

Your Health



Fight the Flu!

With Autumn fast approaching and cooler temperatures on the way, it's time to start preparing for the Flu season. Flu (also known as influenza) is a highly infectious illness caused by the flu virus. It spreads rapidly through small droplets coughed or sneezed into the air by an infected person. Flu vaccinations are an excellent preventative method to beat the bugs and are particularly recommended for those who are pregnant or have a chronic serious medical condition.

Treatment

If you are otherwise fit and well you generally do not need to see your GP when you are having flu symptoms.

Antibiotics are not prescribed for flu.

- Avoid smoking, it irritates the mucous membrane of the nose
- Paracetamol or Ibuprofen can reduce a fever and provide pain relief
- Some people occasionally develop a bacterial chest infection for which antibiotic therapy maybe prescribed
- Symptoms such as cough, sore throat, nasal congestion and headache can be relieved by a variety of over the counter medicines
- Nasal decongestants may ease breathing



Flu Symptoms Include:

- Fever (a temperature of 38c/100.4F or above)
- Cough
- Headache
- Chills and sweating
- Tiredness
- Aching Muscles
- Sore throat
- Poor concentration
- Runny nose and sneezing
- Limb or joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Problems sleeping
- Abdominal pain
- A frequent need to urinate
- Feeling hot or cold

You should start to feel better within five to ten days, however, the cough and tiredness may persist for longer.

You should see your GP if:

- Your symptoms are worsening
- You develop other symptoms like a rash for example
- You have a medical condition made worse by your flu symptoms
- You are aged over 65
- You are pregnant

Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood in your arteries. If it is too high over a period of time and is not treated you will be more at risk of having a stroke or heart attack. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms which is why many people do not know they have it. The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to have regular checks and remember the numbers in the same way as your height and weight. In other words, Know your Numbers! – and encourage your family and friends to do the same.



Recognising your symptoms Are you at risk?

Contributing factors to a raised blood-pressure may include excessive alcohol consumption, poor diet (including too much salt), lack of exercise, being overweight, smoking and getting older.

What happens if you ignore the signs?

Whilst you may continue to feel well, damage will be building up inside your body. Ignoring the effects of high blood pressure can result in damage to your heart, kidneys and blood vessels. High blood pressure is also a contributing factor to suffering a heart attack or stroke.

How is your blood pressure measured?

Blood pressure is measured in two numbers, for example 120/80. The first number is the pressure when the heart is pumping; the second is when the heart is resting.

Why is blood pressure so important?

High blood pressure increases your risk of having a stroke or heart attack. It is also a risk factor for kidney disease, dementia and other illnesses. If you have high blood pressure, by lowering it with lifestyle changes and medicines you can lower your risk of these problems.



Systolic 140 or above

Diastolic 90 or above

Systolic between 121 and 139

Diastolic between 81 and 89

Systolic between 120 or less

Diastolic between 80 or less

'Know Your Numbers' week is 18th - 24th September 2017 & a good opportunity to get your blood pressure checked. Blood pressure UK (www.bloodpressureuk.org) are holding 'Pressure Stations' across the UK or visit your GP/Practice nurse or Occupational Health provider

Preventing High Blood Pressure



Regular exercise helps to reduce your blood pressure and maintain a healthy weight



Watch your weight – weight loss will help to reduce high blood pressure



Introduce more fruit and vegetables into your diet – try to eat between 5-9 portions each day to stay healthy



Enjoy alcohol in moderation - 14 units per week for men and women



Cut down on salt – check food labels and where possible look for alternatives such as herbs and spices.