

NHS Grampian Respiratory MCN - Winter Preparation for Patients with Long Term Respiratory Conditions

Get ready for the cold!

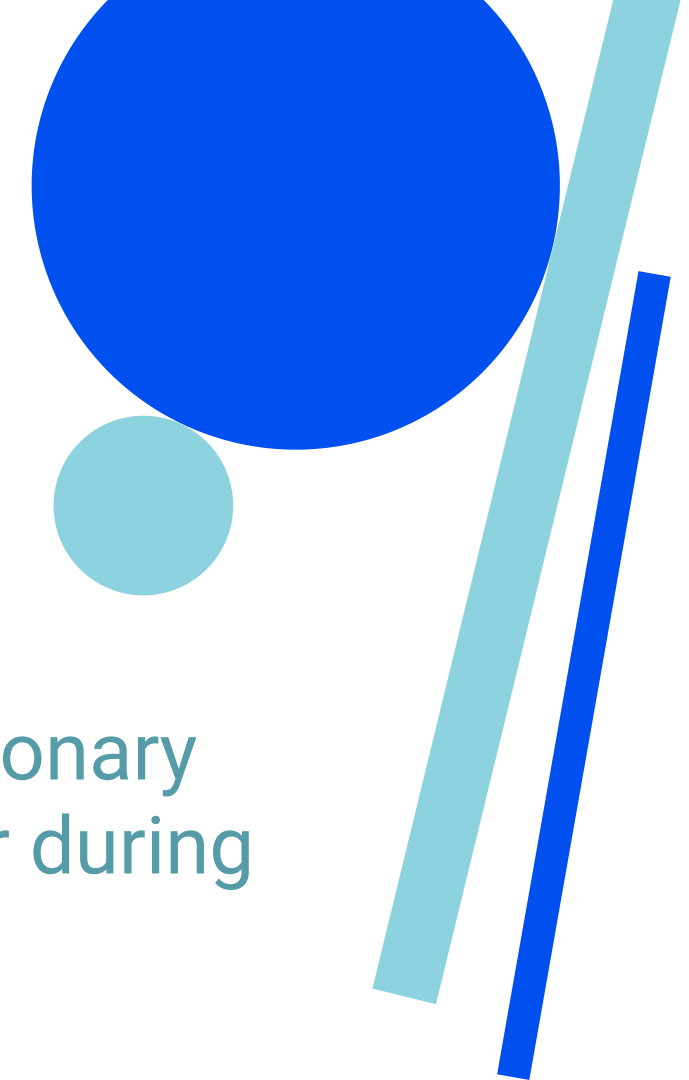


Why is it important to keep well in winter?

If you have a long-term respiratory condition such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or asthma your symptoms may get worse with colder weather during winter. To manage your symptoms, you must be 'weather-wise'.

Being weather-wise means:

- Knowing why it is important to manage your condition during the winter
- Having information to manage your condition during the winter months
- Making changes to your lifestyle to prevent your condition from getting worse
- If you do notice your respiratory condition becoming worse, knowing how to manage this and who to contact (the earlier you treat your symptoms, the quicker you will recover)





How can I keep well in winter?

To keep well in winter, you should read and follow the advice in this booklet

Keeping Warm

It is good to go outside and exercise in the winter, but make sure you are dressed warmly and it is not raining or snowing heavily. If you are shivering this means your body is not coping with the cold and this may be harmful to your health.



Wear layers of clothing

such as thermal underwear, warm tights, socks and a coat to help you keep warm



Wear a warm hat, gloves, and a scarf to help keep your head, hands, neck and shoulders warm

