MEDIA RELEASE

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KNOWING THE NHS

As winter continues the cold weather brings the usual coughs, colds and viruses. Most of us know when we don’t need A&E, but where else can we turn when we need medical advice or help?

If we seek help early enough it can stop a medical condition getting worse. The best place is the pharmacy. Most winter illnesses can be treated with over the counter remedies to ease symptoms. Pharmacists are medically trained professionals so can also advise on which medicines are best with any medication you’re already taking.

Registering for Patient Online with your GP practice means that you can make appointments online; request repeat prescriptions and view some aspects of your healthcare records. This is a great alternative if you struggle to make calls during office hours. Simply take photo ID, such as a passport or driving licence, into your GP practice and complete a form to be enrolled.

If you know you need to see someone quickly your local Urgent Care Centre can offer most treatments A&E can such as cuts, bites, sprains and minor injuries. Thurrock’s centre is the Orsett Minor Injuries Unit.

Those that need urgent care out of hours can call NHS111. Simply dialling 111 will put you through to the NHS.

Patients can speak to an adviser who is supported by healthcare professionals 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

They will ask questions to assess symptoms and provide health care or direct patients to the local service that can help. That could be A&E, an out-of-hours doctor, an urgent care centre, a community nurse, an emergency dentist or a late-opening chemist.

Where possible, the NHS 111 team will book an appointment or transfer patients to the right people.
If NHS 111 advisers think an ambulance is required, they will immediately arrange for one to be sent.

Dr Deshpande, Chair of NHS Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group said: “When you are feeling unwell it can be daunting and confusing to know the best place to go to for help.

“If your situation is not life threatening NHS 111 is the best way of getting straight through to the NHS when pharmacies and urgent care centres are closed.

“It will allow you to get the best advice for your condition so you can get seen by the right person in the right place for your health needs.”

For more information on how to stay well this winter on visit www.nhs.uk/staywell

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