



UK Health
Security
Agency

Winter 2024/25

Communications toolkit for UKHSA stakeholders

UK Health Security Agency | **NHS**

Help stop infections from spreading by

- **Staying at home** if you feel unwell
- **Washing your hands** regularly
- **Catching coughs and sneezes** in a tissue
- **Opening a window** when meeting others indoors
- If you need to go out, **consider wearing a mask**

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Introduction

This winter the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is working with partners in the NHS, local and national government and across the health and care system to protect people's health, including the most vulnerable amongst us, and reduce pressures on our health services.

This toolkit aims to support stakeholders with messages to help protect people's health this winter. It contains background information, health and behaviour advice, social media assets and suggested copy, links to data and other useful information.

The information provided is correct as of 9 January 2024.

Further information

Sign up to [UKHSA's Stakeholder Cascade](#) to receive a weekly newsletter with the latest news, updates and guidance from UKHSA

Visit our website at [GOV.UK](#)

Any queries about this toolkit please contact: externalaffairs@ukhsa.gov.uk

For further information about our regional support please contact your UKHSA regional communications lead.

UKHSA social media channels

X: [@UKHSA](#)

Instagram: [@UKHSA](#)

Facebook: [UK Health Security Agency](#)

LinkedIn: [UK Health Security Agency](#)

Overview

Each winter, the health service experiences increased pressure due to the circulation of seasonal viruses that can make people very unwell.

This winter, there is potential for infectious diseases such as COVID-19, flu, RSV and norovirus to co-circulate, with flu already circulating at high levels. We can also anticipate that there may be further weather events which could impact people's health and wellbeing, such as particularly cold spells and flooding.

Health security hazards like these require a coordinated response across the public health system to ensure the health of the nation is secure and protected. UKHSA provides advice, guidance, data and resources to help inform policy-makers, health professionals and the general public about the latest health protection issues.

We have a range of communications resources which aim to help stakeholders with messaging to your networks, providing advice on health prevention and management during winter.

Key messages

- This winter, we are seeing infectious diseases such as COVID-19, flu, RSV and norovirus circulating at higher levels than previous years. We are already seeing lots of cases of flu and norovirus in particular and it is important that people know how to limit the spread of these.
- If you don't feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with others.

Flu and COVID-19

- If you have symptoms of flu or COVID-19 such as a high temperature, cough and feeling tired and achy, try to limit your contact with others, especially those who are vulnerable. If you have symptoms and need to leave the house, our advice remains that you should wear a face covering. Washing hands regularly and using and disposing of tissues in bins can reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses.

RSV

- As we are now seeing more cases of RSV, it's important to know how to spot the signs in infants and children. Some of the main symptoms of a serious infection due to RSV include a cough that gets worse, shortness of breath and difficulty feeding. You should seek medical help if you're worried your child is seriously unwell and further advice can be found on the [NHS website](#).
- For the first time this year, we are able to offer an RSV vaccination to anyone who is 28 or more weeks pregnant to protect their baby, along with people aged 75-79 years.
- The vaccine helps reduce the risk of RSV causing serious problems such as pneumonia and bronchiolitis.
- If you're aged 75 to 79, your GP surgery will contact you about getting vaccinated.
- If you're 28 weeks pregnant or more, you can speak to your maternity service or GP surgery about getting vaccinated.

Norovirus

- We are seeing extremely high levels of norovirus, with numbers far above the five-year average for this time of year. If you've caught the virus, take steps to avoid passing the infection on. If you have diarrhoea or vomiting, do not return to work, school or nursery until 48 hours after your symptoms have stopped and don't prepare food for others in that time either. If you are unwell, avoid visiting people in hospitals and care homes to prevent passing on the infection in these settings.

- Washing your hands with soap and warm water and using bleach-based products to clean surfaces will also help stop infections from spreading. Alcohol gels do not kill norovirus so don't rely on these alone.

Messages aimed at parents and carers of children

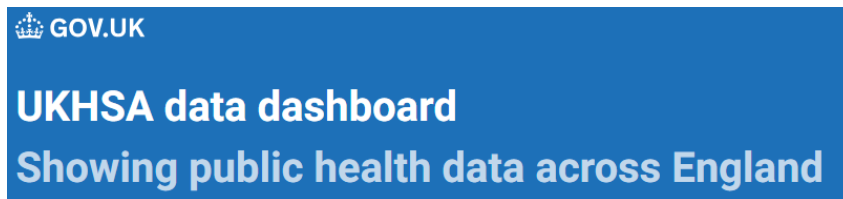
- Staying healthy and taking simple steps to reduce the spread of illness will ensure children and their families experience less disruption at this time of year.
- Each winter, we see an increase in acute respiratory and gastro-intestinal illnesses, however it only takes small measures to reduce the spread of most of these infections. By following advice on good hygiene habits, knowing when to keep your child off school and taking up the opportunity to get vaccinated when offered, parents are protecting their children and the wider school community.

Weekly winter surveillance reports

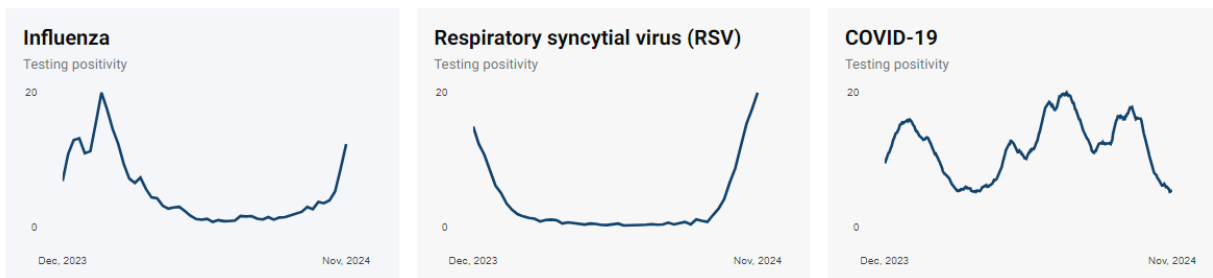
Each week we publish our [COVID-19, flu and RSV surveillance bulletin \(formally Weekly Winter Briefing\)](#). This brings together the latest surveillance data, along with the latest public health advice for COVID-19, flu and RSV.

