

Feel well stay well

Winter 2021

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Support to improve your mental and physical wellbeing this winter

Within this publication, you will find:

- Tips from our local experts to maintain your mental wellbeing
- Wellbeing advice and support that's right for you and your family
- How to access the support you need from your NHS
- Who is eligible for a flu and COVID-19 booster vaccination?
- Help to keep warm this winter.

It's been a time like no other

The experience of the last 18 months has been different for everyone, but there's no doubt it's been tough for us all. Now more than ever, it's important to look after our mental health and wellbeing.

We all experience worries and may, at times, feel sad, anxious or low. It's natural to be affected by circumstances that life throws at us, such as: the disruptions of the pandemic, or bereavement, ill-health, loneliness, money worries, job stress or a relationship turning sour. Feelings that you have experienced in the past may have also resurfaced.

Whatever your feelings or fears, advice and support is available for you in Surrey. You'll be able to find a range of self-help advice and details of free NHS and charity services, including support in a crisis.

Whatever worries you may have about yourself, a child, friend or relative, you'll find self-help ideas and services at **healthysurrey.org.uk/mental-wellbeing** or simply scan the QR code with your phone camera to go directly to the pages. You can also contact your GP. Don't hold back from reaching out for help.

I feel stressed and down and want to do something to help myself

Look for the Self-help section at **healthysurrey.org.uk/mental-wellbeing** to find a range of techniques and resources to help you manage and improve your wellbeing. You'll be able to create your own free, NHS-approved Mind Plan. By answering five simple questions, you'll get a personalised mental health action plan listing practical tips to help you deal with stress and anxiety, boost your mood, sleep better and feel more in control.

Look also for the Groups and activities section to find a range of free sessions such as coffee mornings, group chats and tailored exercise classes. Many are accessible from the comfort of your home.

I don't feel my normal self and need help from others

Difficult emotions can worsen if we ignore them. Some people may not want to reach out for help because they feel 'it's not that bad' or they 'don't want to trouble anyone'.

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Surrey has a range of free and confidential services, so please don't wait for things to get worse. Services can be face-to-face, online, over the phone or in support groups, whatever suits you best.

It's good to talk at **healthysurrey.org.uk/mental-wellbeing** is where you'll find out about referring yourself to Talking Therapies. This service includes counselling sessions, support groups or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to help you develop alternative ways of thinking to feel happier.

Visit the support for you section at **healthysurrey.org.uk/mental-wellbeing** to find a range of wider support, such as confidence-building courses, support groups, mindfulness sessions and links to services that can help with problems like job or money issues. You can also contact your GP to start getting the help you need.

I can't cope anymore and need urgent help now

If you or someone you know has reached breaking point, there is support available to get you through. You can call the crisis helpline on **0800 915 4644** to speak to a friendly and well-trained member of staff, who will listen, help you work through immediate problems and advise the next steps for you or a loved one.

You could also visit one of the Safe Havens in Surrey – places which support people experiencing a mental health crisis outside normal working hours. Head to the Crisis section at **healthysurrey.org.uk/mental-wellbeing** to find out more or call the number above.

Help for children and young people

If you want to find out more about how to keep your child mentally healthy and build their resilience, there's lots of help and practical advice available for young people and parents/carers at **mindworks-surrey.org**

If you are concerned about your child's mental health, but not sure how to spot whether there is something wrong, look out for:

- significant changes to their behaviour
- changes in sleeping habits and ongoing sleeping difficulties
- losing interest in normal activities/ withdrawing from social situations
- self harming or neglecting themselves.

Don't worry about not being seen as 'strong'. It's not a weakness to ask for help. It's helping to protect yourself and getting you back to where you want to be - a happier and healthier you.

I may be drinking too much

Cutting back on alcohol can be an effective way to improve your health, boost your energy, lose weight and save money.

Regular heavy drinking can also interfere with chemicals in the brain that are vital for good mental health. So, while you might feel relaxed after a drink, in the long run alcohol has an impact on mental health and can contribute to feelings of depression and anxiety, and make stress harder to deal with.

Any reduction in the amount you drink every week will be beneficial – and with the right support, it's easier than you think.

Visit healthysurrey.org.uk and search “drugs and alcohol” to find free support.

I'm worried about my body shape

More people have struggled with eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia, during the pandemic and we know that the winter months can heighten difficulties.

Eating disorders affect people of all ages and backgrounds and can become very serious. Even when they don't, they can severely affect the quality of life of both those who are suffering and those who care about them. With the right treatment and support, recovery is possible.

Visit healthysurrey.org.uk and search “eating disorders” to find out more.

Making sure you're as healthy as possible can help your body respond better to bugs and other illnesses. There are a few things you can do to stay as healthy as possible, but if you do need help – your NHS is here and we can see you safely.

What to do when your child is unwell

Coughs, colds and winter bugs are common, particularly in children, and these can usually be treated at home with over-the-counter medicines.

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Your local pharmacist can also give advice. If you are worried, or if your child is getting worse or having difficulty breathing, call **NHS 111** for advice.

The Surrey Children and Families 0-19 Advice Line is able to give advice to parents and carers of babies, young children and teenagers for support on baby and child health, development and parenting. Telephone **01883 340 922** (lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am - 5pm, excluding bank holidays). Alternatively find out more online at **childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk**

Who to contact for help

Need urgent health advice? For urgent medical problems think NHS 111 first. **Dial 111** or visit **111.nhs.uk** for round-the-clock information and advice, 24/7.

