

News release

29 December 2016

Keeping children well this winter

As the holiday season is in full swing and the weather continues to get colder, clinicians in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are urging parents to help their children to stay well this winter.

The risks of bumps and scrapes can increase at this time of year, as the cold weather can make pavements and playgrounds icy. Most injuries sustained in this fashion are minor, but knowing what to do should a child need medical help takes the worry and panic out of the situation for parents.

Dr. Chris Trzcinski, GP in Leicestershire and Clinical Lead at West Leicestershire CCG, speaking on behalf of the three CCG said “Most injuries can be treated at home with a first aid kit and sympathy so it’s a good time to check you have everything at home that you need. Ask your local pharmacy if you’re unsure. They can give you advice about the types of over the counter treatments that are right for your child.

If your child does suffer a minor injury, then you can give them paracetamol to help ease the pain. We know that parents are sometimes concerned that this could mask the symptoms of serious injury, but that is not the case, injuries such as a break will still be obvious, but it will provide relief from the pain. If the pain relief doesn’t work then they should seek medical attention. Unless it is an emergency parents should call NHS 111 for advice. A trained call handler will be able to assess the situation, get you clinical advice from health care professionals, and if necessary refer you to where you need to go to get further help, including where the best place to go is if your child needs an x-ray.”

The cold weather can cause other problems for children. Respiratory conditions such as asthma can also be triggered by cold dry air, so keep children warm and dry and make sure that they are wrapped up when they go out, with gloves, a scarf and a hat.

Dr. Trzcinski continues “Cold weather is a common trigger for asthma symptoms, so if your child suffers from asthma it is really important to make sure that they take their regular preventer inhaler as prescribed by their doctor and you know what to do if their condition gets worse.

Doctors and pharmacists are closed for some days over the Christmas period so make sure you have enough medication to last through until the New Year.”

Finally, doctors want to offer a warning for parents regarding the serious dangers that batteries can pose to children. Christmas is a time where there are often batteries in the house, ready for

toys on Christmas day, but parents are urged to always make sure that they are safely locked away out of the reach of children as they can prove fatal if swallowed.

Dr Trzcinski said, "Button batteries are very tempting to children as they're small, shiny and look like sweets. Every year though children end up in hospital because they have swallowed a battery or got them stuck in their ears or nose. Parents can underestimate the dangers, but if batteries get stuck in the windpipe or stomach it can make an electrical circuit and the battery produces caustic soda. This can not only kill but it can leave children with burns and needing multiple operations. Please make sure that battery compartments of new toys are on tightly, and any spare batteries bought for Christmas toys are kept safe and well away from children. It could save their life."

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For more information please contact:

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Notes for editors:

For more information on the dangers of batteries, please see -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5ApVIDCEjc>

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) plan and purchase acute and community hospital care along with mental health care and from 1 April 2015 all Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CCGs also co-commission local primary care (GP) services with NHS England. NHS England still plans and purchases pharmacies, dentists, opticians and specialised commissioning services.