We also publish [reports of norovirus and rotavirus](#) laboratory surveillance and enteric virus outbreaks in hospital settings in England during the 2024 to 2025 season.

You can also visit the [UKHSA's data dashboard](#) for the figures.



Respiratory viruses



1

¹ These are example graphs accessed on the UKHSA data dashboard on 9 December 2024 and are not indicative of current data. The latest graphs can be found on the [UKHSA data dashboard](#).

Winter 2024/25: Communications toolkit for UKHSA stakeholders

On our social media accounts, we also share regular graphs which look at hospitalisations, positive tests, and vaccination uptake when the surveillance data is published each Thursday. We also publish an infographic which gives an overview of the data for flu, COVID and RSV. On some weeks we will also publish a video of one of our flu experts talking through the data. We use the hashtag #UKHSAVirusWatch.

We have been publishing weekly norovirus graphs on our channels when the data is published every Thursday and will continue to do this during weeks which see an increase in cases or sustained high levels.

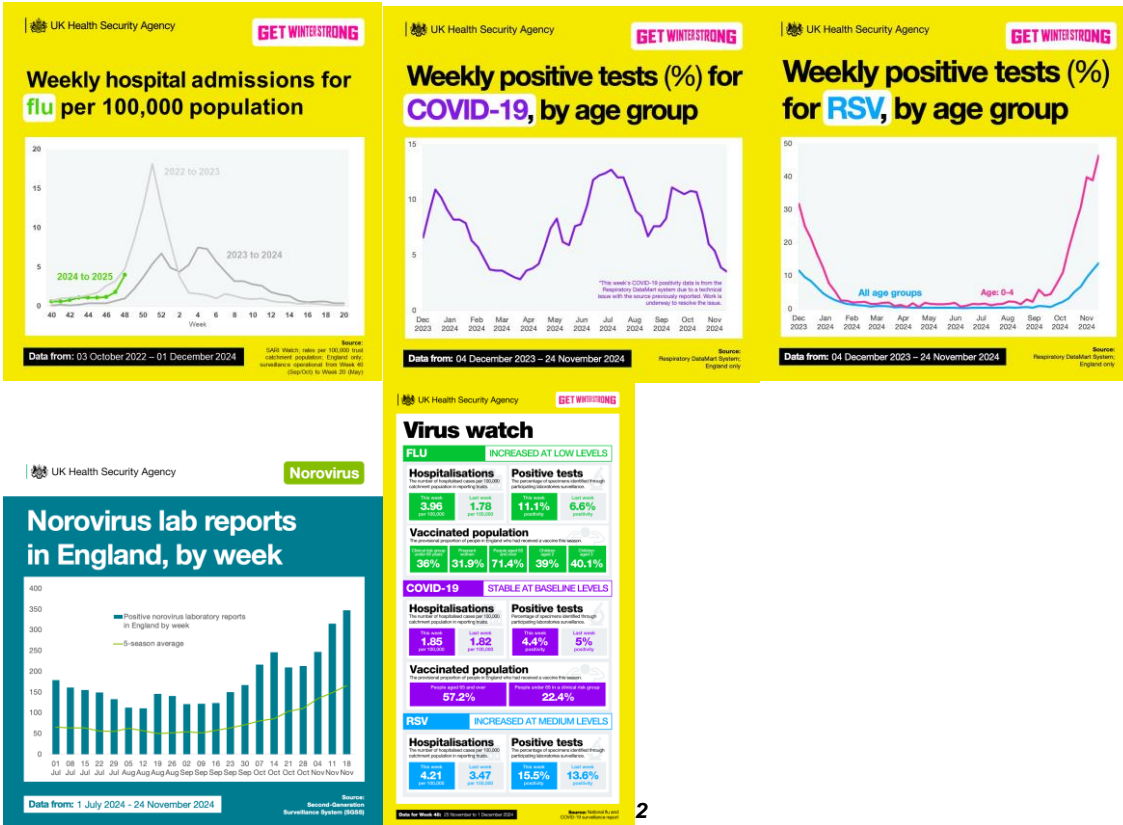
UKHSA social media channels:

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LinkedIn: [UK Health Security Agency](#)



Blogs

- **Winter bugs:** Our blog [‘What winter bug do I have? Know the signs and symptoms’](#) provides an explainer of important information about common winter infections, their signs and symptoms, and information on who is eligible for vaccination.
- **Protecting children and others this winter:** Our blog, [‘5 things to do to help manage winter illness’](#), sets out some of the simple actions that parents of school age children can take to help protect their families and those around them.
- **Winter surveillance:** Our blog, [‘how we monitor flu and other respiratory viruses each winter’](#) provides an overview of UKHSA’s comprehensive surveillance systems.

² These are example social media assets used on the UKHSA social media channels in November 2024 and December 2024 and are not indicative of current data. The latest assets can be found in our [COVID-19, flu and RSV surveillance bulletin](#).

- **Norovirus:** Our blog, [‘why is norovirus reporting in England so high at the moment?’](#) aims to explain the higher reporting of norovirus this winter season and [‘norovirus: what to do if you catch it and helping to stop the spread’](#) provides advice for minimising the spread of infection.

