



TAKE A BREATH



**Looking
after your
lungs**



**CHSS
Live
Better
Blog**



**Flu
Vaccination**



**Keep
Moving &
Feel Better**

Welcome to your first edition of Take a Breath, a quarterly newsletter from Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland for people living with long-term lung conditions. It is full of interesting information, exciting developments and helpful hints for people living in the Lanarkshire area. We hope that you enjoy reading it and find it useful.

It can be really helpful to hear how other people manage so please share your ideas about how you cope with your condition. Don't be shy, tell us your story or any top tips that you have. You can also let us know what kind of information you would like to see in the newsletter in the future.

Getting in touch is easy – send us an email at respiratoryservices@chss.org.uk or call us on 0131 225 6963. We look forward to hearing from you!

Meet the Local Area Co-ordinator for South Lanarkshire Respiratory Services

Hello! My name is Sharon Moncrieff and I work for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. I am the new 'Local Area Co-ordinator for South Lanarkshire Respiratory Services'.... a bit of a mouthful! What my title means is I will be working with people who have a lung condition that live in the South Lanarkshire area.

I have much experience supporting volunteers, as well as informal and family carers. I feel very excited to use these skills and experiences in my new role with CHSS.

We want to find out what services you would find most useful, such as

- **Telephone befriending.**

- **Small groups where people with similar experiences get together**
- **Regular newsletters like this**

Get in touch with Sharon to get involved. You can talk to her individually, or become part of a group to discuss what support services would help you live well with your chest condition.

If you, or someone you know has a lung condition and would benefit from a regular telephone call from one of our volunteers, please get in



touch. These new services will run alongside the services we already have in the rest of Lanarkshire.

I love my work, but like everyone else I love to relax too! My hobbies are 10 pin bowling, going to the theatre, walking and spending time with my family. So if you see me out and about give me a wave!

Please drop me a line by email sharon.moncrieff@chss.org.uk or call me on Tel: 07834 350463

Looking after your lungs over winter

With winter fast approaching Katrina Flannigan, Respiratory Nurse Specialist for Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership is reinforcing the importance of monitoring the everyday symptoms of COPD.

COPD is a long-term condition which affects everyone differently. The key to managing the condition, minimising exacerbations and living a longer healthier life is recognising and understanding the symptoms that you live with on a daily basis. You may experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Breathlessness
- Cough
- Excess mucus production

It is important that you recognise your symptoms and how they affect you day to day when you are well. Once you know what your daily symptoms are it becomes easier to recognise when you are not so well.

Katrina's advice is to recognise when two or more of these symptoms are worse for more than 24 hours as that may be the time to seek advice from your GP or nurse.

Katrina would advise everyone to become familiar with their self-management plan. If you don't have a plan, speak to your nurse about how this could help you.

Take these simple steps to manage your symptoms when they are worse, for example:

- If your sputum is thicker or stickier, drink some more fluids.
- If you feel more breathless, use your blue (reliever) inhaler a little more.
- Pace your activity.
- Practise chest clearance techniques regularly. You may need to do them more often when you are unwell.

Whilst starting antibiotic and steroid treatment quickly is important during a flare up, remember that taking too many courses when they are not needed can cause problems.



Becoming more familiar with your usual symptoms and recognising when they are worse, means you will be able to get the most out of your medication.

Don't forget your flu vaccination; it is available to you all and will help to minimise the risk of a flare up. The 2016 programme is well under way and your GP surgery will be offering the vaccination to everyone with a long-term condition. See page 3 for more information.

COLOURFUL WORDSEARCH

Can you find the following colours?

- YELLOW
- RED
- GREEN
- ORANGE
- LIME
- BLACK
- BROWN
- BLUE
- RUST
- MAGENTA
- GREY

Y	E	L	L	O	W	L	E	Y	B
B	H	I	G	R	E	E	N	G	L
R	G	H	P	A	D	R	H	R	A
U	P	R	U	N	G	R	E	Y	C
S	L	E	M	G	A	U	V	R	K
T	S	U	R	E	D	A	Y	Q	U
A	L	I	S	O	L	I	M	E	N
B	R	O	W	N	T	R	U	O	C
M	A	G	E	N	T	A	A	I	R
B	L	U	E	S	I	E	G	L	O

Extract from *The Activity Year Book: A Week by Week Guide for Use in Elderly Day and Residential Care* by Anni Bowden and Nancy Lewthwaite, published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

HOW TO REGISTER

Don't want to miss the next issue of *Take a Breath!?* You can sign up to receive an e-mail alert that will let you know that the next issue is available, and a link to take you straight there!

Visit: <https://chssi.org.uk/takeabreath-lanarkshire>

KEEP MOVING AND FEEL BETTER!

As it gets darker and colder it can feel like there is nowhere more appealing than the sofa! It can be hard to stay active over the winter. Don't give in! Staying active can boost your immune system and help you to fight off coughs and colds. It can also help fight the winter blues.

Why not try something new, there are a variety of groups and organisations that can help:

- **Chest Heart & Stroke**

Scotland (www.chss.org.uk). Visit the website to find out more, or call the Advice Line nurses for free on 0800 801 0899 during office hours 9.30 to 4.00 Monday to Friday.

