About this booklet

This booklet has been produced by the Department of Health, in association with other partners.

It aims to help you maintain good health during winter and take advantage of the financial help and benefits available.

Inside, you'll find useful tips on heating your home effectively, a large section on financial support available, steps on preparing your home for the winter and advice on staying healthy.

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Your top five tips for keeping warm and well

These top tips are some of the best ways to keep your home warm, keep on top of your bills, and keep healthy. Some may seem obvious, but they could help you stay warmer throughout winter.

You’ll find more top tips throughout this booklet.

1. Heat your home well
By setting your heating to the right temperature, (between 18–21°C or 64–70°F) you can still keep your home warm and lower your bills. If you feel cold at night, use a hot water bottle or electric blanket – but never use both together.

2. Get financial support
There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It’s worthwhile claiming all of the benefits you are entitled to.

3. Eat well
Food is a vital source of energy, which helps to keep your body warm. Try to make sure you have hot meals and drinks regularly throughout the day.

4. Get a flu jab
You can get a free flu jab from your GP if you are over 65 or if you have a long-term health condition.

5. Look after yourself and others
On cold days try to avoid going outside: however, if you do need to, remember to wrap up warm. If you have an older neighbour or relative, look out for them during winter to make sure they are safe and well.
Top tips for heating your home effectively

Some energy-saving tips may seem obvious, but they can make a big difference when it comes to reducing your fuel bills.

Top tips

- By setting your heating to the right temperature, you can keep your home warm and lower your bills. During the day set the thermostat to 21°C (70°F), and during the night set it to 18°C (64°F).
- Set your heating to come on just before you get up and switch off after you’ve gone to bed. If it’s very cold, set your heating to come on earlier and turn off later rather than turning the thermostat up.
- If you can’t heat all of the rooms you use, heat the living room throughout the day and your bedroom just before you go to bed. Remember to close curtains and shut doors to keep heat in the rooms you use most.
Heating your home safely is really important. Remember to get your heating system checked regularly, and keep your home well ventilated.

**Top tips**

- If you have open fires make sure they are properly ventilated. Use safety guards and don't hang your washing near the open flames. If you use a fire or heater in your bedroom at night, always keep a window and door open.

- Use your electric blanket as instructed and get it tested every three years. Remember never to use an electric blanket and a hot water bottle together.

- Switch your appliances (such as televisions and microwaves) off rather than leaving them on standby. This will save money and energy and help you to Act On CO₂.

For more information on energy efficiency, call 0800 316 2805 (8am–6pm Mon–Fri and 9am–5pm Sat) or visit www.warmfront.co.uk/energy-efficiency-advice.htm
Financial help to heat your home

If you're struggling financially to keep your home warm, you could get a grant to make your home more energy efficient, or repair or install a new heating system.

If you don't qualify for some benefits, you may qualify for others. And even if you've been turned down for benefits in the past, you may find that you now qualify for some means of support.

Winter Fuel Payment

This is a tax-free benefit to help pay for heating during winter. You are eligible if:

- you are aged 60 or over; and
- you normally live in Great Britain.

How much could I get?

This year you could get a Winter Fuel Payment of up to £250 for households with someone aged 60–79, or up to £400 for someone aged 80 or over. The exact amount you'll get depends on your circumstances during the qualifying week of 15–21 September 2008, such as your age, whether you live alone and whether you're getting Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
You will get the payment automatically if:

- you get a State Pension or other social security benefit (not including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit);
- you got a payment last winter and your circumstances haven't changed.

Payments are made over a number of weeks from November onwards. You should get your payment by Christmas – if you haven't, you should make a claim. All claims must be received on or before 30 March 2009.

To find out more about Winter Fuel Payments, call 08459 15 15 15 (8.30am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, textphone 0845 601 5613) or visit www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel

**Warm Front Scheme**

Warm Front provides grants to help people on disability or income-related benefits pay for heating and insulation improvements. You may be eligible if:

- you own your own home or rent it from a private landlord; and
- you get a disability or an income-related benefit (such as Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit); and

For further information on benefit eligibility, please see the enclosed application form.
How much could I get?
You may get grants for heating and insulation improvements for your home worth up to £2,700, or up to £4,000 if your home needs oil central heating. You can also get advice on energy efficiency to lower your energy bills.

How to apply
- Fill in the application form included with this booklet
- Call 0800 316 2805 (8am–6pm Mon–Fri and 9am–5pm Sat)
- Visit www.warmfront.co.uk

You could be entitled to more benefits than you are currently getting. Find out by calling the Benefit Entitlement Check team on 0800 072 9006.

Heating Rebate Scheme
If you do not qualify for a Warm Front grant because you do not receive the relevant benefit, you may be able to claim up to £300 to pay for installing or repairing a heating system under the Heating Rebate Scheme. You are eligible if:

- you are over 60;
- you own your own home or rent it from a private landlord;
- you don’t get a Warm Front grant; and
- you don’t have a central heating system or it is not working.

To find out more, call 0800 316 6012.
Cold Weather Payment

Cold Weather Payments are made during periods of very cold weather to help people pay for extra heating costs. To get a Cold Weather Payment, the average temperature where you live must be recorded as, or expected to be, 0°C or below for seven days in a row. You may be able to get Cold Weather Payments if you are getting Pension Credit; Income Support and have a pensioner or disability premium, or you have a child who is disabled or under 5 years old; or income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance and have a pensioner or disability premium, or you have a child who is disabled or under 5 years old.

To find out more about Cold Weather Payments contact Jobcentre Plus or visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Help from your energy provider

As part of achieving their carbon emission reduction targets, your energy provider has partnered with the Act On CO₂ campaign. A booklet with tips on how to save money and reduce your carbon footprint will be available this autumn.

Other sources of financial support

If you’re struggling to pay your energy bills, there are plenty of sources of help. Remember to contact your energy supplier, as they may be able to offer you a special tariff or payment plan to help you stay on top of your bills.