Other useful toolkits

We have other toolkits which will be useful for stakeholders this winter period:

- **RSV:** [UKHSA and NHS England's joint RSV toolkit](#) to help stakeholders communicate the benefits of the RSV vaccine to older adults and pregnant women. It contains a range of materials including social media assets, posters, leaflets, videos and display screen visuals.
- **Cold weather:** To support stakeholders communicate cold weather messaging, we have updated our [cold weather communications toolkit for 2024/25](#). The communication material in this toolkit relates specifically to cold weather and is intended to provide basic health information that can be communicated before and during cold spells so the right messages reach the right people at the right time. The content included in this toolkit can be used to target both public and professional audiences. We ask that cold weather messaging is not used until alerts are issued.

We are advising stakeholders to sign up to Weather-Health Alerts which are distributed via email. If you would like to receive the alerts, [please register and share the link with anyone you feel should be receiving them](#).

- **Flooding:** We have produced a [flooding communications toolkit](#) to support any communications activity stakeholders choose to undertake during the course of a flood in relation to public health advice. Getting our message to all sections of our communities during adverse weather events and other incidents aids us to mitigate the impact of health inequalities. The content included in this toolkit can be used to target both public and professional audiences. It contains background information, key messages, suggested social media copy, example press statements and links to useful information.
- **Warm spaces:** In 2023 UKHSA published a [toolkit which provides a framework for organisations seeking to develop or evaluate a warm space](#) for their local population during the winter. Based on a systematic literature review, a small survey of local authorities across England and guidance from an expert network of providers of such spaces, this toolkit has been developed to help increase the effectiveness of warm spaces being set up to provide support to local populations through the winter months. The toolkit includes case studies sharing examples of best and promising practice as well as signposting to resources to support organisations in developing

their warm space offer.

- **Childhood immunisations:** A number of infectious diseases affecting children have been circulating throughout 2024 and continue to circulate at higher levels. UKHSA's and NHS England's second wave of the [childhood immunisations campaign](#) came to an end at the start of October. We are currently developing plans for a third phase of the campaign and we will share more information about phase three and how you can support it in due course. In the meantime, we have [redesigned our toolkit](#) to include information of how you can continue to promote childhood vaccinations outside of the paid campaign period. All assets can be used up until 3 March 2025.

Guidance and other useful resources

- [Health protection in children and young people's settings \(including education\)](#)
- ['Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z'](#) provides advice for teaching, education and early years staff on a range of infectious diseases including those more prevalent in winter.
- [Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#) provides advice on reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19 and flu.
- [Norovirus: how to stop it spreading](#). Information about norovirus, how it's transmitted and how to prevent it spreading.

Suggested posting strategy

Our social media assets are available for download from [Google Drive](#).

These can be used by stakeholders on your own channels.

Suggested posting strategy

We suggest using the following assets throughout the season.

Business as Usual (BAU) / throughout winter:

- Vaccination assets (the National Booking System for flu and COVID-19 vaccines closed on 19 December, after this date we are still directing people to www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations as this will be updated with advice on where people can access vaccines locally; RSV can be used throughout the season as this is a year-round offer)
- Behaviours assets
- Winter surveillance assets
- How to manage norovirus infections

Cases rising but not yet 'high' or 'very high':

- Vaccination assets (the National Booking System for flu and COVID-19 vaccines closes on 19 December, after this date we are still directing people to www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations as this will be updated with advice on where people can access vaccines locally; RSV can be used throughout the season as this is a year-round offer)
- Increase use of all assets
- Add 'It's still out there' assets to ramp up awareness

Cases 'high' or very high

- Vaccination assets (the National Booking System for flu and COVID-19 vaccines closes on 19 December, after this date we are still directing people to www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations as this will be updated with advice on where people can access vaccines locally; RSV can be used throughout the season as this is a year-round offer)
- Increase use of all assets
- Add 'Flu / COVID-19' is circulating at high levels

Winter behaviours

Key messages:

- If you don't feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with others.
- You can help reduce the risk of passing infections on to others through frequent handwashing and catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue.
- If you have respiratory symptoms such as a cough or sore throat, along with a fever, it's best to avoid close contact with other people, especially those who are vulnerable, such as the elderly or those with weakened immune systems. If you do go out in crowded places, consider wearing a facemask to reduce your risk of infecting others.
- Bringing fresh air into a room by opening a door or a window, even for a few minutes at a time, can help reduce the chance of spreading infections.
- If you've had diarrhoea and vomiting, avoid school or work for 48 hours after symptoms stop, avoid preparing food for others and do not visit loved ones in care homes or hospitals to reduce the chances of causing outbreaks in these settings.
- Protect yourself against cold weather this winter. Maintain indoor temperatures of at least 18°C, particularly if you are older or live with elderly people, young children, or those with long-term health conditions. If you're spending time outdoors, ensure you wear plenty of warm clothing.

NHS advice:

The [NHS website has useful information on winter health](#) including:

- The importance of people getting their seasonal vaccinations
- Where to get help and advice if people feel unwell
- Keeping warm and getting help with heating
- Looking in on vulnerable neighbours and relatives

This information is available in other formats including leaflets (large print and easy read leaflets), British Sign Language and audio versions.

Social media assets:

Our social media assets are available for download from [Google Drive](#).

These can be used by stakeholders on your own channels.

UKHSA Winter Behaviours assets

The main creative for this year is entitled '**Don't be a party pooper**' and includes sets of

graphics to be used in pairs, as a gif supplied in the pack or as an animation. The pack includes:

1. "Don't be a party pooper" images
2. Images with infection prevention advice
3. Animations with splats

If using the static images, both types need to be posted together but you can do this in a few different ways.


