

## News release

Friday November 25, 2011  
For immediate release

### **Simple steps to stop the spread of bugs this winter**

Families are being urged to follow simple steps to reduce the spread of infections this winter.

Catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue and disposing of it, as well as staying at home when suffering from tummy bugs and practising good hand hygiene are just some of the ways people can ensure winter illnesses don't get passed on to the most vulnerable people at this time of year.

Bugs such as sickness, diarrhoea and flu are potentially life-threatening for older people and young children, as well as those with some existing health conditions.

Diane Worthington, head of infection control speaking on behalf of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster, said: "It is important that we all practice good hand hygiene to protect ourselves and others from becoming infected this winter. It is very important to wash your hands with liquid soap and water after contact with someone who is ill with a tummy bug, after using the toilet and before preparing food if you are suffering from symptoms yourself.

"Stomach bugs spread quickly in places like care homes, hospitals, schools and colleges so people should keep themselves at home until they have recovered fully and they should not return to work, school or college or attend any events until they have been free of symptoms for at least 48 hours.

So, where should you go for help?

**Self Care** Minor illnesses including coughs, colds, sore throats and upset stomachs can all be treated at home with a well-stocked medicine cabinet.

Health advice is also available by calling **NHS Direct** on 0845 46 47, 24 hours a day.

**NHS Choices** – [www.lcr.nhs.uk](http://www.lcr.nhs.uk) – is a website where you can find expert advice on a range of illnesses as well as your nearest pharmacist, GP, dentist or urgent care centre.

**Your local pharmacy** can give advice on treating coughs, colds, sore throats, ear or tooth aches. You can also get advice on prescription medicines and contraception in confidence.

**Your GP** should be seen for cases of vomiting, ear pain, a sore stomach or back pain that won't go away. Many GPs offer extended opening hours in the evenings and weekends. If you require a GP outside of normal surgery hours call the GP Out of Hours service on 0845 045 0411.

**Walk-in centres, urgent care centres and minor injury units** are also available for minor illnesses and injuries including deep cuts, burns and strains. You will be seen by an experienced nurse without appointment. X-ray is also available at some locations.

**999 or A&E** should only be used in an emergency such as a serious accident or illness which involves traumatic blood loss, chest pain or loss of consciousness.

For more information on Choose Better visit [www.choosebetter.org.uk](http://www.choosebetter.org.uk)

ENDS

**For interviews or more information please contact media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or [liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk](mailto:liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk) or senior media officer Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663 or [caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk](mailto:caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk).**

Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving on-going transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament and the House of Lords.