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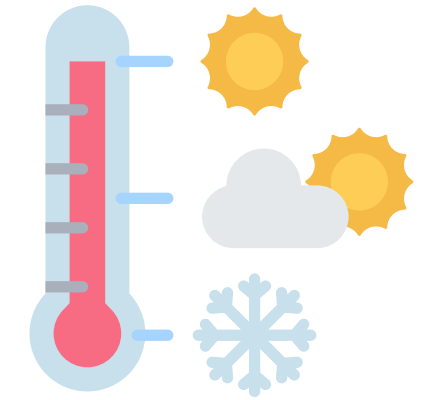
Wear warm clothes at night

during very cold weather, and use extra bedcovers



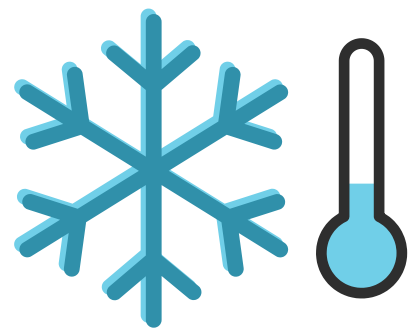
Be active

moving around and exercising will generate heat



Check the weather

before going out so you know what to expect



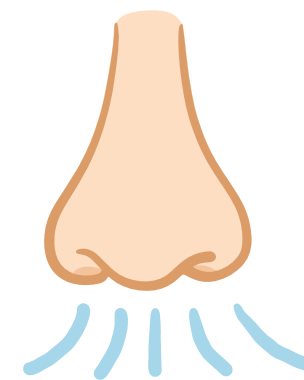
Avoid going out when it is very cold

(less than 4°C) especially when it is windy or wet as this will cool your body quickly



Keep moving when outside

or go inside if you start shivering



Breathe through your nose

instead of your mouth, This will help to warm the air you are breathing



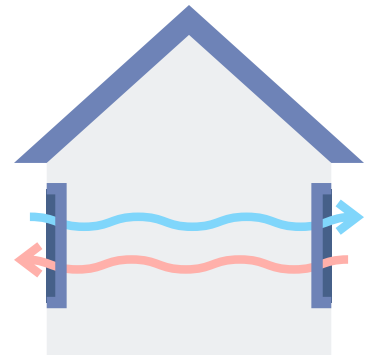
Pull your scarf over

your mouth and nose

As well as keeping warm you should carry any medication you take with you at all times. If you have a bronchodilator (eg salbutamol), use it 30 minutes before going outside.

Keeping Your House Warm

The recommended temperature in the living room is 21°C and 18°C in the bedroom



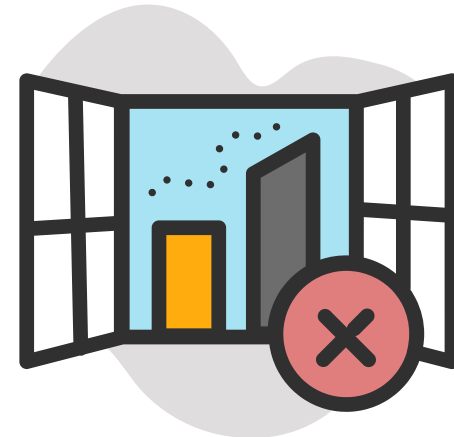
Keep it well ventilated

This will improve the air quality by reducing pollutants in the air which can build up with bad ventilation, and also prevent mould which can affect your respiratory condition



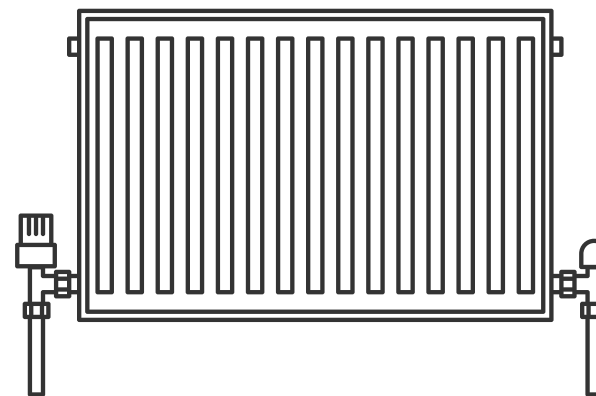
Make sure thermostats are set correctly

Hot water should be 60°C - 65°C and central heating should be 21°C



Close the window at night

A cold bedroom can make your condition worse. If you get hot, you can use an electric fan instead



Avoid having furniture blocking radiators

The furniture will heat up instead of your room



Close your curtains when it gets dark

This will help keep the heat in the house



Get advice about making your home energy efficient

from the council or your energy provider and have your boiler serviced by a registered engineer