Sharing Options:





- Post 2 images as a static pair
- Post 2 images as an animated GIF
- Use as a 2-part carousel where the feature exists (e.g. Instagram)
- Share both in a single post or thread

Suggested post copy

These assets are general and do not refer to one single infection, however post copy can be adapted to refer to different infections, as suggested below:

General copy





Copy	Image	Alt text
<p>Lots of respiratory infections like #Flu spread easily during winter. 😞</p> <p>If you're unwell, there are actions you can take to reduce the risk of spreading infections to others. 👉</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19</p>		<p>Help stop infections from spreading by: staying at home if you feel unwell; washing your hands regularly; catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue; opening a window when meeting others indoors; if you need to go out, consider wearing a mask.</p>

	 <p>UK Health Security Agency NHS</p> <p>Help stop infections from spreading by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying at home if you feel unwell • Washing your hands regularly • Catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue • Opening a window when meeting others indoors • If you need to go out, consider wearing a mask 	
<p>Been feeling unwell this winter? There are things you can do to help stop infections spreading, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying home if you feel unwell • Washing your hands regularly 	  <p>UK Health Security Agency NHS</p> <p>Don't be a party pooper!</p> <p>Help stop infections from spreading by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying at home if you feel unwell • Washing your hands regularly 	<p>Image of a toilet with colourful splats. The text reads 'Don't be a party pooper'</p> <p>Image of a person leaning over a toilet feeling unwell, with one hand in the air. The text reads 'help stop infections from spreading by staying at home if you feel unwell. Wash your hands regularly.'</p>
<p>Lots of infections spread during winter. Avoid passing illnesses on by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying home if you feel unwell • Regularly washing your hands. 	 <p>UK Health Security Agency NHS</p> <p>Don't be a party pooper!</p>	<p>Image of a bin full of tissues with some green splats. Text reads: Don't be a party pooper</p> <p>Image of hands being washed over a sink with soap visible on hands. Text reads: Help stop infections from spreading by stay home if you feel unwell. Wash your hands regularly.</p>



Examples of virus specific copy – images should be used for specific viruses when there are local outbreaks or when UKHSA data shows that a certain virus is circulating

Copy	Image	Alt text
<p>Lots of people are getting #norovirus at the moment. If you catch the winter vomiting bug, stay home for 48 hours after symptoms stop to prevent passing it on.</p>		<p>Image of a toilet with colourful splats. The text reads 'Don't be a party pooper'</p> <p>Image of a person leaning over a toilet feeling unwell, with one hand in the air. The text reads: help stop infections from spreading by staying at home if you feel unwell. Wash your hands regularly.</p>
<p>Lots of people are getting flu at the moment. You can help stop the spread by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying home if you feel unwell • Washing your hands regularly 		<p>Image of a bin full of tissues with green splats. Text reads: help stop infections from spreading by staying at home if you feel unwell. Wash your hands regularly.</p> <p>Image of hands being washed over a sink. Text reads: help stop infections from spreading by staying at home if you feel unwell.</p>

		<p>Wash your hands regularly.</p>
<p>Lots of respiratory infections spread during winter. You can help keep yourself and others well by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying home if you feel unwell • Washing your hands regularly 	 	<p>Image of a bin full of tissues with green splats. Text reads: help stop infections from spreading by staying at home if you feel unwell. Wash your hands regularly.</p> <p>Image of hands being washed over a sink. Text reads: help stop infections from spreading by staying at home if you feel unwell. Wash your hands regularly.</p>
<p>Copy</p>	<p>Animation BIN</p>	<p>Alt text</p>
<p>Lots of respiratory infections spread during winter. You can help keep yourself and others well by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying home if you feel unwell • Washing your hands regularly 		<p>An image of a bin full tissues with green and orange splats appearing on the screen. The text on the first slide says 'Don't be a party pooper'. The second slide is an image of a person wrapped in a blanket holding a tissue. The text reads 'Help stop infections spreading by staying home if you feel unwell and regularly washing your hands'</p>
	<p>Animation TOILET</p>	

<p>Been feeling unwell this winter? There are things you can do to help stop infections spreading, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staying home if you feel unwell• Washing your hands regularly		<p>Image of a toilet with splats appearing. One large orange splat appears with the text: 'Don't be a party pooper'. A second slide appears with an image of hands being washed over a metal sink. The text that appears says 'Help stop infections spreading by staying home if you feel unwell and regularly wash your hands'.</p>
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Flu

Overview of influenza (flu):

Influenza, commonly known as flu, is caused by a virus, usually influenza A or B. Flu viruses can change from one winter to the next.

Flu can affect anyone and will often get better on its own, but it can make some people seriously ill. If people have certain long-term health condition the effects of flu can make it worse, even if the health condition is well managed and they normally feel well.

Flu is easily transmitted by droplets, aerosols and by hand to mouth/eye contamination from a contaminated surface or respiratory secretions of an infected person. People with mild or no symptoms can still infect others.

Common symptoms of flu include:

- Sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain and extreme fatigue
- Dry cough, sore throat and stuffy nose
- In young children gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea may be seen

Key messages:

- If you are showing symptoms of flu or COVID-19 such as a high temperature, cough, and feeling tired and achy, try to limit your contact with others, especially those who are vulnerable such as pregnant women, under 5s, the elderly or those with weakened immune systems.
- Washing your hands regularly, using tissues or sneezing into a bent elbow can reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses.

Flu vaccine:

- People who are at higher risk of getting seriously ill from flu are eligible for a flu vaccination. The flu vaccination programme is open until 31 March 2025, but the NHS National Booking System closed on 19 December 2024. It is still possible to book your vaccinations after 19 December through local NHS vaccination services, like pharmacies or walk-in sites. However, there will be fewer appointments, and you may need to travel further.
- It's best to have the flu vaccine before flu starts circulating but if you haven't already had it, it may still be worth have the vaccine if you are eligible.
- There is more information on the flu vaccine available on the [NHS website](#).

