

# COQUET MEDICAL GROUP



# NEWSLETTER



*Welcome* to our Winter Newsletter. Hopefully we won't have a winter like last year but just in case, we have prepared some useful tips on how you can minimise the risks of cold weather on your health.

2011 has been an extremely busy year for us, full of changes, and developments, such as the formation of a new Patient Reference Group. We would like to thank all those patients who have joined the group so far and are helping us make decisions about the range and quality of services we provide. If you would like to know more about this group and get involved yourself, it is not too late for you to join. You can visit our website at [www.coquetmedicalgroup.co.uk](http://www.coquetmedicalgroup.co.uk) or ask our receptionist for more information.

*The partners and staff would like to wish all our patients a happy Christmas and a healthy new year!*



## CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES



FRIDAY 23rd	Normal Hours
SATURDAY 24 <sup>th</sup>	Broomhill Health Centre 8.30 – 12.00 noon*
SUNDAY 25 <sup>th</sup>	CLOSED
MONDAY 26th	CLOSED
TUESDAY 27th	CLOSED
WEDNESDAY 28th	Normal Hours
THURSDAY 29th	Normal Hours
FRIDAY 30 <sup>th</sup>	Normal Hours
SATURDAY 31 <sup>st</sup>	Amble Health Centre 8.30 – 12 noon*
SUNDAY 1 <sup>st</sup>	CLOSED
MONDAY 2nd	CLOSED
TUESDAY 3rd	Normal Hours

**\* Pre-booked appointments only. Reserved for patients who are unable to attend during normal working hours.**

**Emergency services and home visits not included in this service**

**Please call Northern Doctors Urgent Care when the surgeries are closed Tel: 0300 123 4343**

Please consider our opening times when ordering repeat prescriptions.

We will need up to two working days to process prescriptions.

Thank you.

## DO YOU HAVE A COLD WEATHER PLAN?

It's a fact that as we get old and frail many of us will have underlying chronic health problems, like respiratory disease or dementia. We may live alone and will find it particularly difficult to manage during the winter months. Every year deaths rise by 19% in England due to cold weather related illness. This amounts to an average 27,000 'excess' winter deaths or 1,560 more people dying per week, between December and March compared with the rest of the year. Most at risk are those people with pre-existing medical conditions, the elderly and the very young.

To try to reduce the impact that severe cold weather could have on your health there are lots of simple things you can do to keep warm, stay healthy and make the best use of heating your home:-

### Step 1: PREPARE FOR SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

Prepare in advance to help protect yourself, your family, friends and neighbours against the effects of cold weather:

- Ensure that your family members have received all appropriate vaccinations (influenza, pneumococcal, meningitis) particularly if you or they are in an at-risk group.
- Check your entitlements to benefits and local grants.
- Ensure that you have a room thermometer.
- Consider improving the heating efficiency of your home, including better insulation. You should have at least 10-11 inches (270 mm) of insulation in your loft.
- Make sure wall cavities, hot water cylinders and pipes are insulated. Follow expert advice on protecting and insulating water pipes against freezing.
- Fit draught-proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors.
- Have boilers, heaters and cookers serviced ahead of winter by an appropriately registered engineer to reduce the risk of breakdown.
- Have your flues and chimneys swept, ensure there is adequate ventilation to allow appliances to work properly and fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm which is EN50291 compliant.
- Look out for elderly neighbours and offer to help if needed.
- If you don't have mains gas, purchase heating oil, LPG and solid fuel early to avoid running out during periods of severely cold weather.
- Ensure you have warm clothes, coats and adequate footwear in advance of cold weather.

### Step 2: WHEN SEVERE WEATHER IS FORECAST

Stay tuned into forecasts and take the weather into account when planning your daily activities:

- Avoid exposing yourself to cold or icy outdoor conditions if you are at higher risk of cold related illness or falls.
- Ensure you have all essential medication and keep stocked with food by getting supplies in early, having them delivered or asking a friend or neighbour for help.
- During the day heat your main living room to around 21°C (70°F) and the rest of the house to at least 16°C. Heat all the rooms you use in the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed. Set the timer on your heating to come on earlier rather than turning the thermostat up so that you won't be cold while you wait for your home to warm up.
- During the night keep the temperature in your bedroom at 18°C (65°F).
- Open the window or door a little at night for ventilation if you use a fire or heater in your bedroom.
- Never use hot water bottles in the same bed as an electric blanket, even if the blanket is switched off.
- Unplug blankets before you go to bed unless they have a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Get your blanket tested for safety every 3 years – Age UK or your local fire and rescue services may be able to do this for you.

### Step 3: DURING SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

Reduce the harmful effects of severe cold weather by taking appropriate actions:

- Dress warmly, wearing plenty of thin layers rather than one thick one. Clothes made of wool, cotton or fleecy synthetic fibres are best.
- Always put on a coat, hat, scarf, gloves and warm nonslip shoes or boots when you need to go outside.
- Wear bed socks, thermal underwear and a night cap or headscarf to stay warm in bed.
- Do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home as this is inefficient and there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Draw curtains at dusk to help keep the heat generated inside your rooms.
- Eat regular hot food and drinks to keep your energy levels up.
- Aim to include five portions of fruit and vegetables daily – this includes tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables.
- Stay active. Try to move around at least once an hour. Even a small amount of exercise can bring health benefits and keep you warm.
- Remember to check on those you know are at risk from the effects of severe cold weather.

For more information and advice on how to keep fit and well, including keeping warm; the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning; the importance of eating well and the symptoms of flu check out the NHS choices website ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

Additional information on help with heating costs is provided by charity organisations such as:-

National Energy Action [www.nea.org.uk/useful-phone-numbers/](http://www.nea.org.uk/useful-phone-numbers/)

Citizens Advice [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or call 01665 604 135 and

Age UK [www.ageuk.org.uk/money-matters/claiming-benefits/heating-benefits/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/money-matters/claiming-benefits/heating-benefits/) or call 0800 169 6565)