

# Advice on keeping warm and staying healthy

**It's important to keep warm in order to keep colds, flu and other more serious illnesses at bay. Read our tips below on how to keep warm, well and make the best use of your heating at home.**

## → Keeping your home warm

- Whatever type of heating you have, it's important to keep both your living room and bedroom warm
- Heat your main living room to around 18-21°C (64-70°F) - the rest of the house to at least 16°C
- Make sure you keep your living room warm throughout the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed
- Set the timer on your heating to come on before you get up and switch off when you go to bed (Try to keep your bedroom at 18°C so keep it on overnight if necessary)
- Never use hot water bottles in the same bed as an electric blanket, even if the blanket is switched off
- Unplug electric blankets before you go to bed, unless they have a thermostat control for safe all night use
- Get your electric blanket tested every three years for safety – Age UK or your local fire and rescue service may be able to do this for you
- If the temperature falls below 16°C the elderly especially could be at risk of suffering from hypothermia, heart attack or a stroke
- If it's very cold weather, and if bills are a great problem, living and sleeping in one room may be a last resort – but get some friends or family to move your bed into the living room rather than sleeping in an armchair overnight. Be careful if there is a gas fire in the room; make sure it is turned off before going to bed

## → Keep moving

- Try not to stay sitting down for long periods of time. Get up and move around a bit. Any kind of activity, from walking to the shops (as long as it's not very cold) to doing the vacuuming, gets your circulation going and makes you feel warmer
- If you have difficulty walking, moving your arms and legs and wiggling your toes and fingers will help
- If it's very cold outside or icy underfoot, try to keep active indoors rather than venturing outside

## → Dress for warmth

- Wear plenty of thin layers, rather than one thick one
- Put on a coat, hat, scarf, gloves and warm shoes or boots when you go outside
- Wear clothes made of wool, cotton or fleecy synthetic fibres
- Wear bed socks and thermal underwear at night

## → Eat for warmth

- During cold weather, regular hot meals and hot drinks will provide warmth and energy
- Even if you don't feel like cooking, try to have at least one proper hot meal a day. Certain foods, such as potatoes, beans, bread, milk, eggs, meat and fish, are all good sources of protein, energy and vitamins which will help keep you healthy
- Eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables will also help. Contact your local Social Services for details of Meals on Wheels services in your area, which can provide hot meals
- It's also a good idea to stock up on basic foods so you don't need to go out to the shops on very cold days