For vaccine messaging, once the National Booking System closes on 19 December the call to action will be to encourage people to check their eligibility and find out more about how they can access their vaccination.

We are still directing people to www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations as this will be updated with advice on where people can book.

We encourage stakeholders to use the flu and COVID-19 vaccination campaign assets until the programme concludes (the COVID-19 programme ends on 31 January and the flu programme on 31 March).

NHS advice:

Further information on flu, how to treat flu at home, how to avoid spreading flu and information on the flu vaccine can be found on [the NHS website](#).

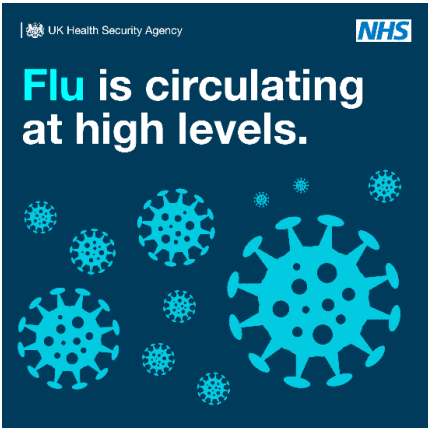
Health publications:

There are a range of resources on the flu vaccine – including posters and leaflets – available on the [Health Publications website](#). This includes resources in accessible formats and translated materials in community languages.

Social media assets:

Our social media assets are available for download from [Google Drive](#).

These can be used by stakeholders on your own channels.

Asset	Posting strategy and post copy
<p>Flu is circulating at high levels</p> 	<p><i>We have ‘high level’ alerts assets for when flu case rates are circulating at ‘high’ or ‘very high’ levels. Please liaise with your local Director of Public Health and regional UKHSA team to determine when to deploy these assets, based on local rates, or contact externalaffairs@ukhsa.gov.uk if you are unsure.</i></p> <p>Post copy: We are seeing lots of cases of flu at the moment. We can all help slow the spread by staying home when we feel unwell and washing our hands regularly.</p>

 <p>UK Health Security Agency</p> <p>FLU IS SPREADING AT HIGH LEVELS</p> <p>There are things we can all do to stop the spread</p> <p>Avoid close contact with others if you're feeling unwell and remember to wash your hands regularly</p>	<p>Post copy: We are seeing lots of cases of flu at the moment. We can all help slow the spread by staying home when we feel unwell and washing our hands regularly.</p>
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COVID-19

Overview of COVID-19:

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention.

While COVID-19 is not a seasonal illness, it and other respiratory infections are known to peak during the autumn and winter period.

Respiratory infections can spread easily between people. Sneezing, coughing, singing and talking may spread respiratory droplets from an infected person to someone close by.

Droplets from the mouth or nose may also contaminate hands, eating and drinking utensils, toys or other items and spread to those who may use or touch them, particularly if they then touch their nose or mouth.

Common symptoms of COVID-19:

- People with COVID-19 can experience a range of symptoms including a runny nose, high temperature, cough and sore throat.

Key messages:

- If you are showing symptoms of respiratory infections COVID-19 such as a high temperature, cough, and feeling tired and achy, try to limit your contact with others, especially those who are vulnerable such as the elderly or those with weakened immune systems.
- If you do go out in crowded places, consider wearing a facemask to reduce your risk of infecting others.
- Bringing fresh air into a room by opening a door or a window, even for a few minutes at a time, helps remove older stale air that could contain virus particles and reduces the chance of spreading infections. Following these basic rules of good hygiene will help to protect you and others from COVID-19 as well as many other common infections:
 - cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze
 - wash your hands
 - clean your surroundings

COVID-19 vaccine:

- The COVID-19 vaccine is offered on the NHS to people at increased risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 vaccination programme is open until 31 January 2025, but the NHS National Booking System closes on 19 December 2024 with the last appointments through this system taking place on 20 December 2024. It is still

possible to book your vaccinations after 19 December through local NHS vaccination services, like pharmacies or walk-in sites. However, there will be fewer appointments, and you may need to travel further.

- Anyone still eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine should get booked in ahead of the busy winter period, when we expect the flu virus to spread between people more easily.
- There is more information on the COVID-19 vaccine available on the [NHS website](#).

For vaccine messaging, once the National Booking System closes on 19 December the call to action will be to encourage people to check their eligibility and find out more about how they can access their vaccination.

We are still directing people to www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations as this will be updated with advice on where people can book.

We encourage stakeholders to use the flu and COVID-19 vaccination campaign assets until the programme concludes (the COVID-19 programme ends on 31 January and the flu programme on 31 March).

COVID-19 treatments:

The NHS offers treatment to people with COVID-19 who are at the highest risk of becoming seriously ill.

Further information can be found on the [treatments for COVID-19 page](#) on the NHS website.

NHS advice:

Further information on COVID-19 including its symptoms and what to do, how to avoid catching and spreading it, treatments, vaccinations and long-term effects can be found on [the NHS website](#).

Health publications:

There are a range of resources on the flu vaccine – including posters and leaflets – available on the [Health Publications website](#). This includes resources in accessible formats and translated materials in community languages.

RSV

Overview of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV):

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a virus, in the same family as measles, mumps, parainfluenza and human metapneumovirus. RSV is one of the common viruses that cause coughs and colds in winter. Most people get it several times during their life.

For most people, RSV infection causes a mild respiratory illness which usually gets better by itself.

For a small number of people who are at risk of more severe respiratory disease, RSV infection might cause severe disease which may result in hospitalisation. The very young (under 1 year of age) and the elderly are at the greatest risk. It can cause illnesses such as pneumonia (a lung infection) or bronchiolitis (a chest infection that affects babies).

