Winter Health

Newsletter Peel Park Surgery January

**It may be cold outside, but winter needn't be the unhealthiest time of year for you and your family.** Here are five ways to make sure that, even when your body is telling you to hibernate, you can keep healthy and fit, no matter what the weather's like.

Try these tips**: get outdoors** in natural daylight as much as possible, get a good night's sleep – go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, destress with exercise or meditation. Have a **healthy diet and** include five portions of fruit and veg a day. You are more likely to get a [cold](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/) in winter, so make sure your immune system is in tip-top condition. Milk and **dairy products** such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais . **Regular exercise** helps control your weight, boost your immune system, and is a good way to break the tension that can build if the family is constantly cooped up inside the house. Winter is the perfect season for **porridge.** Eating a warm bowlful on a cold morning isn't just a delicious way to start your day, it also helps boost your intake of starchy foods.

Eye Health

It's easy to neglect your eyes because they often don't hurt when there's a problem. Opticians recommend that most people have an eye test at least every 2 years. People over 40 and people from black or minority ethnic groups may need sight tests more often.

People from Afro-Caribbean communities are at greater risk of developing [glaucoma](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/glaucoma/) and [diabetes](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-2-diabetes/), and people from south-Asian communities are also at a greater risk of developing diabetes – [diabetic retinopathy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetic-retinopathy/), where the retina becomes damaged, is a common complication of diabetes, [someone with a learning disability](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/), from a family with a history of eye disease.

Getting out in the sun is important for your general health, but you have to be sure to protect yourself.

Never look at the sun directly, even when something exciting such as an eclipse is happening. Doing so can cause irreversible damage to your eyesight and even lead to blindness. Several studies also suggest sunlight exposure is a risk factor for cataracts.