

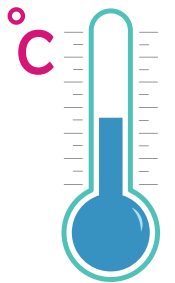


A BOLDER HEALTHIER WINTER CHECKLIST

As the chill sets in, it's important to think about our physical and mental wellbeing. This checklist is designed to empower you with valuable insights for a healthier winter. We're here to give you practical advice on how to stay safe and healthy during the colder months. We also want to share information about the resources and support you can access to help keep your mind and body at its best throughout the winter season.

Winter should be a season of wellbeing, resilience, and community support. By following the advice provided in this checklist, and accessing the support networks available, we can all contribute to making this a Bolder Healthier Winter.

A BOLDER HEALTHIER BIRMINGHAM





WINTER FLU VACCINES:

- Are you up to date with COVID initial doses (first, second and booster together?) These are applicable to everyone.
- Have you had the flu vaccine? If you are in a vulnerable group, you're eligible for a free jab.
- Are you and your children up to date with the MMR vaccination?



MENTAL HEALTH:

- Are you staying connected with friends, family or people in your local community?
- Are you making time for self-care activities like journaling or meditation?
- Do you know what signs of poor mental health to look out for in yourself and others?
- Do you know where to reach out for help and support? If not, please visit the mental health support links provided at the end of this document.



RESPIRATORY HEALTH AND SMOKING:

- Do you have all of the medications that you need to take regularly?
- As the winter months are upon us, do you have your general medications for cold/flu season?
- If you are a smoker have you tried the Bella App to help you stop smoking?



SLEEP:

- If you're not getting 7 hours sleep, are you moving more or reducing caffeine intake and screen time close to bedtime to try to improve your sleep?
- If you're still not getting enough sleep, have you tried some of the support provided in the final section of this document?



KEEPING SAFE, WELL, AND WARM:

- Have you stocked up in advance on the food and medicine you need during the winter?
- Has your home heating system had an annual check by a qualified professional?
- Are you checking the weather forecast regularly and wrapping up warm when leaving your home?
- Have you checked on those in your community who are vulnerable to the cold weather?



SUBSTANCE USE:

- Have you thought about alcohol and drugs you use regularly and whether you need to reduce your use?
- Do you know where to get help and support from? The NHS offers support and guidance online. You can also Talk to Frank.



EATING WELL:

- Are you eating 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day?
- Are you choosing snacks which keep you feeling full for longer?
- Are you cooking from scratch? It's fun to learn and gives you more control over your diet.
- Do you know where to go when you need access to free/reduced price foods? There's more information at the end of this checklist.



GET ACTIVE:

- Are you getting moderate physical activity for at least 150 minutes a week? Or vigorous activity for 75 minutes a week?
- Are you doing muscle strength training at least twice a week? This could be yoga, lifting weights or body weight exercise such as push-ups.
- Find local activities to help you get active this winter on the Active Birmingham activity finder.



A BOLDER HEALTHIER WINTER

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Are you getting moderate physical activity for at least 25 min a day?							
Are you eating 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day?							
How many hours of sleep did you get last night? (Aim for 7-9 hours)							
Who did you 'connect' with today?							
Are you eating at least 1 warm meal a day?							
Have you checked on someone who is vulnerable today?							
How many glasses of water have you had today?							
Have stored your alcohol, medication, and drugs securely?							
Have you had an alcohol-free day?							

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

WINTER VACCINES

This winter, the flu vaccine is being offered for free to people aged 65 and over and people at high risk, as well as anyone who is living or working with people at higher risk – [click here to the full eligibility list](#). It's also available for children aged 2 to 17, **depending on their age and/or health diagnosis**. You can book online, through the NHS app, or by calling 119.

The **Covid-19 booster** for winter 2023 is also being offered for free to people aged 65 and over and people at high risk, as well as anyone who is living or working with people at higher risk – [click here to the full eligibility list](#). You can book a booster through your GP surgery, the NHS website, the NHS app, or by calling 119. You can also visit a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination location.

The MMR vaccine is the best protection against measles, and children should have a dose at 1-year-old and another at 3-years-and-4-months old. Find out more about the MMR vaccine and contact your GP surgery if you think you or your child have missed either of the 2 doses.

