

Monday 30 May 2022

Stay well this Jubilee weekend by stocking the medicine cabinet and treating minor conditions at home

Health officials in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire are reminding people that most minor illnesses and injuries can be safely treated at home with the aid of a well-stocked medicine cabinet.

The advice comes ahead of the extended bank holiday weekend, with people also encouraged to stock up on essential items, such as paracetamol, indigestion tablets, antihistamines, anti-diarrhoea tablets and digital thermometers.

GP practices across the region, as well as other NHS services, will be closed on Thursday 2 and Friday 3 June for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Selected pharmacies will remain open on the bank holidays, as will urgent and emergency care services, including NHS 111.

However, new data recorded over the last two bank holiday weekends has shown that hundreds of people who contacted NHS 111 could have saved time by managing their symptoms through simple self-care methods.

Over the course of the Easter weekend, 1,417 calls to 111 ended with the callers being advised to treat their condition at home, which is more than a quarter (27 per cent) of all calls made during the four-day break.

A similar picture was also seen during the Early May bank holiday weekend, when a further 815 callers – 23 per cent of all calls made that weekend – were told that self-care would be the most appropriate treatment plan for their symptoms.

Dr Amanda Webb, Chief Medical Officer for the soon-to-be established BSW Integrated Care Board, said: "As a clinician, I can't emphasise enough how important and valuable good self-care can be, especially during a bank holiday weekend, which is always an incredibly busy time for the health and care system.

"Self-care not only allows people to manage their symptoms at home, which, for most, is a much more attractive option than sitting in a clinical waiting room, it also enables our hard-working frontline teams to focus all their attention on those people who will most benefit from it.

"So, while we clearly want everybody to enjoy a celebratory weekend, especially after the last two years, we can all play a part in reducing pressure on our already-stretched NHS teams by taking a sensible approach to the festivities and stocking up on those medicine box staples that can really make a difference."

Hospital emergency departments, along with the region's urgent treatment centres, will be open throughout the Jubilee weekend for people experiencing serious health issues, such as heavy bleeding, loss of consciousness, chest pain and broken bones.

Simon Sethi, Chief Operating Officer, Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Bank holidays are always a busy time for A&E departments but, for those needing emergency care, our teams will be ready to help.

"To help us prepare for the weekend, please check in on any family members, friends or neighbours, who might be at risk of needing health services over the bank holiday, to see if they're safe and have the medicines they need.

"People with any relatives or friends in the hospital can also support us by helping us get them home for the long weekend when they are well enough to leave.

"We know that getting people back home as soon as they are well is better for their recovery, and it also helps us to create much-needed bed capacity for those who really need hospital care."

NHS 111 will be available as usual online and over the phone throughout the bank holiday weekend, with the service ready to provide quick advice, information and, where necessary, details of where to go for further support.

Opening times for the selected pharmacies that will be staying open on Thursday 2 and Friday 3 June can be found online at www.bswccg.nhs.uk.

Elsewhere, people can access general health advice from the NHS website by visiting www.nhs.uk.

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Notes to Editors

- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group is responsible for planning and buying local healthcare services
- Many of these services are carried out at the region's three acute hospitals (the Royal United Hospital in Bath, the Great Western Hospital in Swindon and Salisbury District Hospital), but some also take place in community settings and in people's own homes
- The CCG is a clinically-led organisation, with its membership made up of representatives from the region's 92 GP practices
- Working closely with health and care providers, local authorities and the third sector, the CCG's overarching ambition is to empower people to lead their best life
- Visit www.bswccg.nhs.uk for more information