your heart rate will be monitored and you may be given oxygen to help you breathe.

You may also be given warm fluids straight into a vein to help your body warm up.

TREATMENT IN INTENSIVE CARE MAY BE NEEDED IF YOU HAVE SEVERE HYPOTHERMIA.

CAUSES OF HYPOTHERMIA

HYPOTHERMIA HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET TOO COLD AND YOUR BODY TEMPERATURE DROPS BELOW 35C.

YOU CAN GET HYPOTHERMIA IF YOU:

- DO NOT WEAR ENOUGH CLOTHES IN COLD WEATHER
- STAY OUT IN THE COLD TOO LONG
- FALL INTO COLD WATER
- HAVE WET CLOTHES AND GET COLD
- LIVE IN A COLD HOUSE – OLDER PEOPLE LIVING ALONE ARE PARTICULARLY AT RISK





WINTER BLUES

SAD– Seasonal affective disorder

The colder weather and shorter days cause you to feel sad or down sometimes, especially during the winter months, could be a sign of the winter blues. It's not uncommon to experience fatigue, sadness, difficulty concentrating, and a disruption in your sleep schedule during the winter season.

For some, this mood change is temporary and easily managed with lifestyle modifications. But for others, the winter blues can turn into a more severe type of depression called seasonal affective disorder or SAD. The good news? There are things you can do to beat the winter blues.

Like many other mood disorders, you can take action to lessen the severity of the symptoms associated with winter blues.

Besides feeling sad, here are some typical symptoms of winter blues:

- You feel apathetic, unmotivated, and bored.
- You are less interested in friends and activities you usually enjoy.
- You feel irritable, moody, and your relationships suffer.
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Having low energy and feeling sluggish

- Having problems with sleeping too much
- Experiencing carbohydrate cravings, overeating and weight gain
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- Having thoughts of not wanting to live

Take a Break From the News

Being indoors more often means an increase in screen time. And if this time is spent consuming a non-stop news cycle, you may feel an increase in the winter blues. Try to limit the amount of time you spend in front of a screen. If possible, schedule one hour for news.

Boost Your Mood with Food

A healthy diet will boost your mood, give you more energy and stop you putting on weight over winter. Winter blues can make you crave sugary foods and carbohydrates such as chocolate, pasta and bread, balance the craving for carbohydrates, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Try to including foods high in vitamin D such as fatty fish, fish oil, and vitamin D fortified foods like milk, orange juice, breakfast cereal, yogurt, and other food sources can help balance mood.¹

According to one meta-analysis, researchers found that people with depression have low vitamin D levels, and people with low vitamin D are at a greater risk of depression.

Keep Up Your Sleep Routine

Sleep is a huge component of mood. Without adequate, regular sleep,

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Follow a simple bedtime routine that signals rest, such as taking a bath, turning down the lights, or drinking a cup of herbal tea.

Do Some Physical Activity

Physical activity has been shown to boost mood, getting outside daily, even for a few minutes a day, can make a huge impact on your mood and help target the specific symptoms of SAD related to a lack of daylight.

Call on Your Support System

Loneliness and isolation tend to make the effects of the winter blues worse. Finding a way to spend time with supportive people is key to boosting your mood. This may include walks outdoors, talking on the phone, or coffee dates (virtual or in person, depending on your circumstances).

Seek Out the Sun

Being in the sunlight helps balance serotonin activity, increases melatonin production, balances your circadian rhythm, and increases vitamin D levels, which can lead to an improved emotional state.

Take up a new Hobby

Keeping your mind active with a new interest can help ward off symptoms of Sad. "It could be anything, such as playing bridge, singing, knitting, joining a gym, keeping a journal, or writing a blog. The important thing is that you have some-

thing to look forward to and concentrate on.

Seek Professional Help

If lifestyle modifications and other low-level interventions do not provide enough relief from the winter blues, and you begin to feel as if you're unable to function and live your life like you have previously, and your symptoms are becoming unmanageable or causing anxiety, all is not lost it's time to consider seeking professional help. Contact your GP for help and guidance.

Prevention

There's no known way to prevent the development of seasonal affective disorder. However, if you take steps early on to manage symptoms, you may be able to prevent them from getting worse over time. You may be able to head off serious changes in mood, appetite and energy levels, as you can predict the time of the year in which these symptoms may start. Treatment can help prevent complications, especially if it is diagnosed and treated before symptoms get worse.



Effects of cold weather

Keeping the heating turned off is one sure fire way of reducing gas and electricity bills this winter, but it could come at the expense of people's health – particularly those with heart and lung conditions.

As we get older it becomes harder for our bodies to detect how cold we are, and it takes longer to warm up which can be bad for our health. For older people in particular, the longer the exposure to the cold, the more risk of heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia, depression, worsening arthritis and increased accidents at home (associated with loss of strength and dexterity in the hands).

It is important to keep warm in winter both inside and outdoors. Keeping warm can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems.

For those worried about the cost of heating and still trying to stay warm the following methods may help:

Try using a hot water bottle, electric blanket or a microwaveable heat bag to keep warm and ease discomfort caused by stiffness, as well as keeping moving as much as possible

Eating regularly helps keep you warm so try to have at least one hot meal a day along with regular hot drinks.



