

Public Health Spotlight

Staying Well This Winter

December 2018

It is fantastic to be able to share with you our first monthly public health update for all of our elected members. As many of you have highlighted to me, elected members play a pivotal leadership role in helping promote the many benefits of positive health and wellbeing to all of our residents. These new briefings aim to provide you with our key public health messages for the month ahead. Please help spread the word to residents in your wards.

This winter the Council and partner organisations are actively promoting the national Stay Well This Winter campaign which provides advice for members of the public on how to keep their families warm and well in winter. Visit: www.nhs.uk/staywell/ for further details.

Stay warm!

People who cannot afford to sufficiently heat their homes during winter, especially those in vulnerable groups are known to be at risk of ill health and mortality. In seeking to help address local fuel poverty, the Council has teamed up with QWEST Services and energy company ENGIE to develop a new competitive local energy offer "QWEST Energy" for residents. They are offering a range of competitive tariffs, offering 100% renewable energy at no further cost and are committed to investing a proportion of profits into local community projects to help tackle fuel poverty.

Visit www.qwestenergy.co.uk for further details.

In addition, QWEST are promoting a range of local and national initiatives that provide financial assistance to residents.

Stay hydrated!

Good hydration is a core component of maintaining good health for everyone however, maintaining good hydration is particularly important in our elderly population as changes associated with ageing, such as reduced kidney function and a lack of thirst can make older people particularly vulnerable to dehydration and its effects. In Cheshire West and Chester, we have made promoting hydration amongst our older people a priority as we know that good hydration helps to reduce people's risk of falls, urine infections, constipation, bloodstream infections and many others conditions. We are promoting good hydration across the borough in a variety of ways, including the launch of an intensive Hydration Pilot in four of our residential homes, the circulation of a Hydration Resource Pack to all residential homes, domiciliary carers and family carers and the wider launch of our Hydration communications campaign.

And finally...don't let the flu catch you!

Flu is an unpleasant but usually self-limiting disease, however for vulnerable people such as the elderly, the very young, pregnant women and those with long-term health conditions, flu can be extremely dangerous -



increasing the risk of serious health complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia, exacerbating pre-existing conditions or even causing death.

Vaccination is the most effective method for preventing outbreaks of flu. It not only reduces the risk of contracting flu, but can help prevent the virus from being passed on to vulnerable patients, family, friends and colleagues.

Residents are eligible for the **free** flu vaccination if they are:

- aged 65+
- under 65 with a long-term health condition
- pregnant
- health and social care workers#
- children aged 2-9/10 years old*
- people living in a long stay care home
- carers of an older or disabled person
- people who live with someone with a weakened immune system

This year the Council's flu campaign is focusing on improving uptake in 2-3 year olds and people under the age of 65 with a long term health condition, though we are also actively promoting vaccination amongst pregnant women and health and social care workers.

This year staff working in registered care homes, registered domiciliary care providers or voluntary managed hospices can also access free flu vaccination via their GP or local pharmacy. Health and social care providers who aren't eligible for free flu vaccination can 'piggy back' the Council's flu voucher scheme

on a rechargeable basis (£12.50 per vaccination). If anyone is interested in accessing this service, please refer them to: Helen.Stott@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

* children aged 2-9/10 years are usually offered the nasal spray vaccination by their GP or in school.

If the health and social care worker is employed by a registered care provider or hospice and work directly with people in a clinical risk group you are eligible for a free flu vaccination via your GP or pharmacy. All other health and social care workers should be offered the flu vaccination via their employer.

I would really value your feedback and recommendations for future updates. Please send through your views to publichealth@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support.



Ian Ashworth
Director of Public Health

