

Stay Well This Winter

In Suffolk and north east Essex

NHS



Taking care with asthma

When you have a long-term condition, it's important to take care of yourself and follow the advice of your GP practice and consultants so you can prevent your condition from worsening or getting complications. This guide will help you to know what you should be doing, and what to do if you start feeling worse. Our aim is to ensure that you get the care you need, when you need it. We want you to be able to look after yourself and know your warning signs, so that you don't end up in an emergency situation.

Treatment

While there's currently no cure for asthma, there are a number of treatments that can help control the condition. Most asthma treatments are taken using an inhaler, a small device that delivers a spray or powder medicine to your lungs as you breathe in. The main treatments are:

- identifying and avoiding asthma triggers if possible
- reliever inhalers – inhalers used when needed to quickly relieve asthma symptoms for a short time
- preventer inhalers – inhalers used regularly every day to reduce the inflammation in the breathing tubes, which prevents asthma symptoms occurring

You'll usually draw up a personal action plan with your doctor or asthma nurse. This will include information about your medicines, how to monitor your condition and what to do if you have an asthma attack.

If you do not have an action plan, please contact your asthma nurse at your surgery.

When to get medical advice

Please make sure you are familiar with your action plan and understand what it means for you. If you feel that your asthma is getting worse, as well as refereeing to your action plan, you should contact your GP or asthma nurse early for advice.

Only attend A&E if you are having significant difficulty breathing and your reliever inhalers are not working.

Remember you can access GP services 24 hours a day, seven days per week. If you need to speak to a GP out of hours, then phone NHS 111 and they will arrange for you to speak to a professional.



For more information, please visit www.sneevaccine.org.uk

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Taking care with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

When you have a long-term condition, it's important to take care of yourself and follow the advice of your GP practice and consultants so you can prevent your condition from worsening or getting complications. This guide will help you to know what you should be doing, and what to do if you start feeling worse. Our aim is to ensure that you get the care you need, when you need it. We want you to be able to look after yourself and know your warning signs, so that you don't end up in an emergency situation.

Treatment

Treatment can help to slow the progression and control the symptoms of COPD. The most important thing you can do is stop smoking if you are a smoker. You may also be prescribed inhalers and medications, and pulmonary rehabilitation. Follow your care team's advice, including taking any medication prescribed, to make sure your health is in its best possible condition.

Please consider the following;

- Book an early review with your practice/ COPD nurse prior to winter
- Receive the flu vaccination before winter
- If you notice an increase in sputum, particularly if it is coloured or if you are getting increasingly

short of breath, you should contact your GP or COPD nurse for advice

- If your symptoms are getting worse, and you have been prescribed rescue medication, please consider using this as well as contacting a health professional

Only attend A&E if you are having significant difficulty breathing and your reliever inhalers are not working.

Remember you can access GP services 24 hours a day, seven days per week. If you need to speak to a GP out of hours, then phone NHS 111 and they will arrange for you to speak to a professional.

Your COPD nurse is

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Taking care with diabetes (type 1 or type 2 on insulin)

When you have a long-term condition, it's important to take care of yourself and follow the advice of your GP practice and consultants so you can prevent your condition from worsening or getting complications. This guide will help you to know what you should be doing, and what to do if you start feeling worse. Our aim is to ensure that you get the care you need, when you need it. We want you to be able to look after yourself and know your warning signs, so that you don't end up in an emergency situation.

Treatment

Living with type 1 diabetes means that you have to manage your health very carefully to avoid complications. You need to ensure that you're taking your insulin and other medication as advised by your diabetes care team.

Being diabetic puts you at much higher risk from getting the flu. It is really important that you get your flu vaccination before the start of winter.

Your diabetes team can also help you set a target HbA1c level to aim for you to keep your blood glucose levels healthy.

If your blood glucose levels become too high or too low, this could lead to hyperglycaemia or hypoglycaemia respectively (high or low blood sugar levels) which can both cause severe symptoms and complications, so it's important to keep up with taking insulin and monitoring blood glucose levels as you have been advised.

You should also aim to eat a healthy balanced diet and take regular exercise. Giving up smoking can benefit you a lot as diabetes means that your risk of heart attack and stroke is greater, and smoking increases this risk. Limit

alcohol and keep up with your vaccinations. Get regular eye tests and look after your feet - regularly check your feet for cuts, blisters or grazes as you may not be able to feel them if the nerves in your feet are damaged.