Cardiovascular disease

Low temperatures cause

blood vessels to narrow, putting stress on the circulatory system. “[This] can lead to cardiovascular effects, including ischaemic heart disease (IHD), coronary heart disease, strokes, sub arachnoid haemorrhage and death.

Asthma and COPD

Cold air also affects the function of the respiratory tract, with problems starting once the temperature drops below about 16C (61F). Those with existing respiratory conditions, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), are at greatest risk.

Joint pain, arthritis

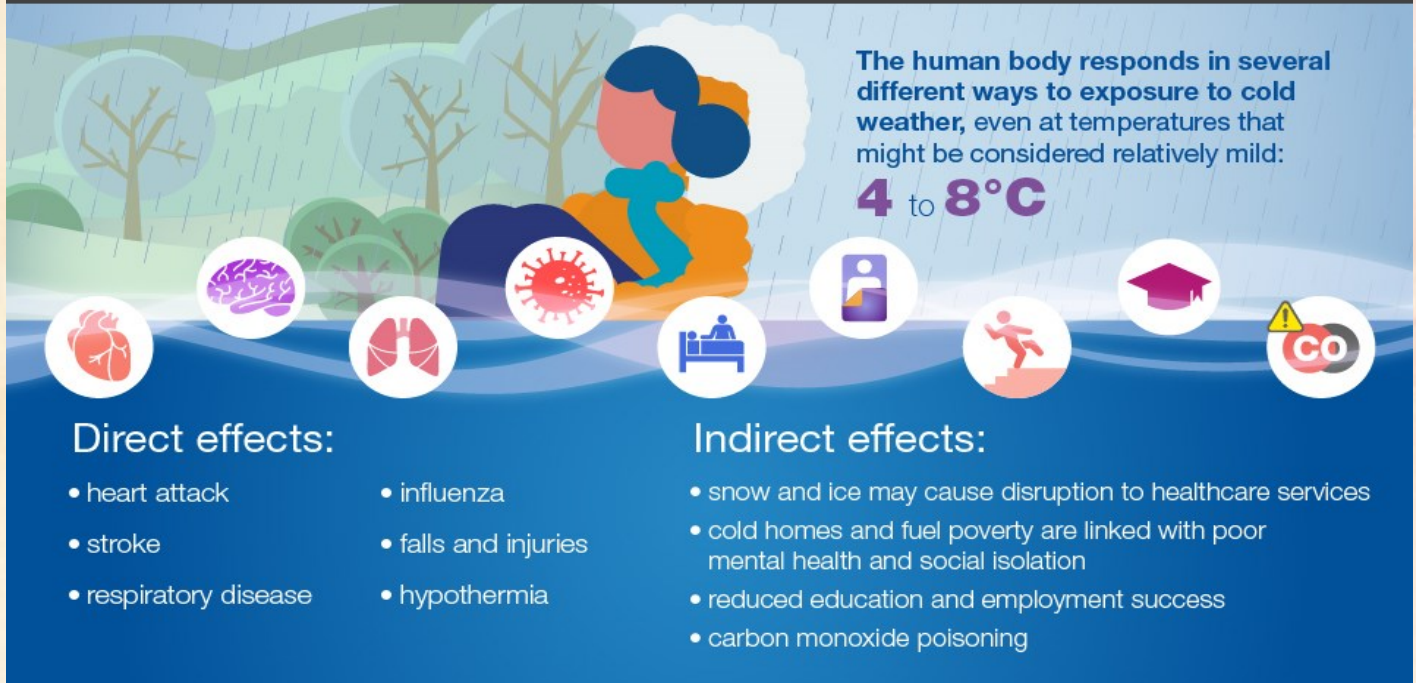
Cold weather can exacerbate the discomfort of existing aches and pains. This is because the cold generally makes us less active, which can lead to joint stiffness, and because our body tends to redirect blood to vital organs, leaving joints feeling tighter and less pliable.

Stroke

The cold puts more pressure on our hearts and circulation

The cold can increase the risk of a stroke or heart attack, as well as hypothermia. If you think you or someone else is experiencing any of these symptoms, call 999 (or 112 from a mobile) immediately and ask for an ambulance.

The direct and indirect health effects of winter weather



The human body responds in several different ways to exposure to cold weather, even at temperatures that might be considered relatively mild: **4 to 8°C**

Direct effects:

- heart attack
- stroke
- respiratory disease
- influenza
- falls and injuries
- hypothermia

Indirect effects:

- snow and ice may cause disruption to healthcare services
- cold homes and fuel poverty are linked with poor mental health and social isolation
- reduced education and employment success
- carbon monoxide poisoning

For a stroke, think FAST:

F – Is the face drooping on one side?

A – Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?

S – Is speech slurred?

T – Time to call 999 if you spot any one of these signs.

Many people experience severe chest pain during a heart attack – but the symptoms can be different for different people.

Hypothermia is a medical emergency, just like a stroke or a heart attack.

