

West Norfolk CCG Patient and Stakeholder

Newsletter

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Beat the bugs and get vaccinated against flu and pneumonia!

Doctors in West Norfolk are urging people at risk of flu and pneumonia to get vaccinated this winter. NHS West Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group is encouraging residents aged 65 or over to get the pneumococcal vaccination, which is free for those at risk and will protect for life.



The CCG is also encouraging people who are eligible to take up the free flu vaccine this winter. People with serious health conditions, adults aged 65 or over, pregnant women, some carers and healthy children aged between 2 and 4, plus children in primary school years one and two, all qualify for one free from the NHS. For more information and to find out if you are eligible visit www.nhs.uk

The pneumococcal vaccine protects against pneumococcal infections, which can lead to pneumonia, septicaemia (blood poisoning) and meningitis. A pneumococcal infection can affect anyone. However some people need the pneumococcal vaccination because they are at higher risk of complications.

These include:

- All children under the age of two (given as part of the NHS childhood vaccination programme)
- Adults aged 65 or over
- Children and adults with certain long-term health conditions, such as serious heart or kidney condition.

People aged 65 or over only need a single pneumococcal vaccination, which will protect them for life. People with a long-term health condition may need a five-yearly vaccination depending on their underlying health problem. The CCG is encouraging people to ask their GP, nurse or pharmacist if they should be vaccinated.



Dr Paul Williams, West Norfolk CCG's Governing Body member responsible for Prescribing and Education, said:

"Pneumococcal infections can be serious and life-threatening in some cases. By having a simple vaccine local people at risk from these infections can avoid an unpleasant illness and a potentially lengthy hospital stay this winter. We would also like to remind people who are eligible to take up the free flu vaccine. Flu can be a very nasty disease, particularly for the young, elderly or those with underlying health conditions, so it is important for you and your family to be protected this winter."

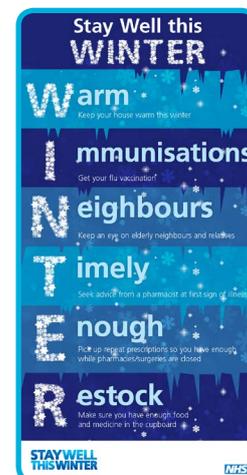
The CCG is supporting the NHS 'Stay Well This Winter' campaign which has been launched by Public Health England and NHS England.

STAY WELL THIS WINTER

As well as protecting against flu, the campaign will urge people over 65 or those with long-term health conditions, such as diabetes, stroke, heart disease or respiratory illness, to prepare for winter with advice on how to ward off common illnesses.

The NHS 'Stay Well This Winter' campaign urges people to:

- Make sure you get your flu jab if eligible.
- Keep yourself warm - heat your home to least 18 degrees C or (65F) if you can.
- If you start to feel unwell, even if it's just a cough or a cold, then get help from your pharmacist quickly before it gets more serious.
- Make sure you get your prescription medicines before pharmacies close on Christmas Eve
- Always take your prescribed medicines as directed
- Look out for other people who may need a bit of extra help over winter



Antibiotics are not always the answer

West Norfolk CCG has been supporting European Antibiotics Awareness Week (November 16-22) by running a campaign to encourage people to self-treat minor ailments such as colds or sore throats this winter.

The CCG is keen to remind people that antibiotics will not help people recover from mild winter illnesses such as colds and sniffles, and may make them resistant to these drugs, which won't help their health in the long term.

As part of this work, GP practices in West Norfolk will receive a prescription-style pad to give to patients who don't require antibiotics. These "non-prescription" leaflets explain how to treat minor ailments such as drinking plenty of fluids, getting some rest and taking over the counter remedies to ease symptoms such as paracetamol.

Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats facing us today. Without effective antibiotics many routine treatments will become increasingly dangerous. Setting broken bones, basic operations, even chemotherapy, all rely on access to antibiotics that work.

●●● West Norfolk CCG has pledged to become an Antibiotic Guardian, an initiative developed by Public Health England (PHE), which urges members of the public and healthcare professionals to join in the campaign and take action and help make sure antibiotics work now and in the future.



West Norfolk CCG approves proposals on gluten free foods

Doctors in West Norfolk have approved plans to stop funding gluten free products on prescription for adults but to continue to fund prescriptions for children and young people aged up to 18.



The proposals put forward by NHS West Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group were approved by members of its Governing Body at a meeting in November. The changes will come into place on January 1st 2016 and patients affected will be written to in advance.



Dr Ian Mack, chairman of West Norfolk CCG and a GP in Watlington, said:

“West Norfolk CCG is facing significant financial challenges in common with many parts of the NHS, and if we do nothing we face a predicted shortfall at year end of £4.9m. We have submitted to NHS England a Financial Recovery Plan that identifies a number of ways in which the CCG can get its budget back into balance by March.

As a result we have to look closely at areas where we can make savings. In common with other CCGs an area of focus has been gluten free products which are provided to patients on prescription.

Gluten free products are now available from all supermarkets and are sold to the public at prices that are considerably lower than the NHS is charged when bought for use on prescription.

There has been considerable clinical discussion on this issue and West Norfolk CCG has approved plans to stop funding gluten free products on prescription for adults but continue funding gluten free products on prescription for children and young people aged up to 18.

We will review the effects of these changes in a year's time.”

●●● It is estimated the changes will save the CCG £73,000 a year which will help it maintain its investment in priority areas such as ambulance services, mental health services, and accident and emergency care.

“Transforming Local Services with You” at the heart of West Norfolk CCG’s fourth annual stakeholder events

West Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group (WNCCG) held a series of Stakeholder Events over the summer to give local people the opportunity to get involved in shaping healthcare services locally.

The theme of West Norfolk CCG’s 4th Annual Stakeholder Events was ‘Transforming Local Services with You’. This year the focus was on four of the CCG’s key priority areas for 2015/16:



Mental Health

Urgent Care

Frailty

Dementia Services

The CCG held the events at four locations across West Norfolk (Hunstanton, King’s Lynn, Downham Market, Swaffham) to help as many people attend as possible: -

Each event began with a 'scene setting' presentation by the CCG's Chief Officer, Dr Sue Crossman, which gave a range of updates, clarified some of the issues facing the local health economy and introduced the CCG's plans and four of the main priorities for the coming period.



Dr Sue Crossman, Chief Officer of West Norfolk CCG, said:

"These events were open to the general public and provided a really valuable opportunity to gather people's thoughts about local services and how they might develop in the future."

If you would like more information about any of the topics in this newsletter or would like to provide feedback or get involved please contact:

Get Involved!

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