



# TAKE A BREATH



Looking  
after your  
lungs



CHSS  
Live  
Better  
Blog



Flu  
Vaccination



Keep  
Moving &  
Feel Better

## Honours in the Highlands!

**In April, Maureen Fraser from 'The Cheerful Chesters' in Inverness received a very special letter. It was marked as 'private and confidential' from the Cabinet Office so she was a little nervous! She could not believe the news inside..... she had been awarded The British Empire Medal for her services to the voluntary sector.**

Someone who knows Maureen, and all the good work she does for others thought she should be recognised for it and what's more, the UK Government Honours Committee agreed. This decision was passed on to The Prime Minister, and then on to the Queen herself, who has awarded the honour! Maureen says "I felt total disbelief that someone had thought to nominate someone like me for something like this!" Maureen was nominated by fellow 'Chester' Jo, and seconded by people from the variety of good causes she gives her time to.

The big challenge was that Maureen wasn't allowed to tell anyone as the decision was confidential until June! When it came to receiving the award, Maureen wanted her family and the Cheerful Chesters to be there: "the Chesters are such a big part of my life, they are a super group".

The award was presented by Donald Cameron of Locheil, who is the Lord Lieutenant of Inverness, Badenoch, Strathspey and Lochaber. They had a lovely ceremony in front of the Cheerful Chesters group plus family and friends. The wonderful Community Volunteers from Tesco provided a buffet lunch afterwards. The Lord Lieutenant also stayed and everyone enjoyed speaking with him. It was a great day!

Maureen clearly makes a significant difference to people's lives through all her hard work and it is fitting that she has been recognised for it.

Many congratulations Maureen!



### Congratulations also to.....

**'The Grumpy Gaspers' from Invergordon made a successful bid for money from the Voluntary Action Fund. This has enabled them to buy some equipment to keep them active along with the exercise DVD produced by Nairn's 'Lung at Heart' group!**

**Happy Birthday to Agnes Williams from The Cheerful Chesters who was 100 years young on the 15th of October! She celebrated with friends, family and members of the group.**

# 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 4 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.

## Have your say...

Do you have any new information about services in your area, an interesting story or a helpful hint to share with people affected by chronic lung disease? Then please let us know so that we can share it with others. We'd love to hear from you:

**Contact us by e-mail on [respiratoryservices@chss.org.uk](mailto:respiratoryservices@chss.org.uk), or call us on 0131 225 6963**

We look forward to hearing your news!

# 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/chest-information-and-support/how-we-can-help/support-for-you/chest-groups](http://www.chss.org.uk/chest-information-and-support/how-we-can-help/support-for-you/chest-groups)) have a number of groups in Highland that do some exercise when they meet up. Visit the web site to find a group near you, or call the Advice Line Nurses for free on 0800 801 0899 during office hours 9.30 to 4.00 Monday to Friday.
- **Highlife Highland** ([www.highlifehighland.com](http://www.highlifehighland.com)) provides information on activities run at local community and leisure centres. For example highland dancing, 50+ bowls, swimming, aqua aerobics.
- **Active Scotland** ([www.activescotland.org.uk](http://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](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa-home)) local health walks in your area.
- **Step It Up Highland** ([www.pfw.org.uk/projects/step-it-up-highland](http://www.pfw.org.uk/projects/step-it-up-highland)) free walks led by a trained walk leader. Range of walks for all levels, including those who haven't walked for a while.
- **Cairngorms Walking to Health Project** ([www.cairngormsoutdooraccess.org.uk/walking-to-health/](http://www.cairngormsoutdooraccess.org.uk/walking-to-health/)) a short local walk led by trained volunteer leaders from your own community.
- **Living It Up** ([www.livingitup.scot](http://www.livingitup.scot)) is an on-line resource with lots of ideas, including activities in Highland 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](http://www.aliss.org)) is another resource to find local activities.

**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.



## NEW! 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 – find out the truth behind vaping!

[www.chss.org.uk/supportus/hps/e-cigarettes-friend-or-foe](http://www.chss.org.uk/supportus/hps/e-cigarettes-friend-or-foe)

For more of our health blogs visit: [www.chss.org.uk/livebetterblog](http://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>

## 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 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 with? 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 our Advice Line Nurses for free on 0800 801 0899 during office hours 9.30 to 4.00 Monday to Friday.**

# 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 jab vaccine from October to March and you should have a flu jab 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 jab while you are ill.

Some people worry that having the flu jab 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 jab 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.



## 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: [www.chss.org.uk/takeabreath-highland](http://www.chss.org.uk/takeabreath-highland) for more information**