- **South Lanarkshire**

Culture and Leisure (www.slleisureandculture.co.uk) provides information on local amenities and activities, including classes which are specifically designed for

people aged 50+. These include the opportunity to try a variety of different sports and activities such as aerobics, table tennis, indoor curling and indoor bowls.

- **Active Scotland** (www.activescotland.org.uk) The Easy Activity section can be particularly useful - just type in your location for a list of all the activities near you.
- **Paths for all** (www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa-home). Find local health walks in your area.
- **Living It Up** (www.livingitup.scot) is an on-line resource with lots of ideas, including support in South Lanarkshire for people with lung conditions.
- **Local libraries** often have a health section or notice board about community facilities and groups.
- **ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland)** (www.aliss.org) is another resource to find local activities.

GET YOUR FLU VACCINATION

Getting your **flu vaccination**

is a free and easy way to help keep yourself well, particularly over the winter months.



Influenza (flu) is feverish illness that tends appear in the winter. Your GP surgery offers the flu jag from October to March and you should have a flu jag once a year. Last year's vaccine might not work against this year's bug!

Don't wait until you start to feel unwell as you may not be able to get the flu jag while you are ill.

Some people worry that having the flu jag can end up giving them the flu. This is not true. The flu vaccine is called 'an inactivated injection'; this means there is no live virus in the injection.

Side effects are usually mild and only last a day or two. These include pain, swelling and redness where the jag was given. Occasionally people feel a slight fever, shivering, headache or aching muscles.

- ✓ If you have a sore or red area on your arm try applying a cold cloth.
- ✓ If you have a headache or slight fever drink plenty of fluids and take regular doses of paracetamol (but do not exceed the recommended dose).
- ✓ These symptoms usually disappear within one to two days without any treatment. However if you have increased breathlessness, swelling or a rash in the few days after vaccination contact your doctor or nurse.

When you're feeling well here are a few tips that can help you to feel your best when you go out:



- ✓ Wrap up! Remember you will lose heat from any part of your body that is not covered up. Wear a hat, scarf and gloves.
- ✓ Do a little warm up indoors before you go out, like swinging your arms, marching on the spot or using the stairs. This can stop you from feeling cold.
- ✓ When you're out stick to well-lit areas and wear bright clothing.
- ✓ Wear shoes that have good grip and stick to paths and pavements that have been gritted.
- ✓ If you know that the cold or wind makes you breathless or wheezy, check the forecast and use your inhalers before you go out.
- ✓ Contact the Chest Heart & Stroke Advice Line nurses and ask about signing up for the Air Quality & Weather Text Alert Service.

When you're feeling a bit worse or recovering from a flare up:



You may be able to do some physical activities or exercise but not as much as usual. For example go for a walk but avoid hills.

However, if you feel much worse:



Remember, do not exercise if you 'feel rotten' or have a fever as this can make you more unwell.

CHEST-A-MINUTE

I don't feel that I'm getting out and about as much as I used to. Sometimes I can feel quite lonely.

Loneliness is a normal emotion, and all of us feel it from time to time.

That's good to know but I'm starting to feel lonely a bit more often.

Have you thought about joining a group, or joining a befriending service?

I haven't heard of 'befriending before'. What is that?

It is a bit of a funny word! A 'befriender' is a person who can pop in to see you, go out on short trips or visits with you, or even just give you a buzz on the phone from time-to-time, whatever works best for you both. They are not health care workers. A 'Befriender' is recruited, trained and carefully matched with you to make sure you have similar interests.

Do you think that would help?

Yes, definitely! Feeling lonely can actually make you feel quite unwell. Going along to a group where people have similar interests as you, or joining a befriending service can really boost your physical and mental wellbeing. It can open up a range of activities, or maybe you just need someone to talk to and share a cup of tea? Either way you will get some company which can help you feel brighter and more confident!

If you'd like to know more about groups or befriending services in your area, call Alison Stewart on 01236 832 843 or email alison.stewart@chss.org.uk



A blog about health, wellness and a healthier you

Did you know that CHSS produces a fortnightly health blog? The 'Live Better Blog' was launched in February 2016 by our Health Promotion team and covers a range of topics to help reduce your risk of chest, heart and stroke illness.

Why not check out our recent post about e-cigarettes written by CHSS Cardiac and Respiratory Manager, Jill Adams and find out the truth behind vaping!

<https://www.chss.org.uk/supportus/hps/e-cigarettes-friend-or-foe>

Electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes (aka e-cigs or vapes) have been around for about 10 years in the UK and have become increasingly popular with smokers who are trying to give up the habit. However they have caused a lot of controversy as **people worry that they are dangerous to use**, they may encourage younger people to begin smoking or that they are more harmful than cigarettes. There have been several reports in the media which adds to this confusion. So what are we to do?

- Will e-cigarettes reveal their harmful effects once the damage has been done?
- Or are they a sensible alternative to smoking tobacco, reducing your risk of health harms associated with smoking?

For more of our health blogs visit:

www.chss.org.uk/livebetterblog

If you would like to subscribe to the quarterly blog e-newsletter just following this link:

<https://chssi.org.uk/livebetterblog-newsletter>

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