



December 2021

Firstly, we'd like to thank you for everything you've done since COVID-19 arrived to help keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

Winter is always a challenging time for NHS Scotland and social care. This year, with the continuing pandemic, and lower levels of flu immunity, our NHS could be facing the most challenging winter in its history.

That's why we're writing to everyone in Scotland to ask for your support in helping our health and care services to get through these winter months.

NHS and social care services remain open, and additional resources are being put in place. But there are some simple things that everyone can do which will help our staff, while also ensuring you get the right care when you need it.

### Right Care Right Place

Whatever your health needs or concerns, there are a wide range of experts available. Some of them will be based in your local community, and others are available online to allow you to access services in a more convenient way. Face-to-face appointments will always be available for those who need them. Please familiarise yourself with the attached guide so you can identify which service is right for your particular need.

### COVID-19 Guidance and Rules

If we all follow the guidance and rules to reduce the spread of the virus, we will see less demand being placed on the health service to deal with the consequences of COVID-19. That means good hand hygiene, wearing face coverings where required, and ensuring there is good ventilation when meeting indoors. You should also take regular tests, even if you don't have symptoms, and get your vaccine, including the booster if you're eligible.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms you should stay at home until either you get a negative PCR test or you have isolated for 10 days and are well again. You should also consider staying at home if you have cold or flu symptoms to prevent spread of these infections. The more of us who continue to do these simple tasks the better.

### Showing Our Support to Health and Social Care Workers

Health and social care workers continue to rise to the ongoing demands and we cannot thank them enough for what they do. The positive actions of support shown since the pandemic have really made a difference and we'd like you to keep doing what you can to show your appreciation. Let's be patient, be kind and do all we can to allow health and social care staff to do their jobs well.




Every individual action will help this winter, so please do what you can to support our health and social care workers. Together, if we all pull together, we can make a real difference.

Jason Leitch  
National Clinical Director

Gregor Smith  
Chief Medical Officer



# ACCESSING THE RIGHT CARE FROM THE RIGHT PLACE

	<b>NHS 24</b>	NHS inform includes self-help guides for a range of common conditions: <b>NHSinform.scot/self-help-guides</b> . If you have a non-life threatening condition for which you would previously have visited A&E, you should now first call <b>NHS 24</b> on <b>111</b> or contact your General Practice.
	<b>Community Pharmacy</b>	<p>Your local pharmacy should be your first stop for common conditions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colds</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Indigestion</li> <li>• Cold sores</li> <li>• Diarrhoea</li> <li>• Aches and pains</li> </ul> <p>Your pharmacy can also help if you run out of your repeat prescription.</p>
	<b>Mental Health Support</b>	<p>For help with your mental health and wellbeing: Call <b>NHS 24</b> on <b>111</b>, 24/7, 365 days a year. <b>Breathing Space: 0800 83 85 87</b> Weekdays: Monday - Thursday 6pm to 2am Weekends: Friday 6pm - Monday 6am</p>
	<b>Dentist</b>	<p>Contact your dental practice if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tooth pain</li> <li>• Painful or bleeding gums</li> <li>• Swelling to your mouth</li> <li>• Injury to your mouth</li> </ul> <p>Your dental practice can also give advice on oral hygiene.</p>
	<b>Optometrist</b>	<p>The majority of eye conditions can be managed by your local optometrist (optician), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red or sticky eye</li> <li>• Blurred or reduced vision</li> <li>• Pain in or around your eye</li> <li>• Flashes and floaters</li> </ul>
	<b>General Practice</b>	<p>Your General Practice has a range of clinicians to help with both mental and physical health conditions. You may be offered a face-to-face, telephone or video consultation, as clinically appropriate.</p>
	<b>Minor Injuries Unit</b>	<p>You may be asked to attend your local Minor Injuries Unit for non-life threatening but painful injuries such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuts and minor burns</li> <li>• Sprains and strains</li> <li>• Suspected broken bones and fractures</li> </ul>
	<b>A&amp;E or 999</b>	<p>Your local A&amp;E is for emergencies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspected heart attack or stroke</li> <li>• Breathing difficulties</li> <li>• Severe bleeding</li> </ul>

If you are unsure about where to go or who to see, find out at:  
**NHSinform.scot/right-care**