Falls and injuries

Winter weather and cold homes affect mobility and increase the likelihood of falls and injuries – especially in frail and elderly peo-

ple – because: snow and icy conditions increase the risk of trips and falls outdoors

Feeling cold all the time is a common symptom of a number of medical conditions such as:

Anemia - Caused by a lack of iron in the diet or an inability to make enough red blood cells. If you are female of reproductive age and vegetarian it is even more likely.

Hypothyroidism - Most often caused by an autoimmune disorder, most frequently in women and in or approaching middle age.



Raynaud's disease - A situation where spasms in the arteries in the hands and feet result in a lack of blood flow to the fingers and toes which go pale and numb.

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Diabetes - one symptom of "diabetic nephropathy" the kidney damage resulting from diabetes is a feeling of being cold all the time.

Anorexia - people with this eating disorder often feel cold all the time as the body tries to make any nutrition last as long as possible by generating less heat. Soft body hair often grows as a response to being cold as added insulation to counter the loss of naturally insulating body fat.

A constant feeling of being cold can be a sign of a more serious medical condition, if you really can't ever get warm even in a warm place or long after coming in from the cold, you should contact your GP.

Did you know that you can now get advice and help from your GP practice for other services other than health related issues such as housing , Financial, isolation?

How local authorities can help prevent cold-related harm



THE



APPROACH

Are you looking for a holistic approach to enhance your physical and mental well-being? Reiki, a gentle and non-invasive energy healing technique, may hold the key to promoting overall wellness. The 111 Approach uses Reiki therapy as a core treatment and combines this with quick easy and practical techniques to ensure your wellness is kept at its optimal level between treatments.

What Is Reiki?

Reiki, pronounced "ray-key," is an ancient Japanese practice that harnesses universal life energy to promote healing and balance. The word "Reiki" translates to "universal life energy" and it is based on the scientific principle that everything in the universe is made up of energy – including ourselves.

How Does Reiki Work?

During a Reiki session, a trained practitioner uses their hands to channel this healing energy to the recipient. The energy is guided by the practitioner's intention and flows to where it's needed most. It's a bit like a therapeutic energy massage for your body and soul. It can be done either in person or even over a video call as you don't need physical touch for energy to flow to you.

Physical Wellness Benefits:

Pain Relief: Reiki has been known to provide relief from chronic pain conditions. The energy helps soothe sore muscles, reduce inflammation, and improve blood circulation, aiding in pain management.

Stress Reduction: Reiki promotes deep relaxation, reducing stress and anxiety. When our bodies are in a relaxed state, they're better equipped to heal and maintain overall health.

Improved Sleep: Many individuals report better sleep quality after Reiki sessions. Improved relaxation and reduced stress levels contribute to more restful nights.

Mental Wellness Benefits:

Emotional Balance: Reiki helps release emotional blockages and promotes emotional healing. It's a wonderful complement to therapies for conditions like depression and anxiety.

Mental Clarity: Regular Reiki sessions can clear mental fog, improve focus, and enhance mental clarity, allowing you to make better decisions and feel more grounded.

Enhanced Self-Awareness: Reiki often fosters a deeper connection with oneself. It can help you become more self-aware, manage emotions effectively, and develop a positive outlook on life.

Experience Reiki with The 111 Approach

At The 111 Approach we bring the science and practicality behind Reiki treatments and bring you a unique method that is tailored to your needs and requirements. Every treatment is bespoke and specific to the individual.

Whether you're seeking relief from physical ailments or looking to improve your mental and emotional well-being, Reiki may offer the support you need. It's a gentle and nurturing practice that complements conventional medical treatments. It has no side effects and can be used alongside all medical treatments. It's widely used in NHS and private hospitals throughout the UK and the world.

If you're interested in exploring the benefits of Reiki, please don't hesitate to contact The 111 Approach to schedule a session. Experience the healing power of Reiki and embark on a journey to improved physical and mental wellness.

The 111 Approach – [in-fo@the111approach.com](mailto:info@the111approach.com) 07468 480 232
Socials - @the111approach – follow on Instagram facebook and tiktok for FREE Daily Meditations

Website – www.the111approach.com

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Time of crises

Autumn and Winter seasons approaching and the cold weather setting in, it is a time of extra concern for the elderly, young, homeless and vulnerable with health risks.

The devastation of homelessness and the additional pressure of the cost of living is having an enormous impact on people's wellbeing. Research from charities show that people are having to skip meals and avoid using heating when they need it. Homeless shelters are no doubt are filled to the brink and food banks are already stretched.

Christmas is going to be especially tricky for many people this year.

However, knowing just what you can do to help can not only benefit you but others as well. It is a well known fact that volunteering improves well-being, reduces loneliness.

All you need is to spread some warmth and kindness and empathy to bring a bit of comfort to those that really need a reason to smile.

There are many ways to volunteer, from short term help in food banks and soup kitchens, to making a longer-term commitment to offer your time on a regular basis.

During this crisis, with Christmas approaching it is a perfect time for giving, caring and sharing. Let us all take time to help each other in this time of crises.

Mr Rajash Mehta

