

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 Monday 14 November

Self Care Week highlights the need to Self Care for Life

Self Care Week, the annual awareness week which aims to increase people's ability to look after their own health and wellbeing, is taking place from 14-20 November with events up and down the country to help people understand how to self care for life.

Organised by the Self Care Forum, Self Care Week provides an opportunity for healthcare professionals and health organisations to talk to patients and the public about self care and explain how they can effectively look after their own health and help prevent avoidable conditions.

As the country experiences the first real cold snap of the season, it is an ideal time to start a conversation with people about self care, by reminding them about the best ways to treat common winter conditions, such as coughs and colds, and supporting those with long term conditions to be prepared for the winter.

“People practice self care every day” says Self Care Forum co-chair and GP, Dr Pete Smith, “when we brush our teeth, choose to exercise or eat healthily, this is self care. However, self care is also understanding how to self-treat common ailments, manage long term conditions and avoid preventable illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.”

Self Care Forum co-chair Dr Selwyn Hodge agrees “we are all living longer, but we're not spending those extra years in good health. We seem to have lost the ability to understand and use health information to keep ourselves well and know what to do when we become ill. Self Care Week gives healthcare professionals an opportunity to talk to people about their wellbeing and help improve their health literacy.”

Welcoming Self Care Week, the Health Minister, David Mowat MP said “a wealth of advice is available through both NHS choices and from pharmacists to treat a wide range of minor ailments like colds and back pain.

“However the NHS is here to help and for more serious cases, we still recommend seeing your GP.”

Notes to editors:

- Self Care Week runs from 14 to 20 November and the theme is ‘Understanding Self Care for Life’.
- The Self Care Forum is an independent charity, number 1167500, which aims to further the reach of self care and embed it in everyday life.
- Information on self-treatable conditions such as the normal duration and red flag symptoms is available from <http://www.selfcareforum.org/fact-sheets/>, NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) or your local pharmacist.
- To find out what events are taking place during Self Care Week in your area visit your local Clinical Commissioning Group or local authority website for details.
- A Self Care Week TwitterChat will take place at 12.00pm GMT on Monday 14 November

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