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Protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu, Covid-19, and Norovirus this winter

Dear Parents

As we approach the festive season and face colder winter weather, it's important to prioritise the following measures that protect you and your families from the flu, Covid-19, and Norovirus.

Are you to up to date with your vaccines?

This winter, vaccinations are being offered free of charge to those most at risk of getting seriously ill from the flu and/or Covid-19.

To learn more about the **flu vaccine**, including who is eligible, how to book an appointment, and local pharmacy locations, please visit the [NHS website on flu vaccinations](#).

NOTE: If you are not eligible for the flu vaccine, you can still get vaccinated. Please contact your local pharmacy directly for more information and be aware that there will most likely be a cost associated with this.

To learn more about the **Covid-19 vaccine**, including who is eligible, how to book an appointment, or walk-in vaccination sites, please visit the [NHS webpage on Covid-19 vaccinations](#). Keep in mind that you do not need to wait for an invitation before booking an appointment.

Do you know how to stay safe from the winter vomiting bug?

Norovirus, also called the "winter vomiting bug", is a stomach bug that causes vomiting and diarrhoea. It can be very unpleasant but usually goes away in about 2 days.

To protect yourself and your loved ones from Norovirus this winter, make sure to

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Alcohol hand gels do not kill norovirus!
- Stay off school or work until you have not been sick for 2 days
- Rest and have lots of fluids to avoid dehydration

To learn more about Norovirus, including when to seek advice or medical attention, please visit the [NHS website](#)

Yours Faithfully

David Aldworth

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UK Health
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Winter infections in children – guidance for parents/guardians

This leaflet gives advice on illnesses that are currently affecting nursery and primary school children across the West Midlands

What are the symptoms?

There are two groups of symptoms:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting – usually lasting 1-2 days
- Fever, tiredness, runny nose, cough and sore throat – lasting 3-4 days

Infection control advice

Handwashing is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of both of these infections. This applies to the child who is ill and the person caring for them. Hands should be washed using soap and rinsed under running water:

- Before and after caring for the child
- After using the toilet
- Before eating, preparing or handling food

What should I do if my child is unwell?

- If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms, they should not attend nursery/school until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
 - If your child has a high temperature and is unwell, it is very important they stay at home and don't attend school until they have recovered. Children with mild symptoms like runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend school.
 - Ensure they drink plenty of fluids – taking sips rather than gulps, to avoid vomiting
 - If they have a fever – give child paracetamol and/or ibuprofen, according to manufacturer's instructions. Your pharmacist can also advise you about the best treatment for your child
 - If your child is unusually sleepy, can't take fluids or has other symptoms, such as an unusual rash, headache or neck stiffness – seek medical advice immediately
- After cleaning up spills (vomit, diarrhoea or urine)
 - Also – keep a separate towel for each family member who has symptoms, and change them regularly
 - Dry hands thoroughly

Other control measures:

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue if possible – dispose of used tissues immediately and wash hands
- Wash soiled clothing, bed linen and towels at 60°C, using detergent – if possible, wear disposable gloves to handle contaminated items
- Surfaces and touch points (taps, toilet flush handle, door handles) should be cleaned then disinfected with bleach-based cleaner
- Check that your child is up to date with their [NHS vaccinations schedule](#)

For further information, visit [NHS.uk](#) and search for 'respiratory infections' and 'diarrhoea and vomiting'