



Winter Safety 2017

Winter is an exciting time for children and adults alike. Whilst it brings the joy of festivities, at the same time comes cold weather, ice and snow. Here are some tips and general information to be safe and healthy this winter:

Flu Vaccine Programme

In 2017/2018 the Flu Vaccination programme will allow more children to have the vaccine. It will be available **free** on the NHS for eligible children, including:

- Children aged two and three on August 31, 2017 – that is, children born between September 1, 2013 and August 31, 2015.
- Children in reception class and school years one, two, three and four.

Hand washing! Keep yourself and your children safe from both the flu and vomiting bug by ensuring regular washing of hands for at least 10-15 seconds.

Winter and Christmas Home Safety

The excitement and change in our homes during Christmas can often lead to accidents, which these simple tips could easily avoid:

1. **Carbon Monoxide:** Boilers, fires, wood burners are used the most during winter and poor maintenance can lead to the 'silent killer' carbon monoxide poisoning. Families with young children (and older people) are most at risk, click [here](#) for tips on reducing the risk and awareness of signs of carbon monoxide poisoning.
2. Keeping with **Suffolk's Safer Sleeping Strategy**, ensure babies have appropriate sleeping arrangements. Instinct may be to keep babies as warm as possible, but overheating is a risk factor of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Click [here](#) for more information.
3. **Lithium Batteries:** Be extremely vigilant of small children consuming button cell lithium batteries from Christmas toys/gifts. They are poisonous and extremely dangerous.
4. **Christmas Fire Safety:**
 - a. Ensure that Christmas decorations are kept away from any major light fittings.
 - b. Always remember to keep candles away from children, but also to put them out before going to bed.
 - c. Old Christmas lights can be dangerous, make sure you buy new ones every few years to ensure they meet safety standards.
 - d. Scalding and burns can severely affect children and babies by causing major damage to their delicate skin. When possible try to keep children away from the kitchen and keep lit candles and match boxes in safe areas.
5. **Alcohol:** Christmas holidays can lead to more drinking. Be wary of over-drinking during the holidays especially ensuring alcohol is kept out of reach and sight of children.



Asthma Kills!

As the winter months arrive, the triggers for Asthma attacks for children especially, are at an all year high. It's so important for children and adults to be aware of the main triggers of Asthma such as colds and flu, allergens (dust, pollen), smoking, stress and anxiety and poor control/management. For more information on the triggers for Asthma click [here](#).

The main way to proactively manage Asthma is to keep a personal log and action plan; this will contain step by step advice, as well as a track of medication, dosages, and times. For information on downloading a plan and starting the process please click [here](#). Finally, do make sure you have enough medications over the Christmas period.

Safe Travel-Winter Travel

- **Young drivers** especially are at a higher risk of injury to both themselves and passengers in the winter. Young/new drivers should stay focused whilst driving and when appropriate give preference to using taxi or other modes of transport. Visit www.suffolkroadsafe.net for information and resources about road safety.
- **Parents** driving their children to school can visit RoSPA's [Winter Driving Tips](#) website, which contains useful advice for preparing journeys in snow, ice, rain, fog or strong winds.
- **Car Seats:** The winter months have arrived and caution must be taken whilst travelling with young children. It is essential that children, if under the age of 12, or under 135cm tall is in a car seat that is securely fitted. For some simple and easy to follow videos on how to properly install a car seat click [here](#)

Common illness and infection

In the East of England, cases of mumps, measles and rubella have fallen recently, but cases of whooping cough have increased. A useful guide will be available soon for teachers and parents giving advice on infections, how to manage them, when to seek advice from health professionals and when your child might need to stay away from school.

National News:

Type 2 diabetes - Type 2 diabetes is linked to obesity and with 1 in 10 children in reception and 1 in 5 children in year 6 reported to be obese, the numbers of children with type 2 diabetes is on the rise. Diabetes can lead to serious health problems such as heart disease, kidney failure and blindness. During the Christmas period, be wary of your children's sugar intake, and limit the number of treats and chocolates that are both given and displayed at home.

Falls - Falls are a leading cause of accidental injury in young children, and taking steps to avoid falls can help. Young children are more at risk because:

- They want to see what's happening outside but do not understand dangers.
- They develop quickly, they climb furniture or drag items across the floor to open a window.
- Small children have a different centre of gravity so may topple out of windows more easily. We recommend that you fit window catches, locks or restrictors to stop your windows opening too wide.

Stay Safe and Healthy this Winter!

Any queries please contact Dr Mash Maidrag at mashbileg.maidrag@suffolk.gov.uk.

