



Anchor's reputation is built on 50 years of experience and, by staying true to our values, we're proud to say we have become England's largest not-for-profit provider of housing and care for older people.

For more information on planning for winter or to find out more about Anchor care visit anchor.org.uk/care or call us free on **0800 731 2020**

Anchor Hanover Group is a charitable housing association with registered society No 7843. Registered Provider No. LH4095.
Registered office: Anchor Hanover Group, Suites A & B, The Heal's Building, 22-24 Torrington Place, London, WC1E 7HJ.

Happy living for the years ahead



Planning for winter



Happy living for the years ahead



The winter months can mean that many of us become more vulnerable to health problems. The cold weather can also make the possibility of falling or injury more likely. Whilst we can't completely eliminate the added risks to our health during the cold weather, we can take some simple precautions that can dramatically reduce the risks of this happening.

Planning to stay healthy

1. Activity

Being physically active at any time of the year is great for your health but during winter it has the added benefit of generating body heat.

Being active can include things like taking a short walk during the middle of the day, if it is not too cold or icy. It can also include simple tasks like walking around your home, getting up to make a drink or do chores or some chair-based exercises if walking is difficult.

2. Food and drink

Eating warm meals and drinking hot drinks regularly is very important during the colder weather. Soups, stews and casseroles are ideal dishes as they often include nutritious ingredients such as vegetables. Try and include fruit as well as vegetables in your diet and remember that frozen vegetables are just as good as fresh.

Make sure you keep plenty of tinned goods in your cupboards and food in the freezer too, just in case it becomes too cold to venture out. You could also order your shopping on the internet and get it delivered to your home.

3. Vaccinations

Always make sure you get a free flu jab from your local GP before the winter period. Flu is a very unpleasant illness and can develop into something much more serious such as pneumonia.

You should also check that you have had your pneumo (pneumococcal) jab as this will help protect you against pneumonia, meningitis and septicaemia. Ask your GP if you are unsure.

4. Clean hands

Germs and bacteria that can cause illness are often transmitted via our hands. Make sure you wash your hands regularly or use an antibacterial gel to stop colds and flu from spreading. Keeping surfaces that are in regular contact with our hands clean, such as kitchen surfaces and door handles, is also a great way of stopping germs from spreading.

5. Staying positive

Staying healthy is not just about keeping your body healthy but also your mind. It is not uncommon to feel depressed in winter as the days become shorter and there is less opportunity to chat with neighbours or pop to the shops. To overcome this, try and do something every day that you know you will like. It may be a hobby or chatting to family or friends on the phone. Ask friends and family who are more mobile to come and visit you.

If feelings of depression persist it is important to share this with somebody you trust or a GP. Low moods and depression are very common and nothing to be ashamed of, and there is a great deal of help available.

Planning to keep warm

1. Keeping yourself warm

- Wearing several thinner layers of clothing is more effective than wearing just one thicker layer, as warm air is trapped between each layer. Always go for fabrics such as wool or fleecy fibres rather than cotton, which is not as good at insulating. Thermal underwear, thick tights or woolly socks are also great base layers to keep you snug and warm.
- A hot water bottle retains heat and will keep your hands and body warm for longer. You can also use wheat bags.
- Electric blankets are an excellent method of warming up your bed before you get in. Make sure you check whether the electric blanket can be left on all night as many should only be used for warming the bed. Never use an electric blanket and hot water bottle together as this is very dangerous.
- Continence difficulties can have a huge impact on moderating your body temperature during the cold weather so make sure you see your GP if this affects you.

2. Keeping your home warm

- Closing your curtains at dusk will help keep the heat in, particularly if you are able to fit thermal linings into your curtains.
- Keep your windows closed, especially at night when the weather is at its coldest. Breathing in cold air increases the risk of developing chest infections. Keep your doors closed too as this will warm the rooms quicker and help maintain the right temperature, making it more cost efficient.
- Draught excluders on your doors and windows as well as insulation in walls and your loft are excellent ways to keep your home warmer and your energy bills lower. There may be financial assistance available to help you do this.
- Remember, optimum temperature for your main living room is 21°C (70°F) and 18°C (64°F) for your bedroom.
- People aged over 65 years are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment to assist with the increased cost of utilities in the colder weather. If you do not receive this or need more information, please visit www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment or call **0800 731 0160**.

Planning to stay safe

1. Safety at home

- Make sure your heating system and boiler are serviced every year by a qualified gas heating engineer.
- Check your smoke alarms are working by testing them weekly. Your local fire station will be happy to come out and risk-assess your home if you give them a call.
- Keep your mobile phone and other devices charged so you can still use them if there is a power cut.
- Keep a list of emergency contact numbers handy so you can access them easily and quickly.
- Keep a torch handy in case of a power cut.
- Never block air vents as fires and heaters need ventilation.
- Use a fire guard if you have an open fire and never hang washing or anything else that could be flammable near it.

2. Safety when out of home

- Always wear appropriate clothing for the condition. Boots and warm clothing are ideal for the cold weather.
- Keep grit or salt at home so you can spread on steps and paths in icy weather.
- If your mobility is compromised, then consider getting a grab rail installed at your door. Your local council will be able to help with external and internal home adaptations if you find these are required.
- If you are driving be sure to tell someone where you are going and when you expect to arrive or return home.
- Make sure your mobile is fully charged before leaving the house.