NHS 111 can also book you a timed arrival slot at a local minor injury unit or A&E if that's where you need to be. In a health emergency, where someone's life is at risk, always call **999**.

Getting help from your GP

Our GP practices are here to help, and now if you need advice from the practice but it's not urgent you can submit a request to your surgery, either online or by phone.

To help protect people, and following government guidance, GPs still need to maintain safe infection control and minimise unnecessary physical contact.

This means all appointments are triaged to decide who needs to be seen in person, who can have a phone or video consultation and which healthcare professional you need to

see to get the right care.

Anyone can register with a GP surgery. It's free to register – and you don't need proof of address or immigration status, ID or an NHS number.

Visit **www.nhs.uk** to see and compare local GP practices. Alternatively, you can telephone NHS England on **0300 311 22 33**.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although many people are now vaccinated against COVID-19, the virus hasn't gone away so it's still important to keep yourself and others safe by following the government guidance. Here's seven things we can do:

- get vaccinated
- let fresh air in if you meet indoors – meeting outdoors is safer
- wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed settings where you come into contact with people you do not normally meet
- get tested regularly and self-isolate if required
- try to stay at home if you are feeling unwell
- wash your hands regularly
- download and use the NHS COVID-19 app.

The latest evidence is that wearing a well-fitted face covering over your mouth and nose, protects you and others by helping to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

If you are asked by Test and Trace to complete a questionnaire, please provide as much information as you can about your activities and close contacts, so together we can stop the spread of this virus.

Boost your immunity

Flu, coronavirus and other respiratory viruses are circulating and can make you very unwell, sometimes leading to hospital admission. Everyone may have lower immunity this winter and the combination of viruses circulating means you should get vaccinated against the ones that you can if you're eligible.

If you are offered both the flu and coronavirus vaccine, it's safe to have them at the same time, but your coronavirus booster vaccine needs to be at least six months after your second dose.

Not sure if you are eligible?

Free flu vaccinations on the NHS are being offered to:

- all children aged 2 to 15 (but not 16 years or older) on 31 August 2021
- those aged 6 months to under 50 years in clinical risk groups
- pregnant women
- those aged 50 years and over
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers (paid and unpaid)
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- frontline health and social care staff.

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Visit healthysurrey.org.uk/winter to see the full and latest list of who is eligible.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations

Free coronavirus vaccination first and second doses can still be booked for all adults. It's never too late to get one.

nhs.uk/covidvaccine

Booster Eligibility

The booster vaccines are being offered to:

- all those living in residential care homes for older adults
- all adults aged 50 years or over
- frontline health and social care workers
- all those aged 16 to 49 years with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe coronavirus, and adult carers
- adult household contacts (aged 16 or over) of immunosuppressed individuals.

Our other top tips for staying well

Get advice if you feel unwell

There's lots of helpful information available at nhs.uk or pharmacists can give treatment advice for a range of minor illnesses and can tell you if you need to see a doctor.

Stock up on medicines

Keep your medicine cabinets well stocked with over-the-counter medicines that can treat many common illnesses -

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and remember to order repeat prescriptions in advance, well before you are due to run out.

Keep your booked appointments

If you have a healthcare appointment booked, make sure you keep it, unless your doctor recommends otherwise – and please call to reschedule if you have coronavirus symptoms to help reduce the spread. If you are invited to go to hospital for a routine appointment, the NHS has taken steps to keep you safe.

Check in on others

Older neighbours and relatives are more vulnerable in the colder months and may need a bit of extra help this winter, so make sure you keep in touch and check in on them when you can.

Help us help you stay well this winter. Visit healthysurrey.org.uk/winter

Keep warm this winter

Are you struggling to keep your home warm? You might be eligible for some financial support to help you keep warm this winter.

If you are in financial crisis, the Surrey Crisis Fund may be able to help towards pre-paid meter payments. The amount has been increased to account for the increase in fuel prices this winter. If you're unable to pay for food or essential items because you've had to spend money on gas and electricity, you could also qualify for a cash award.

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Find out if you or someone you know could get financial help this winter by telephoning Surrey County Council on **0345 600 9009** or by visiting **surreycc.gov.uk/surreycrisisfund**

Some people are also eligible for support from the government through the winter fuel and cold weather payments. Find out who is eligible and could get support by calling **0800 731 0160**.

For information and advice on how to keep a home warm and how to improve the energy efficiency of your home by contacting Action Surrey on **0800 783 2503**. You can also find out about Heat Project grants by contacting Happy Energy Solutions Ltd on **0800 024 6234/6231** or by email: **mail@heatproject.co.uk**

For more information to help you stay warm, visit **healthysurrey.org.uk/winter**

Additional information

Find Surrey County Council on social media

Facebook: Surrey County Council

Twitter: @SurreyNews

Instagram: surreycountycouncil

How to request this document in an alternative format or language

If you require this document in an alternative format or language, please contact Surrey County Council:

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Telephone: 0300 200 1005

SMS: 07527 182 861 (for the deaf or hard of hearing)

Email: contactcentre.adminhub@surreycc.gov.uk