Common symptoms of RSV include:

Symptoms of an RSV infection usually start within a few days of getting infected.

Most people only get cold-like symptoms, such as:

- a runny or blocked nose
- a cough
- sneezing
- tiredness
- a high temperature – signs include your back or chest feeling hotter than usual, sweatiness and shivering (chills)

Babies with RSV may also be irritable and feed less than usual.

If RSV leads to a more serious lung infection (such as pneumonia) it may also cause:

- a cough that gets worse
- shortness of breath
- faster breathing or long gaps between breaths
- difficulty feeding (in babies) or loss of appetite
- noisy breathing (wheezing)
- confusion (in older adults)

Key messages:

- As we are now seeing more cases of RSV, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Some of the main symptoms of a serious infection due to RSV include a cough that gets worse, shortness of breath and difficulty feeding. You should seek medical help if

you're worried your child is seriously unwell and further advice can be found on the [NHS website](#).

- For the first time this year, we are able to offer an RSV vaccination to anyone who is 28 or more weeks pregnant to protect their baby, along with people aged 75-79 years.
- The vaccine helps reduce the risk of RSV causing serious problems such as pneumonia and bronchiolitis.
- If you're aged 75 to 79, your GP surgery will contact you about getting vaccinated.
- If you're pregnant, you can speak to your maternity service or GP surgery about getting vaccinated from week 28 of pregnancy to protect you baby after they are born.

RSV vaccine:

The RSV vaccine helps protect against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a common virus that can make babies and older adults seriously ill. It's recommended during pregnancy and for adults aged 75 to 79. If you turned 80 on or after 1 September 2024, you're eligible for the RSV vaccine until 31 August 2025.

The RSV vaccine is given all year round.

There is more information on the RSV vaccine on the [NHS website](#).

NHS advice:

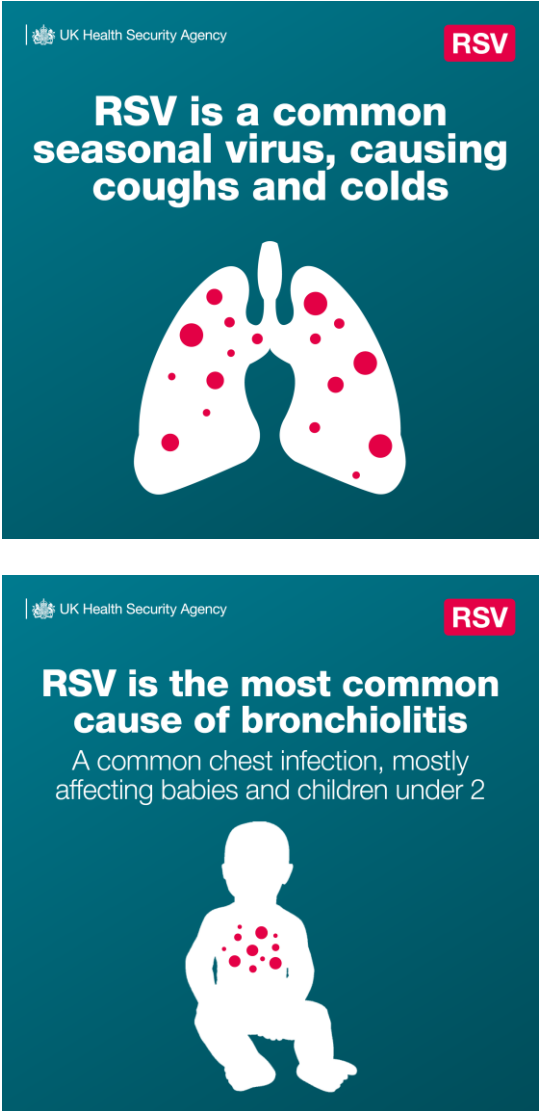
The NHS website has more information on RSV, who is at risk from RSV, how to avoid catching and spreading it, the RSV vaccine and symptoms of an RSV infection on the [NHS website](#).



RSV vaccination toolkit:

[UKHSA and NHS England's joint RSV vaccination toolkit](#) to help stakeholders communicate the benefits of the RSV vaccine to older adults and pregnant women. It contains a range of materials including social media assets, posters, leaflets, videos and display screen visuals.

Social media assets:

Our social media assets are available for download from [Google Drive](#).
 These can be used by stakeholders on your own channels.

Asset	Post copy
	<p>#RSV is a common cause of a type of chest infection called bronchiolitis in babies. This can cause breathing problems and may need to be treated in hospital. More information can be found via the NHS website: Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) - NHS</p>

 <p>UK Health Security Agency RSV</p> <p>Early RSV symptoms are similar to a cold and they may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing more quickly • Difficulty feeding/eating • Noisy breathing (wheezing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming irritable <p>Symptoms are usually worst between days 3 and 5, and the cough usually gets better in 3 weeks</p>	
<p>RSV vaccine asset: maternal offer for infant protection</p>  <p>UK Health Security Agency NHS</p> <p>You can have the RSV vaccine from week 28 of your pregnancy</p> <p>Having the RSV vaccination in pregnancy reduces your baby's risk of severe RSV lung infection by around 70% in the first 6 months of life.</p> <p>Speak to your maternity service or GP practice to arrange an appointment.</p>	<p>Post copy option 1:</p> <p>Around 20,000 babies under 1 are hospitalised with the respiratory infection #RSV in the UK each year, and sadly we see 20 to 30 infant deaths as well. Find out more about how vaccination during pregnancy can protect your baby: https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/07/17/what-is-rsv-and-is-there-a-vaccine/</p> <p>Post copy option 2:</p> <p>Many are unaware of the respiratory illness #RSV, but it causes 20,000 hospitalisations each year in babies under 1, just in England. Find out about the new vaccination programme launching this autumn to help thousands of children & older adults: https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/07/17/what-is-rsv-and-is-there-a-vaccine/</p>
<p>RSV vaccine asset: older adults programme</p>	<p>Post copy option 1:</p> <p>The new RSV vaccination programme for older adults is expected to prevent up to 500 deaths, 2,500 hospital admissions, 15,000 GP visits and 60,000 cases of RSV illness, in the first season alone. Find out more about how the #RSV vaccination can protect you: https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/07/17/what-is-rsv-and-is-there-a-vaccine/</p> <p>Post copy option 2:</p>