KEEPING SAFE, WELL, AND WARM

Cold weather can make some health problems worse and even lead to serious complications, especially if you are 65 or older, or if you have a long-term health condition. Keep your home at a comfortable temperature throughout the day, close curtains at dusk to help keep heat in and keep bedroom windows closed at night when the weather is coldest. If you are concerned about the cost of heating your home, See **GOV.UK** page to find ways to save energy in your home. Other tips are wrapping up well and staying stocked up: wear plenty of layers, stock up on medications and cold and sore throat remedies. Check on older neighbours and relatives to ensure they are safe and well this winter. Read more about how to stay well in winter on the NHS website.

MENTAL HEALTH

Many people find the winter a challenging time for their mental health. So, this year, why not try the **Every Mind Matters** platform to help you make small changes to support your wellbeing? It has a range of resources, including a mind plan, advice on limiting social media usage and coping with money worries, as well as access to self-help cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques.

If you need more support with your mental health, help is out there. **Through the NHS** you can access a range of support, from what to do in a mental health crisis to how to access self-help and NHS talking therapy services. For a full list of resources, and our mental health webinar, **visit our website**.

RESPIRATORY HEALTH AND SMOKING

You are **three times** more likely to quit smoking for good with professional support. Support can be offered on the phone or face-to-face by phone by your Local Stop Smoking Service (LSSS). Birmingham residents can also download the Quit with Bella App for FREE.

If you're a smoker or ex-smoker aged between 55 -74 then **we want to check your lungs are working well**. Eligible residents will be invited for a lung check. **Please take up the offer**.

If you want more information, please call: **0121 661 1919** or email: **bsol.lunghealthcheck@nhs.net**



EATING WELL

A “well-balanced diet” is a varied diet, balanced across the food groups, which contains enough energy and nutrients for an active and healthy life. This diet should include lots of whole foods, minimally processed foods - including wholegrains, beans, pulses, nuts, seeds and a wide variety of fruits and plenty of dark green leafy vegetables. Depending on your preferences, you might also eat moderate amounts of eggs, dairy, poultry and fish, and small amounts of red meat. Water should be the drink of choice.

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of each food group we should eat overall to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. A balanced diet helps you feel full of energy, protects you from illnesses and powers your body. Other useful resources include the NHS Better Health webpages and the NHS Food Scanner App.



The Eatwell Guide shows how much of each food group we should eat overall to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. A balanced diet helps you feel full of energy, protects you from illnesses and powers your body. Other useful resources include the NHS Better Health webpages and the NHS Food Scanner App.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The NHS has exercise guidelines and workouts to help improve your health and wellbeing. Adults should do some kind of physical activity every day and, ideally 150 minutes or more of moderate exercise every week. Even exercising just once or twice a week can reduce risk of heart disease and stroke. Children should be doing at least 60 minutes of physical activity every single day.

Visit the NHS website more information about exercise and its impact on your health.

SLEEP

Sleep plays a vital role in good health and wellbeing. During sleep your body is working to support healthy brain function and maintain physical health. Lack of sleep can come from psychological causes such as stress, emotional shock, depression and anxiety, physical causes such as anaemia, hypothyroidism, and sleep apnoea, pregnancy or weight. Finally, a person’s lifestyle, such as too little/ too much exercise, caffeine, alcohol and night shifts can also affect their sleep.



For more tips about sleeping well, and information on where to turn to if sleep difficulties are affecting your life, please visit Every Mind Matters.

SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use is the use of alcohol, drugs, over the counter or prescription medication. Using them in a way they are not supposed to be taken or taking more than the recommended dose is substance misuse, and will lead to harms to your health. Addiction is not having control over doing, taking, or using something to the point where it could be harmful to you. Addiction is a common problem, but help is available. The NHS can offer you, or a someone you know, information on where to get advice and support.



EATING WELL

What you eat and how much you eat has a big impact on your health and wellbeing. Swap crisps and chocolate for chopped up vegetables with hummus or a small handful of unsalted nuts. Not only are they tasty but they will fill you up until your next meal.

To save money, choose fruits and vegetables which are in season, such as apples, butternut squash and leeks. Frozen options are great too, as the nutrients are locked in during the freezing process. There are also many places you can go in Birmingham if you are having difficulty accessing food. Please visit the council website to find out more.

Cooking from scratch is a great way to connect with family, have fun and build your confidence in the kitchen. Try making homemade soups from any vegetables to have leftover. Also try different sources of protein, for example, swap some of the mince out of a spaghetti bolognese for lentils and try adding chickpeas to a curry.



nhs.uk
birmingham.gov.uk

