



Keep warm

Keep healthy

Helping you keep your
baby warm at home





Your keep warm pack

With expensive fuel costs and colder weather, it can be difficult to keep our homes warm enough. For many, including children and babies, living in a cold home can lead to illness and for others it can worsen existing health conditions. This keep warm pack has been supplied to help you to keep your baby warm at home during cold weather and some of the items can also be used for extra insulation when going outdoors.

Keeping an eye on room temperature is important and the temperature card provided in this pack will help you to do this. Your main living room should be around 18–21°C with the rest of the house at least 16°C. If your home falls below these temperatures or if you are struggling to keep your home warm, please see the next section to find out about support that may be available to help you and your family stay warmer in your home.



Support to make winter more affordable

Energy efficiency

Improving the energy efficiency of your home is one of the simplest ways of saving energy and combating rising energy prices. Getting such measures installed may not cost as much as you think. Finding out what grants and discounts are available is easy. NI Energy Advice offers free independent and impartial energy advice to domestic householders in Northern Ireland - including advice about energy grants and other sources of help.

NI Energy Advice

Freephone: 0800 111 4455

Email: nienergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk

Website: www.nihe.gov.uk/housing-help/ni-energy-advice

Income/benefit entitlements

Whether working or not, ensure you are getting all the money and support you are entitled to. Make the call and speak to a local benefit adviser on Tel: 0800 232 1271, or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/makethecall, or get advice from the independent advice sector such as your local Community Advice or Advice NI office.

Budgeting for fuel

Oil Stamp Saving Schemes are coordinated by a number of local councils across Northern Ireland. If available in your area, the scheme lets you buy £5 stamps to save towards part or full payment of your next oil delivery. They are available to purchase in many retail outlets and Post Offices and are accepted by most oil suppliers. Contact your local council for further information.

Oil Buying Clubs operate in a number of neighbourhoods across Northern Ireland so consider joining a club near you. Club members benefit from the lower prices negotiated from community bulk buying. To find out if there's a club near you, contact NI Energy Advice (see above).





Tips to help keep your baby warm at home

If you have a baby (1 year old or younger) talk to your midwife, health visitor or family nurse about keeping your baby warm at a safe temperature. Overheating can increase the risk of sudden infant death, see the **Birth to Five** book for more information or visit:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids

- The items in this pack can be used to help keep your baby warmer at home. Several thin layers of clothes trap body heat better than one thick layer. Clothes made from wool, cotton or fleecy materials are warmest.
- Getting ready to go outside in the cold takes time to do properly, especially if you have a baby. Leave enough time to put a coat, hat and gloves on your baby before you leave the house. A hat is especially good for keeping warm outdoors (and always remove wet clothing when returning indoors).
- Check your baby is not cold in bed: feel their tummy and feet, put on socks if needed and make sure any bedroom windows are closed to keep the room at the correct temperature.
- Do not put furniture in front of radiators and close curtains at night to retain the heat generated inside your home.
- Try to minimise condensation in your home, for example: keep lids on pots and, if available, use extraction fans when cooking (if not available, briefly open a window to let any steam escape); try not to dry clothes on radiators; and if you use a vented tumble dryer make sure it is vented outside.



Tips during winter weather

In the event of **extreme weather**, try to plan ahead in case you are unable to leave your home for a time. Ensure you have enough food, fuel and any prescription medication you or your family may need (ask your pharmacy if they offer a home delivery service for your repeat prescriptions as this can be especially helpful in cold weather).

Protect yourself and your family from flu. Babies under the age of two are not generally offered the flu vaccine, but you can help protect them by making sure that anyone else in the household who is eligible gets the flu jab. If your baby falls into one of the at risk groups, your GP will advise you about flu vaccination. For more information, see www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/flu-vaccine-adults

If you or your baby rely on an electricity or a water supply for healthcare, ask to be included on your utility provider's **Critical Care Register**. For example, if you rely on electrically powered medical equipment this could be vital during power outages to ensure your household reconnection is prioritised.





If you have a gas or oil fired central heating boiler have it serviced annually by a qualified engineer, to ensure it is working safely and efficiently. For more information visit: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/domestic-oil-installation-and-boiler-servicing or www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/domestic-gas-installation-and-health-and-safety

To help prevent chimney fires you should have the chimney and liners cleaned frequently by a suitably trained person (at least once a year for smokeless fuels, at least twice a year for bituminous coal, quarterly for wood burning stoves when in use, once per year for oil and once per year for gas).

This will eliminate the build-up of soot, clear blockages, prevent fumes from entering the room and highlight any remedial work that is required.

Take the following precautions with open fires and stoves:

- Do not overfill an open fire grate and always use a spark guard, or consider using a safety guard if you have young children or pets.
- Do not place a mirror or furniture too close to the fire.
- Make sure the fire is out before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Never interrupt the air supply by blocking air vents or air bricks.
- Have a working smoke alarm on every floor and test it every week.





Public Health Agency

Public Health Agency

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www.publichealth.hscni.net

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