

Press Release

Choose well and be prepared this winter

Local people are being reminded to stock up their cupboards with over the counter medicines ready for the winter and holiday period.

Patients who require repeat prescriptions are also asked to think ahead and get hold of the required amount before General Practices close for Christmas.

Traditionally winter months see an increase in coughs, colds and flu like symptoms, which can all be alleviated with over the counter remedies, available from local pharmacies. The message from NHS Bury, comes as part of the ongoing campaign known as **Care about the cost** to make sure that emergency health services are available for the poorest of patients.

Patients are urged to consider the full range of NHS services available to them. Advice about self care and details of local health services are available via the NHS Bury website www.bury.nhs.uk or by visiting the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk

“Many common complaints, such as back-ache, minor sports injuries, upset stomachs, coughs, colds and flu like symptoms can be treated by having a well stocked medicine cabinet.” Said Dr. Kiran Patel, Clinical Lead for Bury’s emerging Clinical Commissioning Group. “Just having a few basic essentials at home can help to treat the symptoms of many common illnesses and injuries.”

“Patients can also get advice from NHS Direct on 0845 46 47, or by accessing one of the range of services available in Bury, including local community pharmacies, a patient’s own GP practice and Prestwich Walk-in Centre. For patients that need treating today, but can’t get an appointment with their own GP practice, they can get fast access at Bury Urgent Treatment Centre. By choosing the right NHS service patients will get the best treatment in the shortest possible time.”

Dr. Andrew Rowland, Consultant in Paediatric Emergency Medicine at The Pennine Acute Trust, added: “A&E departments and the ambulance service experience a significant rise in the number of patients we see each winter. We know, for example, that around one in every four people who turn up to A&E could have either self-treated or used another local service, such as their pharmacy, for advice for conditions such as colds and flu. We also know that colder winter weather brings an increase in the number of heart-attacks, strokes and breathing problems. We need to make sure that ambulance staff and A&E teams are free to treat people with these serious and life-threatening conditions.”

“We’d like to ask people to think about going to their local high-street pharmacy, or go online to find advice so that they are prepared for winter. Minor illnesses such as colds and flu are fairly self-limiting – you may feel unwell for a few days. Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids and take painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. As colds and flu are caused by viruses, antibiotics will not help get rid of them.”

“This winter we are encouraging patients to consider if attending an A&E department is really necessary and the best option available to them, or whether they may be better seeking advice and help from one of the community healthcare services. We need to keep A&E departments for those people who are extremely unwell and need urgent medical attention. If patients present with conditions they could have managed with support from the excellent services available in the community, we use up valuable resources which could be better used to treat critically ill adults or children. Of course, in a genuine emergency, the A&E department will provide the best possible care to patients.”

By choosing and using the right services, patients can expect to be seen or treated more quickly, whilst keeping emergency services free for those patients who need them most. Choosing the right service also helps to make sure that the limited NHS resources available to Bury are being spent wisely.

By choosing the right NHS service patients will get the best treatment in the shortest possible time:

- **Self care** – treat very minor illnesses, ailments and injuries at home
- **NHS Choices** – online advice and information www.nhs.uk
- **NHS Direct** – 24/7 advice and information call [0845 46 47](tel:08454647)
- **Pharmacy** – expert advice and treatment for a range of common health problems
- **GP** – make your GP practice your first port of call for advice, guidance and treatment
- **Bury Urgent Treatment Centre** – if you need treating today, this doctor-led service is open every day from 8am to 10pm, no appointment needed. The service offers an alternative choice for anyone who can't get a same day appointment at their own GP practice, when they are suffering from an ailment, illness or injury that needs assessing quickly, but isn't serious enough to require a visit to A&E. First floor Moorgate Primary Care Centre, 22 Derby Way, Bury, BL9 0NJ.
- **Prestwich Walk-in Centre** – a nurse-led service open every day from 8am until 8pm, no appointment needed. The Walk-in Centre offers treatment for a range of minor ailments and illnesses, including medication if appropriate. Fairfax Road, Prestwich, M25 1BT.
- **A&E/999** – A&E departments and the 999 ambulance service should only be used in a critical or life-threatening situation.

ENDS

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