



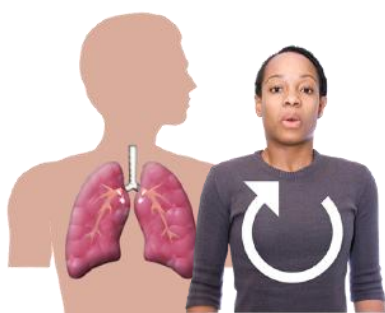
# How to stay well in cold weather



## How cold weather affects your health



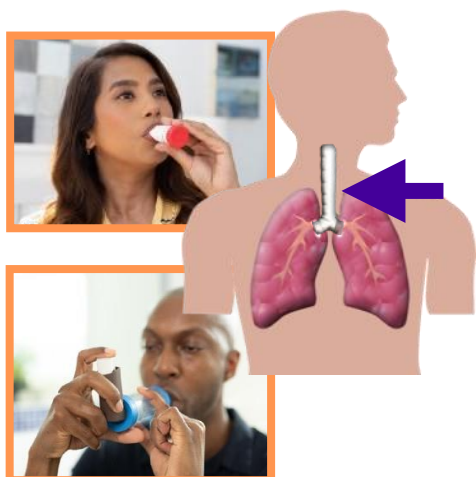
Cold weather can cause problems with your lungs. This means it is easier to get poorly.



Your lungs are in your chest. You use your lungs to breathe air in and out.



If you already have problems with your lungs, cold weather can make you feel worse.



A problem with your lungs could be an illness like asthma or COPD.

These illnesses affect your lungs and the tubes that go from your mouth to your lungs.

## Try not to get ill



Cold and flu are viruses that can make you feel very ill. They can spread easily to other people.



If you have a cold or flu, you might have a runny nose or sore throat.

You can feel really unwell and have a high temperature and a cough.



There are some things you and other people can do to stop colds and flu from spreading:

- When you sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue.



Put the tissue in the bin straightaway.



If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow.



- Wash your hands with soap and hot water. Wash them for at least 20 seconds.

Use hand sanitiser gel if you are out.



- If you start to feel really unwell or find it hard to breathe, don't wait.



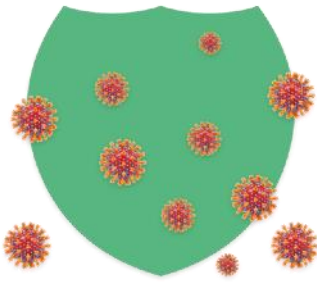
Talk to your doctor, nurse or chemist today.



If it is an emergency phone 999 for an ambulance straight away.



## Have your vaccinations



A vaccine is a way of protecting people from illnesses. It can also help to stop you from catching an disease.

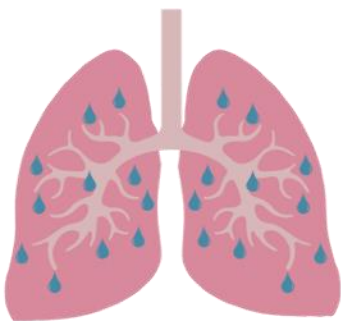


A vaccine is usually given by an injection into your arm or a spray up your nose.



You should talk to your doctor about the flu vaccine and pneumonia vaccine.

New moan ee a is how we say this word  
Pneumonia.



Pneumonia is an infection that gets into your lungs and can be very serious.



Flu is an illness that is a bit like having a bad cold. You will feel really poorly.

## Taking care of yourself



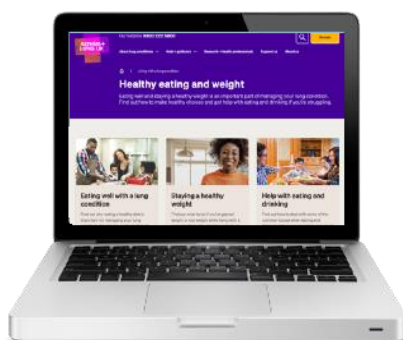
In winter people can feel more tired, sleep more and put on weight.



It is really important to eat a healthy diet.



A healthy diet gives your body the things it needs to keep you and your lungs healthy.



You can find more information about a healthy diet on our website:  
[www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/living-with/healthy-eating](http://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/living-with/healthy-eating)



Keeping active and doing plenty of exercise also keeps your lungs healthy.



We don't get out as much in winter. The days are shorter. This can make some people feel sad.



It is important to keep in touch with friends and family and still go out and meet people.



## How to stay warm



Being cold and breathing cold air can make lung problems worse.

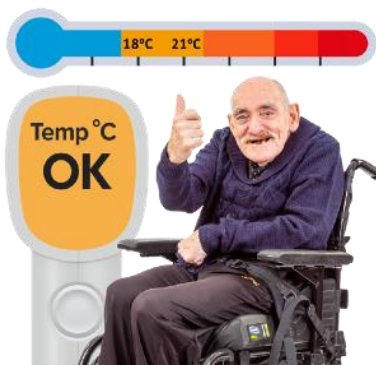


It is really important that you keep yourself warm. This helps you and your lungs stay healthy.



Try to make sure your home stays at a temperature between 18 and 21 degrees celsius.

If you are not able to move around, you might need your home to be warmer.



Buy a thermometer. A thermometer tells you how warm a room is.





Wear warm layers of clothes when it's cold. For example a vest, jumper and cardigan.



Always have a blanket nearby to cover yourself if you get cold.



Keep your bedroom window closed at night when the weather is cold.



Drink plenty of warm drinks and eat 1 hot meal a day if you can. This will give you energy.



When you go out, thermal underwear, hats and gloves are good.

## Keep active



Doing exercise moves blood round our bodies and keep us warm.



In cold weather we often don't feel like going outside. But it is still really important to do some exercise every day.



You can do exercise at home, standing up, sitting down or in a wheelchair.



We have lots of different exercise videos on our website:  
[www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/living-with/keeping-active](http://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/living-with/keeping-active)



You can find some really good ideas for exercises to do when sitting down here:  
[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flexibility-exercises/sitting-exercises/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flexibility-exercises/sitting-exercises/)



Some ideas for exercises you can do if you use a wheelchair are here:  
[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/wheelchair-users-fitness-advice/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/wheelchair-users-fitness-advice/)

## Looking after your lungs



Don't go out if it is very cold, windy or if you are unwell or having trouble breathing.



It is important you go to a doctor, nurse or hospital appointment if you need to.



If you are worried about going out in cold weather, ask someone to go with you.



When you do go out in cold weather, cover your nose and mouth with a scarf if you feel ok doing this.





If you have a reliever inhaler to help you breathe, always take it with you.



Breathe through your nose instead of your mouth. This warms the air up as you breathe in.

## Have a plan



If you have a lung problem already, you should have a self management plan.

Your doctor or nurse should write this plan with you.



The plan says how to look after yourself and what you should do if you become unwell.



Make sure you check your medication is in date. This way you will know if it will last through the winter.



If you become unwell really quickly, get help straightaway.



You can ask your doctor for an appointment quickly, or call 111 who will give you advice and support.



If you cannot breathe or feel much worse, call 999.



If you need more advice about keeping well in the cold please contact us.



We can also tell you about extra support you might be able to get to help pay heating bills.



You can call us on:  
0300 222 5800



We are open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Last reviewed: November 2022  
Next review due: November 2025