

## ADVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE OR INFIRM

### Keeping Well and Warm:

- Keep warm, eat well and avoid unnecessary travel. You should eat regular hot meals and drink plenty of fluids, this will keep you warm and will give you energy to keep active
- Ensure you have sufficient supplies of food and of any prescription medicine you may need.
- Keep active indoors
- Have sufficient fuel supplies to maintain adequate heating in your home
- Ask your relatives and neighbours for help if you need it. Keep their phone numbers on a list beside your phone

### Personal Safety – Staying Safe:

- In icy weather, wear well-fitted shoes with non-slip soles if you have to go out but try to limit walking outside during the cold weather
- Consider wearing a personal alarm so that family or neighbours are alerted if you fall
- If you have a fall, even a minor one, make sure you visit your doctor for a check up

### Fall prevention in your home

- Leave a low energy light on at night time, preferably one with a high light output
- Use a non-slip shower or bath mat
- Make sure wires or cords from lamps, telephones etc. do not trail where you walk
- Arrange furniture so that you can easily move around all your rooms
- Remove rugs or use non-slip tape or backing so rugs will not slip
- Consider installing hand rails on both sides of the stairs

Keep safe this winter – for more information visit [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

## GENTLE REMINDER: CHECK ON YOUR OLDER RELATIVES AND NEIGHBOURS



If it's difficult for you to get around it will be impossible for them.

- Phone them or call around
- Make sure they have enough fuel, food supplies and medications
- If in doubt call the Gardaí and ask them to check

### You can get more information from:

- [www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/](http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/)
- [www.undertheweather.ie](http://www.undertheweather.ie)
- [www.emergencyplanning.ie](http://www.emergencyplanning.ie)
- [www.winterready.ie](http://www.winterready.ie)
- [www.met.ie](http://www.met.ie)

# BE WINTER-READY

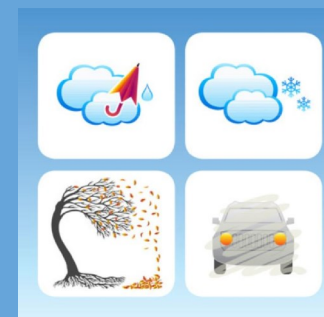


## ADVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

*You*

*Your Health*

*and the Winter*



LoCall: 1890 252 736 or 0761 001 608

e-mail: [oe@defence.ie](mailto:oe@defence.ie)



[www.winterready.ie](http://www.winterready.ie)

[@emergencyIE](https://twitter.com/emergencyIE)



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

## COLDS AND FLU

**Colds and Flu are caused by viruses, so they can't be treated with antibiotics and an antibiotic in this situation may do more harm than good.**

### Colds

Symptoms of a cold include sore throat, sneezing, blocked or runny nose, cough and feeling unwell. While symptomatic with a cold you should drink plenty of liquids, get lots of rest at home and eat healthily. Most adults will start to feel better after 3 or 4 days and be fully recovered by 7 days, although young children may take a little longer to fully recover.

### Flu

Influenza or Flu is a virus that comes on suddenly and makes you feel quite unwell. Symptoms of Flu include sore throat, fever and muscle aches which develop quickly, along with feeling very unwell. You should start to feel much better after 5 to 8 days although a cough and general tiredness may last for 2 to 3 weeks. Usually you do not need to see the doctor, as most Flu can be treated at home by drinking plenty of liquids, getting lots of rest and eating healthily. Contact your GP by telephone if you don't improve or if you start to improve and then get worse. People with Flu are usually infectious a day before symptoms start and remain infectious for 5 or 6 days. Stay at home and try to avoid all unnecessary contact with others during this time to avoid spreading the illness to them.

## COLDS AND FLU

Discourage any visitors. You can avoid spreading the Flu germs by coughing and sneezing into a tissue, binning the tissue immediately and washing your hands with soap and water afterwards. Alcohol based hand gels are also effective. If you don't have a tissue you can cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow.

Those at risk of complications of Flu include:

- Those 65 years and older
- Children under 2 years of age
- Pregnancy including up to 2 weeks after delivery
- Residents of nursing homes and other residential care facilities
- Those with chronic illness, immunosuppression, morbid obesity, cerebral palsy and intellectual disability or Down Syndrome

If you are in one of these at risk categories you should contact your doctor by telephone, as you may need special anti viral medicines. These work best if started within 48 hours of onset of Flu symptoms.

### **Remember**

- Know your Eircode
- Know your GP's Contact Details
- Get the flu vaccine
- Wear a personal alarm
- Keep warm, eat well and avoid unnecessary travel

## FLU VACCINATION

### Flu vaccination

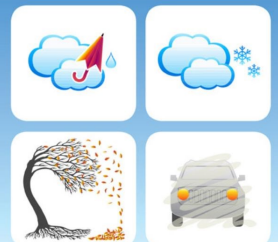
Flu can be prevented by vaccination. Flu vaccine is a safe, effective way to help prevent Flu infection, avoiding hospitalisation, reducing Flu related deaths and illnesses. Flu vaccination is strongly recommended for:

- Persons aged 65 years and older
- Those aged 6 months and older with a long term medical condition such as Diabetes, Heart, Kidney, Liver, Lung or Neurological Disease
- People whose immune system is impaired due to disease or treatment
- Persons with body mass index (BMI) over 40 (obese)
- Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy
- Residents of nursing homes and other long stay institutions
- People with regular close contact with poultry, water fowl or pigs
- Health care workers
- Carers

If you are 65 years old or over, or have a long term medical condition you should also ask your doctor for the Pneumococcal vaccine which helps prevent Pneumonia.

The HSE provides the Flu and Pneumococcal vaccines free of charge for all those in the at risk groups. Those 18 years and older in the at risk groups may attend either their GP or Pharmacist for vaccination and those under 18 years should attend their GP. The vaccine and consultation is free for those with a medical card or GP visit card. Those without a medical card or GP visit card will be charged a consultation fee.

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# You, Your Health and the Winter