

Don't forget your pharmacist is on hand to help over the Christmas period

The Welsh Government's Choose Pharmacy service is seeing pharmacists take responsibility for managing a range of minor ailments. People will be able to see their pharmacist for free treatment instead of making an appointment to see their GP.

In an emergency when people run out of their prescribed medicines, pharmacies can provide a supply of prescribed medicines without the need to visit their GP. They can also help with reviewing medicines when people are discharged from hospital.

Andrew Evans said:

"It is important that people remember there will effectively be a 'five day weekend' from 23 – 27 December this year with in-hours GP services closed for the vast majority of that period. People with repeat prescriptions should check they aren't going to run out over the Christmas period and speak to their pharmacist if they need a further supply.

"Highly skilled pharmacists are on hand over the Christmas period to help with a range of ailments from coughs and colds, to ear aches, conjunctivitis, head lice and even headaches and digestive problems brought about by over indulging during the festive period.

"By visiting the pharmacist in the first instance people can help free up GPs so they can care for patients with more complex needs. Pharmacists will be dispensing advice during this time, helping people to stay in their community, and limiting pressure on our ambulance services and emergency services."

Pig keepers warned not to feed kitchen scraps to pigs due to African Swine Fever risk

The warning comes after the risk of African swine fever entering the UK was raised over the summer following spread of the infection in Eastern and Central Europe.

There has never been a case of African swine fever in the UK and it does not affect humans, but it is potentially fatal to pigs. If the disease were to reach the UK it could have a devastating effect on our export market and would also mean the humane culling of pigs on infected premises to prevent further spread.

Keepers are being reminded that it is illegal to feed catering waste of any description or domestic food waste to farm animals in the UK, including pigs kept as pets, as some of the outbreaks of African swine fever in Europe have been attributed to wild boar or domestic pigs consuming contaminated pork or pork products. This includes food from vegetarian kitchens, as there is still a risk of cross contamination in products of animal origin such as milk.

Strict hygiene measures are essential in preventing disease – people should not take meat or meat products into areas where pigs are kept and should only eat food in designated areas such as staff rooms or the farm kitchen. Pig keepers, farm staff and anyone in contact with pigs should wash their hands before and after eating or preparing food.

UK Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

“The introduction of African swine fever would have an enormous impact on our pig industry. No matter how many pigs you keep, you need to be aware of the potential consequences of feeding waste food to your animals. Not only is it illegal, but you run the risk of spreading disease which could be fatal to your livestock.

“You can purchase a range of pig foods from your local agricultural merchant that can be safely fed to your pigs and which is the most reliable way of giving them a balanced diet. Good biosecurity is also essential for minimising disease risk, such as providing dedicated clothing and boots for workers and preventing vehicles which may be contaminated from entering pig premises.”

Wales' Chief Veterinary Officer Christianne Glossop said:

“African Swine Fever is a highly contagious disease. Pig keepers can help prevent the spread of infection by practising strict biosecurity on their premises. An important part of this is ensuring that your pigs do not have access to potentially infectious meat or meat products, including kitchen waste.”

The UK suffered the consequences of pigs being fed illegal waste food in the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001. That outbreak is thought to have originated from pigs being fed catering waste containing the virus, which came from outside the UK. The outbreak resulted in the destruction of more than 10 million cattle and sheep and cost the UK many millions of pounds.

Chief Executive of the National Pig Association, Dr Zoe Davies, said:

“The health of our pigs is fundamentally important to our sector. A notifiable disease outbreak would not only needlessly result in the loss of many pigs and annihilate our burgeoning export market, but would significantly impact on countless families, their staff, local businesses and tourism for months. Feeding illegal food waste, however harmless it might seem at the time, is just not worth the risk.”

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First President of Welsh Tribunals sworn in

The swearing in ceremony was performed by the Lord Chief Justice and took place today at Cardiff Crown Court.

The President of Welsh Tribunals will provide judicial leadership to support the independence and effectiveness of the Welsh Tribunals.

Sir Wyn Williams was born and raised in Ferndale in the Rhondda. He was called to the Bar in 1974 and was appointed Queen’s Counsel in 1992. He was

appointed a High Court Judge in 2007.

Between January 2012 and December 2015 he was a presiding judge for Wales becoming the Senior Presiding Judge in January 2014.

Sir Wyn Williams said,

“I am very pleased to have been appointed the first President of Welsh Tribunals. These tribunals have an important role in the Welsh legal landscape and I look forward to playing a part in ensuring that they provide access to justice in a modern and efficient manner.”

Counsel General, Jeremy Miles AM said,

“The President of Welsh Tribunals is a crucial role in providing judicial leadership for the administration of justice in our tribunals and in sustaining the independence and standing of the Welsh Tribunals’ judiciary.

“Sir Wyn Williams is a hugely experienced High Court Judge, born and raised here in Wales, and with a track record of judicial leadership in Wales over many years. I warmly welcome his appointment and wish him well in this important role.”

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