

Wales urged to get ready for winter by choosing well and planning ahead

This winter's campaign includes a focus on the role of community pharmacists across Wales. Pharmacists are engaging with people to offer advice, promote key health messages and help people with complex medical conditions to complete a personal health plan to get ready for winter.

Choose Well, Choose Pharmacy this Winter aims to highlight the wide range of services available, which people may not be aware of, close to their homes and often at more convenient times in the evenings and weekends.

Mr Gething said:

"Making the right choice of health service and advice will save you time and make sure you and your family get the right care quickly. In many cases pharmacists can provide confidential advice and treatment without the need to make an appointment.

"Health service staff will be working hard this winter – and we all have a part to play by Choosing Well."

The My Winter Health Plan pack is aimed at helping people with long-term physical or mental health conditions provide vital information for visiting health professionals to allow more people to be seen and treated at home and avoid unnecessary trips to A & E.

Pharmacists will be able to sit down with patients to help them complete the form which includes information such as their emergency contacts and a list of their conditions.

The Welsh Government is working with Public Health Wales and Community Pharmacy Wales to ensure packs are available at all community pharmacies, more than 700 across Wales. The packs, which also provide useful tips to stay safe, warm and well in the winter, are also being distributed by Age Cymru and health boards.

Mr Gething, launching the campaign at Mayberry Pharmacy, Penarth, with pharmacist Elaine Hill, said:

"Community pharmacists across Wales will be playing a vital role in advising you and your family on many common ailments, coughs or colds this winter."

Penarth pharmacist Elaine Hill said:

“Community pharmacists are playing an increasing role in providing support and advice to people in a convenient setting closer to people’s homes.

“One of the new services Mayberry’s is offering this year is a care home visiting service to provide flu vaccines to residents in the comfort of their homes.

“Pharmacies like ours can provide a range of services including face to face healthcare advice without the need to make an appointment, treatment for a range of common ailments including coughs, colds, sore throats, diarrhoea, runny nose, head lice, upset stomachs and headaches. We also offer confidential consultations with a qualified pharmacist in a private setting within the pharmacy.”

NHS Wales Chief Executive Andrew Goodall said that as winter approaches, it was important we all play our part in choosing well by making the right decisions on where to get advice and treatment when we are unwell to help ease pressure on hospital emergency departments and receive help quicker and nearer to home.

Dr Goodall said:

“Pharmacies, NHS Direct, opticians, dentists, Minor Injury Units, health visitors, community nurses, midwives and GP practices, can all provide quick and easy-to-access advice and treatment when looking after yourself at home isn’t enough. You can often do this in your local high street without the need to make an appointment.

“Making the right choice not only saves you time and ensures you and your loved ones get the right care quickly but it also helps NHS staff who will be working hard this winter.

“If you have a serious life-threatening emergency call 999 or go to A&E. But if not, consider the wide range of other options.”

Mark Griffiths, Chair of Community Pharmacy Wales, said:

“Choose Well is a great example of community pharmacies working with Welsh Government and other primary care colleagues to help improve the health of people in Wales. You don’t have to make an appointment, and you can go along at a time that suits you, and your consultation will always be with a qualified pharmacist and will take place in a confidential area within the pharmacy. That’s why Choose Well is the best choice for people this winter.”

The NHS Direct Wales online symptom checker can also provide useful

information on what treatment or service you need – [NHS Direct](#) or speak to somebody at NHS Direct 0845 46 47 or 111 where available. Parents with children under 12 can use the Choose Well web site for advice [Choose Well](#)