



NHS North Staffordshire  
NHS Stoke on Trent  
South Staffordshire PCT

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### **Stay Warm and Well This Winter**

With temperatures expected to drop to lows of minus two degrees celsius in parts of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent this week health bosses are urging the public to help keep themselves healthy during the cold spell.

The NHS and emergency services across the region are predicting a busy period over the next few days as the cold snap continues.

If it's not an emergency, please don't go to A&E or ring 999. People can help the NHS during these busy times by making sure they get the 'right treatment at the right place' and consider using alternatives including a pharmacist, doctor, NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or on-line at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). If you need treatment, you should consider using a walk-in centre or minor injuries unit.

You can also take actions to keep yourself healthy during the winter period.

- The best way of warming up is to keep active, which is also good for the heart. A few gentle exercises at home can keep the blood flowing properly. Extra layers of clothing, including wearing a hat to go out, and regular hot drinks and meals will help. It's also important to make sure you check on elderly relatives or neighbours who live alone.
- Illnesses such as norovirus and flu can be exacerbated by cold weather, particularly in those who are already ill or who have a long term condition. Outbreaks of these viruses are common during the winter, especially within contained environments such as hospitals and nursing homes. The best way of preventing infections and viruses is by basic hand hygiene – washing your hands with soap and warm water.

Acting Director of Public Health Zafar Health said: "Ice and cold temperatures do mean an increase in slips, trips and falls, which can occasionally result in serious injury.

"During inclement weather, make sure you only go out if you really need to. However, if you do, practical things like wearing extra layers of clothing and wearing sensible footwear can make all the difference.

He added: "Most trips to A&E are unnecessary, and if you do suffer a more minor injury like a twist or a sprain, you might be better visiting your own doctors or minor injuries unit."

**To find out where your nearest walk in centre or minor injuries unit is please go to:**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Notes to Editors**

1. For more information on winter health, go to: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and visit the 'Winter Health' section

2. Generally, you should call 999 and A&E if, for example:

- Someone has stopped breathing or their heart has stopped,
- The person is experiencing severe chest pain or is having trouble breathing,
- There is severe bleeding from any part of the body,
- The person is, or has been, unconscious,

Cuts, bruises and sprains are not normally considered to be emergencies. They can usually be treated at home, by your GP or in an NHS walk-in centre or a minor injuries unit. If you are not sure if it is an emergency, you can call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 for advice on what to do.

3. You can find out more about coping with winter at home and on the move at [www.direct.gov.uk/getreadyforwinter](http://www.direct.gov.uk/getreadyforwinter).

**ENDS**

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