

December Awareness

December 1st World AIDS Day

What is World AIDS Day?

World AIDS Day takes place on the 1st December each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

Why is World AIDS Day important?

Over 101,000 people are living with HIV in the UK. Globally, there are an estimated 36.7 million people who have the virus. Despite the virus only being identified in 1984, more than 35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

Today, scientific advances have been made in HIV treatment, there are laws to protect people living with HIV and we understand so much more about the condition. Despite this, each year in the UK around 5,000 people are diagnosed with HIV, people do not know the facts about how to protect themselves and others, and stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with the condition.

World AIDS Day is important because it reminds the public and government that HIV has not gone away – there is still a vital need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education.

What should I do on World AIDS Day?

World AIDS Day is an opportunity to show solidarity with the millions of people living with HIV worldwide. Most people do this by wearing an HIV awareness red ribbon on the day.

Handwashing Awareness – (see attached)

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/why-handwashing.html>

Why Wash Your Hands?

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water.

How germs get onto hands and make people sick

Feces (poop) from people or animals is an important source of germs like [Salmonella](#), [E. coli O157](#), and [norovirus](#) that cause diarrhea, and it can spread some respiratory infections like [adenovirus](#) and [hand-foot-mouth disease](#). These kinds of germs can get onto hands after people use the toilet or change a diaper, but also in less obvious ways, like after handling raw meats that have invisible amounts of animal poop on them. A single gram of human feces—which is about the weight of a paper clip—can contain one trillion germs ¹. Germs can also get onto hands if people touch any object that has germs on it because someone coughed or sneezed on it or was touched by some other contaminated object. When these germs get onto hands and are not washed off, they can be passed from person to person and make people sick.

Washing hands prevents illnesses and spread of infections to others

Handwashing with soap removes germs from hands. This helps prevent infections because:

- People frequently touch their eyes, nose, and mouth without even realizing it. Germs can get into the body through the eyes, nose and mouth and make us sick.
- Germs from unwashed hands can get into foods and drinks while people prepare or consume them. Germs can multiply in some types of foods or drinks, under certain conditions, and make people sick.
- Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to other objects, like handrails, table tops, or toys, and then transferred to another person's hands.
- Removing germs through handwashing therefore helps prevent diarrhea and respiratory infections and may even help prevent skin and eye infections.

Teaching people about handwashing helps them and their communities stay healthy. Handwashing education in the community:

- Reduces the number of people who get sick with diarrhea by 23-40%
- Reduces diarrheal illness in people with weakened immune systems by 58%
- Reduces respiratory illnesses, like colds, in the general population by 16-21%
- Reduces absenteeism due to gastrointestinal illness in schoolchildren by 29-57%

Not washing hands harms children around the world

About 1.8 million children under the age of 5 die each year from diarrheal diseases and pneumonia, the top two killers of young children around the world.

- Handwashing with soap could protect about 1 out of every 3 young children who get sick with diarrhea and almost 1 out of 5 young children with respiratory infections like pneumonia .
- Although people around the world clean their hands with water, very few use soap to wash their hands. Washing hands with soap removes germs much more effectively.
- Handwashing education and access to soap in schools can help improve attendance.
- Good handwashing early in life may help improve child development in some settings.
- Estimated global rates of handwashing after using the toilet are only 19%.

Handwashing helps battle the rise in antibiotic resistance

Preventing sickness reduces the amount of antibiotics people use and the likelihood that [antibiotic resistance](#) will develop. Handwashing can prevent about 30% of diarrhea-related sicknesses and about 20% of respiratory infections (e.g., colds). Antibiotics often are prescribed unnecessarily for these health issues. Reducing the number of these infections by washing hands frequently helps prevent the overuse of antibiotics—the single most important factor leading to antibiotic resistance around the world. Handwashing can also prevent people from getting sick with germs that are already resistant to antibiotics and that can be difficult to treat.