Eat and Drink Plenty of Fluids

Food and drink are important to give you energy and keep your body warm



Make sure you have enough food stocked in the house during the cold weather

Drinking plenty of fluids will help your symptoms. This is especially important in winter when indoor heating makes the air very dry



Hot drinks are a good way of keeping warm. You can have a hot drink before you go to bed or have a hot drink in a flask to keep by your bed at night

Avoid Infections

Viral infections such as a cold, flu or airway infections can make your symptoms worse



They can:

- Make your breathing worse
- Make you cough
- Change the colour of your sputum
- Increase the amount of sputum you produce



Avoid contact with people who have a viral infection, even friends and relatives.



Protect yourself against viruses by making sure you get your annual flu and Covid vaccinations



You can catch viral infections by touching things that anyone with a cold has touched. You can prevent this by washing your hands



You should:

- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly
- Pay attention to your nails and between your fingers
- Take time to dry your hands properly using a clean towel



You can use hand gel for added protection, especially when you are in public places

Keep Active

Try to keep as active as you can by doing simple exercises at home like walking to the local shops, shopping or even cleaning and gardening

Walking is a good activity and it can improve the way your heart and lungs work



You can walk around the house or an indoor shopping centre if it is too cold outside

If you have difficulty walking then you can move your arms and legs, and wiggle your fingers and toes instead



REMEMBER

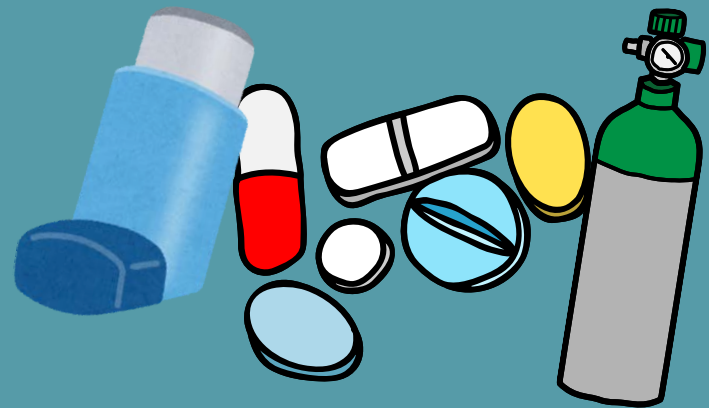
It is normal to be a little breathless when you are moving around because you are being active

Even people without respiratory conditions get out of breath when they are active

You should plan what you are going to do and take regular breaks. Try to avoid sitting down too long

DON'T Run Out of Medication

Always keep enough of your medicines to last two weeks, including oxygen cylinders if you use them

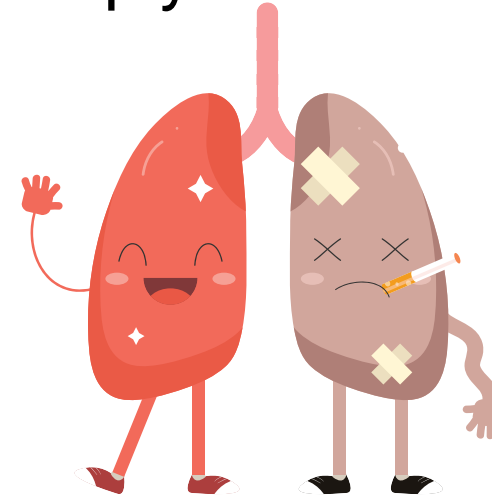


Make arrangements with your GP and pharmacist so you do not run out of medication, especially during the weekends and bank holidays, like Christmas



Stop Smoking

Smoking reduces how well your lungs work. Stopping smoking is very important to help your breathing



The NHS has free advice services to help you stop smoking



For more information, contact:



Your local pharmacist



Quit Your Way Scotland
0800 84 84 84



Health information you can trust
visit www.nhsinform.scot

NHS Inform
Website



Useful Resources

<https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/>

<https://www.mylungsmylife.org/>

<https://www.nhsgrampian.org/your-health/dont-waste-a-breath/>

<https://www.aberdeenlungs.com/>