UK Health Security Agency

You'll be offered the RSV vaccine once you turn 75

RSV can cause pneumonia and other **life-threatening conditions in older adults**, with thousands needing hospital care every year.

From Sep 2024 the vaccine will be offered to adults when they turn 75. There will be a one-off catch-up programme for those already aged 75-79.

NHS

Icons: Two people, a checkmark.

#RSV is a common virus, but for some, it can have much more serious consequences. The new RSV vaccination programme launching this September will help to prevent thousands of cases of RSV, GP visits and hospital admissions. Find out more about the programme:
<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/07/17/what-is-rsv-and-is-there-a-vaccine/>

Diarrhoea and vomiting / norovirus

Overview:

Diarrhoea and vomiting are common in adults, children and babies. They're often caused by a stomach bug. It can be very unpleasant, but should stop in a few days.

The most commonly reported viral infection is norovirus. Norovirus is the most common cause of gastroenteritis in England. It is known as the 'winter vomiting bug'. Norovirus causes symptoms such as nausea, diarrhoea, and vomiting.

Anyone with diarrhoea and vomiting symptoms should follow the 48 hour rule to avoid infecting others: staying home for 48 hours after their symptoms clear.

Norovirus can spread from person to person through hand to mouth contact and can be picked up from contaminated surfaces. It can also spread through the air by sneezing and coughing, though this is less common.

Common symptoms of norovirus:

The main symptoms of norovirus are:

- feeling sick (nausea)
- diarrhoea
- being sick (vomiting)

You may also have:

- a high temperature
- a headache
- aching arms and legs

The symptoms start suddenly within 1 to 2 days of being infected.

Key messages:

- We are seeing extremely high levels of norovirus, with numbers far above the five-year average for this time of year. If you've caught the virus, take steps to avoid passing the infection on. If you've caught the virus, take steps to avoid passing the infection on.
- If you have diarrhoea or vomiting, do not return to work, school or nursery until 48 hours after your symptoms have stopped and don't prepare food for others in that time either. Wash any soiled clothes/bedding at 60 degrees.
- If you are unwell, avoid visiting people in hospitals and care homes to prevent passing on the infection in these settings.
- Washing your hands with soap and warm water and using bleach-based products to clean surfaces will also help stop infections from spreading. Alcohol gels do not kill norovirus so don't rely on these alone.

- Visit [the NHS website](#) for more information to help you recover.

NHS advice:

You can usually treat yourself or your child at home. The most important thing is to rest and have lots of fluids to avoid dehydration. You will usually start to feel better in 2 to 3 days.

You can find out more about norovirus, how it is spread, how it can be treated at home and when to seek medical advice on [the NHS website](#).

Surveillance:

We publish weekly [reports of norovirus and rotavirus laboratory surveillance](#) and enteric virus outbreaks in hospital and community settings in England during the 2024 to 2025 season.

Data for the current 2024/2025 season in England shows that norovirus laboratory reports are notably higher than the 5-season average. Norovirus cases typically increase through autumn and into winter, but this year cases have risen earlier than usual and are expected to continue to increase.

Blog:

Our blog, [‘why is norovirus reporting in England so high at the moment’?](#), explores the data indicating the rise in norovirus cases.

Poster – ‘Stop norovirus spreading’:

We have a poster available explaining norovirus, its symptoms, how to prevent it from spreading and details on recovery. The [poster is available on GOV.UK](#) as a PDF to download, print and display.

The poster is titled "Stop norovirus spreading" and is issued by the UK Health Security Agency. It provides information on the "winter vomiting bug", its symptoms, and how to prevent and manage it. Key points include: washing hands thoroughly with soap and water, staying home for 48 hours after symptoms clear, and using bleach-based disinfectants. It also lists "DO" and "DON'T" actions. The "DO" section includes washing clothes and bedding at 60°C and cleaning surfaces with bleach-based disinfectants. The "DON'T" section includes going to work or school, visiting care homes or hospitals, and preparing food for others. The poster concludes with recovery information and a link to the NHS website for further details.

UK Health Security Agency

Stop norovirus spreading

Norovirus, also known as the 'winter vomiting bug', is the most common stomach bug in the UK. It can spread easily through close contact, or by contaminated surfaces, food or water.

The main symptoms of norovirus include a sudden onset of nausea, followed by projectile vomiting and diarrhoea, usually 1 to 2 days after becoming infected. Other common symptoms include a high fever, a headache and aching arms and legs.

Good hand hygiene is important to stop norovirus spreading.

To stop norovirus spreading, you should:

- wash your hands thoroughly using soap and warm water after using the toilet or contact with a sick individual and before preparing and eating food.
- stay off school or work until you have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least two days
- not rely on alcohol gels instead of washing your hands, as these do not kill the virus
- wash any contaminated clothing or bedding using detergent at 60°C using disposable gloves to handle any items
- use bleach-based cleaners to disinfect surfaces

If you catch it, stay home for 48 hours after your symptoms clear

DO ✓ Wash clothes and bedding at 60°C 	Wash hands with soap, clean surfaces with bleach-based disinfectants 	DON'T ✗ Go to work or school, visit care homes or hospitals 	Prepare food for others
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Most people will make a full recovery in 2-3 days without needing any medicine. It is important to keep hydrated – especially children and the elderly.