Enjoy a Safe Holiday Season

<https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/winter/holiday>

[Holiday safety](#) is an issue that burns brightest from late November to mid-January, when families gather, parties are scheduled and travel spikes. Take some basic precautions to ensure your family remains safe and injury-free throughout the season.



Traveling for the Holidays? Be Prepared

Many people choose to travel during the holidays by automobile, with the [highest fatality rate](#) of any major form of transportation. In 2015, 355 people died on New Year's Day, 386 on Thanksgiving Day and 273 on Christmas Day, according to *Injury Facts 2017*. Alcohol-impaired fatalities represent about one-third of the totals.

- Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; alcohol, over-the-counter or illegal drugs all [cause impairment](#)

- Make sure [every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up](#) no matter how long or short the distance traveled
- [Put that cell phone away](#); many distractions can occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit
- Properly maintain the vehicle and keep an [emergency kit with you](#)
- Be prepared for heavy traffic, and [possibly heavy snow](#)

Even Angel Hair Can Hurt

Decorating is one of the best ways to get in a holiday mood, but emergency rooms see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season.

- "Angel hair," made from spun glass, can irritate your eyes and skin; always wear gloves or substitute non-flammable cotton
- Spraying artificial snow can irritate your lungs if inhaled; follow directions carefully
- Decorate the tree with your kids in mind; move ornaments that are breakable or have metal hooks toward the top
- Always use the [proper step ladder](#); don't stand on chairs or other furniture
- Lights are among the best parts of holiday decorating; make sure there are no exposed or frayed wires, loose connections or broken sockets, and don't overload your electrical circuits
- Plants can spruce up your holiday decorating, but keep those that may be poisonous (including some Poinsettias) out of reach of children or pets; the national [Poison Control Center](#) can be reached at (800) 222-1222
- Make sure paths are clear so no one trips on wrapping paper, decorations, toys, etc.; NSC provides tips for older adults on [slip, trip and fall protection](#)

It's Better to Give Safely



We've all heard it's important when choosing toys for infants or small children to avoid [small parts](#) that might prove to be a choking hazard. Here are some additional gift-related safety tips:

- Select gifts for older adults that are not heavy or awkward to handle
- Be aware of [dangers associated with coin lithium batteries](#); of particular concern is the ingestion of button batteries
- For answers to more of your holiday toy safety questions, check out [this Consumer Product Safety Commission blog](#)
- See which [toys have been recalled](#)

Watch Out for Those Fire Starters

Candles and Fireplaces - Thousands of deaths are caused by fires, burns and other fire-related injuries every year, and [12% of home candle fires occur in December](#), the National Fire Protection Association reports. Increased use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in the amount of combustible, seasonal decorations present in many homes means more risk for fire.

- Never leave burning candles unattended or sleep in a room with a lit candle
- Keep candles out of reach of children
- Make sure candles are on stable surfaces
- Don't burn candles near trees, curtains or any other flammable items
- Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace
- [Check and clean the chimney](#) and fireplace area at least once a year

Turkey Fryers - While many subscribe to the theory any fried food is good – even if it's not necessarily good for you – there is reason to be on alert if you're thinking of celebrating the holidays by frying a turkey.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports there have been 168 turkey-fryer related fires, burns, explosions or carbon monoxide poisoning incidents since 2002. CPSC says [672 people have been injured and \\$8 million in property damage losses](#) have resulted from these incidents.

NSC discourages the use of turkey fryers at home and urges those who prefer fried turkey to seek out professional establishments or consider a new oil-less turkey fryer.

Don't Give the Gift of Food Poisoning

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides some [holiday food safety tips](#). Here are a few:

- Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature
- Refrigerate food within two hours
- Thanksgiving leftovers are safe for four days in the refrigerator
- Bring sauces, soups and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating
- When storing turkey, cut the leftovers in small pieces so they will chill quickly
- Wash your hands frequently when handling food

