

## Press Release

12 December 2006

Christmas...1

### Don't get caught out over Christmas

In the countdown to Christmas, make sure your family's health is taken into account on your last-minute shopping list. That's the message from medical staff at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn, who say that stocking-up on basic emergency medicine could help prevent Christmas misery if you or your family are taken ill.

A simple 'medicine chest' of day-to-day remedies will help you to self-medicate for most ordinary ailments. Without them, and with GP surgeries closed over the holiday, you could face delays in getting to see an emergency doctor. And you will certainly face a long wait of up to four hours if you go to the hospital A&E department with anything that turns out to be neither an accident nor an emergency.

So here's what the doctors recommend you keep handy at home (or take with you if you're planning on spending Christmas abroad):

#### For adults:

- **Painkillers** that can be taken by mouth – ibuprofen, paracetamol or aspirin. But remember...you must not give aspirin to anyone under the age of 16 without seeking medical advice.
- **Cold relief decongestants** in spray, drop, tablet or capsule form. Combination cold remedies including pain relief and decongestants are always a good standby
- **Cough medicine.** Keep a bottle of cough mixture and some throat sweets handy
- **Antiseptic** cream or ointment
- **Sticking plasters**
- **Antihistamine** tablets if you are prone to allergies
- **Indigestion** remedies – absolutely essential in the event that the rich Christmas food doesn't agree with you
- **Diarrhoea** remedy – for the same reasons as above
- **Contraceptives.** Never underestimate what you may need. If you normally obtain contraceptives – or any other medicine - on prescription, make sure your request is submitted to your GP by next Wednesday (20 December) at the latest.

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**For children:**

- **Childrens' painkillers** and cold preparations. A bottle of Calpol is considered by many parents to be an absolute essential stand-by for emergencies
- **Cough mixture** – but make sure it's specifically for children.
- **Teething gel** if you have a baby or toddler

And if you are going abroad to somewhere warm for the holiday – don't forget to pack the sun-screen lotions and the insect repellents and bite treatment!

As with all medicines, please read the instructions on any packaging or container *carefully* to ensure the correct dose is given at the right interval. Otherwise – have a happy, healthy and safe Christmas.

For general medical advice over the holiday period contact **NHS Direct** (24 hours a day) on **0845 4647** to speak to a medical adviser. Your local pharmacist will also be able to advise on treatment of minor ailments

**Out Of Hours:** After 6.30pm on weekdays, until 8am the next morning, and from Friday at 6.30pm until Monday at 8am, and all day on Bank Holidays – such as Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day - emergency cover for your GP is provided by Anglian Medical Care. Contact them on **01603 488488** during those times if you have a medical emergency that is urgent but not life-threatening.

In the case of serious accidents or emergencies where you believe someone's life may be at risk – for example where someone has collapsed, has stopped breathing, may be suffering heart failure or has been involved in a car crash - telephone **999** and ask for 'ambulance'.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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