When to get medical advice

As type 1 diabetes is a long-term condition, you'll be in regular contact with your diabetes care team. Your GP or diabetes care team will also need to check your eyes, feet and nerves regularly because they can also be affected by diabetes.

You should also be seen regularly – at least once a year – to check how well your diabetes is being controlled over the long term.

See your GP if you have a minor foot injury that doesn't start to heal within a few days.

You should have had advice about how to look after yourself when you are ill – known as your "sick day rules". If you haven't been given these, contact your GP or care team.

Remember you can access GP services 24 hours a day, seven days per week. If you need to speak to a GP out of hours, then phone NHS 111 and they will arrange for you to speak to a professional.

111

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Taking care with diabetes (type 2)

When you have a long-term condition, it's important to take care of yourself and follow the advice of your GP practice and consultants so you can prevent your condition from worsening or getting complications. This guide will help you to know what you should be doing, and what to do if you start feeling worse. Our aim is to ensure that you get the care you need, when you need it. We want you to be able to look after yourself and know your warning signs, so that you don't end up in an emergency situation.

Treatment

It's important to keep your glucose levels as normal as possible when you have diabetes. To do this, you will need to look at your diet and lifestyle and make any necessary changes. The three biggest areas to look at are eating healthily, losing weight if you are overweight and exercising regularly. If you are prescribed medication or need insulin injections, ensure you are taking this as advised.

Being diabetic puts you at much higher risk from getting the flu. It is really important that you get your flu vaccination before the start of winter.

Giving up smoking can benefit you a lot as diabetes means that your risk of heart attack and stroke is greater, and smoking increases this risk. Limit alcohol and keep up with your vaccinations. Get regular eye tests and look after your feet - regularly check your feet for cuts, blisters or grazes as you may not be able to feel them if the nerves in your feet are damaged.

Ensure you know what to do if you have a hypo

– your care team can help you if you don't know what to do.

When to get medical advice

As type 2 diabetes is a long-term condition, you'll be in regular contact with your diabetes care team. Your GP or diabetes care team will also need to check your eyes, feet and nerves regularly because they can also be affected by diabetes.

You should also be seen regularly – at least once a year – to check how well your diabetes is being controlled over the long term.

See your GP if you have a minor foot injury that doesn't start to heal within a few days.

If you take insulin, you should have had advice about how to look after yourself when you are ill – known as your "sick day rules". If you haven't been given these, contact your GP or care team.

Remember you can access GP services 24 hours a day, seven days per week. If you need to speak to a GP out of hours, then phone NHS 111 and they will arrange for you to speak to a professional.



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Taking care with heart failure

Your heart is a muscle. If your heart is not pumping as well as it should, then it cannot keep up with your body's need for oxygen especially during exercise. In most cases, heart failure cannot be cured, but taking medicines and changing some everyday habits may help you feel and function better.

Other names for heart failure are congestive heart failure or CHF. The term "Chronic Heart Failure" is used to describe heart failure as a long term condition.

When you have a long-term condition, such as heart failure, it's important to take care of yourself and follow the advice of your GP practice and consultants so you can prevent your condition from worsening or getting complications. This guide will help you to know what you should be doing, and what to do if you start feeling worse. Our aim is to ensure that you get the care you need, when you need it. We want you to be able to look after yourself and know your warning signs, so that you don't end up in an emergency situation.

Treatment

Heart failure is usually treated with healthy lifestyle changes and medication.

It is very important that you take your medicine regularly as it has been prescribed, unless side effects occur. If you do not take your tablets regularly your heart failure may get worse.

Symptoms that may indicate your heart failure is getting worse include:

- You may find it more difficult to breath;
- You may wake up at night feeling more breathless;
- Your ankles may start to swell;
- You might notice rapid weight gain – 2/3 kilos or 4/6 lbs over 3 days.

When to get medical advice

You should already be having regular contact with your health care team. If your symptoms start to get worse or you develop new symptoms between your check-ups, **contact your GP or care team early**. You should only go to A&E if you are having significant difficulty breathing.

Remember you can access GP services 24 hours a day, seven days per week. If you need to speak to a GP out of hours, then phone NHS 111 and they will arrange for you to speak to a professional.



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