Try not to visit A&E or GP surgeries if you have symptoms of norovirus unless advised to do so by a healthcare professional, as this may spread the bug to others. Call ahead to a GP or ring NHS 111 if you are worried about your symptoms.


Further information is available at NHS 111 or NHS.uk (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/>)

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Social media assets:

Our social media assets are available for download from [Google Drive](#).
 These can be used by stakeholders on your own channels.


Asset	Post copy
 <p>The image shows two social media assets. The top asset is a graphic with the UKHSA logo and a 'Diarrhoea and vomiting' tag. It contains the text: 'Diarrhoea and vomiting bugs can spread easily' and 'Follow these simple steps to avoid infecting others'. It includes two purple virus icons. The bottom asset also has the UKHSA logo and a 'Diarrhoea and vomiting' tag. It contains the text: 'Got these symptoms?' and three circular icons: a person coughing (labeled 'Feeling sick'), a toilet (labeled 'Diarrhoea'), and a person vomiting (labeled 'Being sick').</p>	<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Diarrhoea and vomiting bugs are unpleasant and short-lived for most, but for some it can have more of an impact.</p> <p>If you have symptoms, stay at home for 48 hours after your symptoms clear & protect those around you.</p> <p>More info: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/</p> <p>Option 2:</p> <p>Diarrhoea and vomiting bugs can spread easily – here are some simple steps to avoid infecting others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🧼 Wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water 🧼 Clean surfaces with bleach-based disinfectants 👕 Wash soiled clothes and bedding at 60°C 🏠 Avoid going to work, school or nursery and don't visit care homes or hospitals for 48 hours after your symptoms clear 🍳 Don't prepare food for others until 48 hour after your symptoms clear <p>For more info, visit the NHS website: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/</p>

 UK Health Security Agency
Diarrhoea and vomiting


You may also have:




High temperature



Headache




Aching arms and legs


 UK Health Security Agency
Diarrhoea and vomiting

Stay at home for **48 hours** after your symptoms clear:

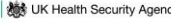
DO




Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water



Wash soiled clothes and bedding at 60 degrees

 UK Health Security Agency
Diarrhoea and vomiting


For more information on how to help yourself or your family members recover, visit the **NHS website.**





New norovirus assets – February 2025

In response to the [higher than 5-season average rates of norovirus](#), we have created a new set of assets and posters. These can be found via [this folder on Google Drive](#). Suggested copy and alt text can also be found below:

Assets	ALT Text	Copy
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 <p>UK Health Security Agency NHS</p> <p>NOROVIRUS SPREADS EASILY</p> <p>Washing your hands regularly with soap and warm water can help you stop catching it and passing it on if you do get sick.</p> <p>If you catch norovirus, don't go to work or school for 48 hours after symptoms stop, as you can still pass it on during this time. Do not visit loved ones in hospital or care homes in this time to avoid causing outbreaks.</p>	<p>NOROVIRUS SPREADS EASILY</p>	<p>Cases of #Norovirus are way above what we usually see at this time of year. 📈</p>
<p>(Link to download these asset)</p>	<p>Washing your hands regularly with soap and warm water can help you stop catching it and passing it on if you do get sick.</p>	<p>The virus spreads easily. Read UKHSA's blog post for everything you need to know about how to deal with the 'winter vomiting bug'. 📌</p>
<p>If you catch norovirus, don't go to work or school for 48 hours after symptoms stop, as you can still pass it on during this time. Do not visit loved ones in hospitals or care homes in this time to avoid causing outbreaks.</p>	<p>https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/17/norovirus-what-to-do-if-you-catch-it-and-helping-to-stop-the-spread/</p>	
 <p>UK Health Security Agency NHS</p> <p>Norovirus spreads easily</p> <p>Washing your hands regularly with soap and warm water can help you stop catching it and passing it on if you do get sick.</p> <p>If you catch norovirus, don't go to work or school for 48 hours after symptoms stop, as you can still pass it on during this time. Do not visit loved ones in hospital or care homes in this time to avoid causing outbreaks.</p>	<p>Norovirus spreads easily.</p>	<p>🧼 #Norovirus spreads easily, washing your hands regularly with soap and warm water can help limit the spread</p>
	<p>Washing your hands regularly with soap and warm water</p>	<p>🏠 You remain infectious for 48 hours after symptoms stop and should stay home at this time</p>

<p>(Various photo variants available)</p> <p>(Link to download these asset)</p>	<p>can help you stop catching it and passing it on if you do get sick.</p> <p>If you catch norovirus, don't go to work or school for 48 hours after symptoms stop, as you can still pass it on during this time. Do not visit loved ones in hospital or care homes in this time to avoid causing outbreaks.</p>	<p> Just because you've had norovirus once doesn't mean you won't get it again</p>
	<p>Wash it, wash it real good! Washing your hands regularly can help stop norovirus spreading.</p>	<p>#Norovirus, which you might know as the “winter vomiting bug”, is spreading at higher levels this year. </p> <p>Regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds to avoid catching or passing it on. </p>



(Various photo variants available)

([Link to download these assets](#))



Intended for print use only.



(Various photo variants available)

<p>(Link to download these assets)</p>	
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About the UK Health Security Agency

UKHSA is responsible for protecting every member of every community from the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents and other health threats. We provide intellectual, scientific and operational leadership at national and local level, as well as on the global stage, to make the nation health secure.

[UKHSA](#) is an executive agency, sponsored by the [Department of Health and Social Care](#).

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-health-security-agency

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