



Looking after yourself this winter

1. Get your winter vaccinations

Flu and COVID-19 cases tend to rise in winter, so getting vaccinated is key. You may be eligible for a COVID-19 booster if you're over 75, live in an older adult care home, or have a weakened immune system. You're entitled to a free flu jab if you're over 65, a carer, have certain long-term health conditions, live with someone immunocompromised, or are in long-term care. Ask about the pneumo (pneumonia) and Shingles vaccines when you get your flu jab.

2. Keep your home warm

- Try to heat the rooms you use most to around 18°C and close doors and unused rooms to save energy.
- Keep curtains open during the day for natural warmth and closed at night to block draughts.
- Rugs on hard floors and hot water bottles can help retain heat. (Never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket).

3. Prevent the spread of germs

Wash hands regularly with soap and water. Catch coughs in tissues, consider wearing a mask in busy places, and ventilate indoor spaces when possible. Keep hand sanitiser with you while out.

4. Dress for the cold

Layer clothing to trap heat. Wear hats, scarves, and gloves when outside, and opt for warm nightwear and slippers indoors. Keeping your whole body warm helps maintain circulation, especially to hands and feet.

5. Check your finances

Winter can be costly. Make sure you're claiming all the benefits you're entitled to. Use a benefits calculator to check your eligibility (www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators) and find support schemes for heating and energy bills. Visit: www.gov.uk/get-help-energy-bills

6. Be prepared

Stock up on food, water, cold and flu remedies, and any regular medications in case bad weather prevents you from going out. A torch with spare batteries is useful during power cuts.

7. Keep moving

Staying active helps you stay warm and maintain strength. Try not to sit for more than an hour at a time.

If walking is hard, try chair exercises, or simply move your arms, legs, and toes. Find activities that feel safe and comfortable for you.

If you're unsure where to start or have a long-term condition, seek guidance on safe ways to stay active.

8. Stay safe outdoors

Wet leaves, ice, and snow increase the risk of slips and falls. Wear shoes with good grip and keep grit or salt on hand for paths. Ask for help clearing walkways if needed.

9. Eat Well

Try to keep a routine with regular meals, even if preparing food feels difficult.

- Warm foods and drinks: Soups, stews, and hot drinks help keep you warm - aim for at least one hot meal a day.
- Balanced diet: Include a variety of foods, with fruit and vegetables daily (fresh, frozen, or tinned). Keep basic supplies at home in case you can't get to the shops.
- If appetite is low: Eat whatever you can manage—even a small treat is better than nothing. If you're losing weight without trying, make sure you let your doctor know.
- Vitamin D: Important for bones, teeth and muscles. In winter, sunlight may not be enough, so ask your doctor if a supplement is right for you.

Source: Age UK

