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## Parent carer participation health newsletter

Hello

With colder days upon us and covid still circulating, our thoughts naturally turn to keeping our families well this winter, especially younger children and babies.

That's why Contact have set up a [babies and toddlers group](#) for parents wanting advice and information on keeping well this winter. Please do join or share with families, local special needs toddler groups, nurseries or premature baby groups you might know about locally.

Wheeze and cough in small children are always a worry but the worry is all the greater if your child has long term health problems. Parent carers need help to keep well too. When we get sick, we carry the extra burden of worry about who will care for our disabled child. This month's health update includes information on RSV, the most common cause of breathing problems in children; Covid vaccine doses plus a timely reminder about flu jabs and more.

It's going to be a tough winter, but Contact is here for you whether you need [advice on your child's education, family finances](#), or need [emotional support and a listening ear](#). And don't forget to check out [our family workshops and events](#).

### Star in a video and help other parents keep young children well in winter

Fancy featuring in a video, sharing tips on how to keep 'at risk' young children well during winter? We are looking for parents of children with an underlying medical

condition willing to share their experiences of caring for a very young child when winter viruses circulate.

Contact is producing a podcast and a video featuring parents to help other parents [recognise the signs and symptoms of RSV, the most common viruses that cause breathing difficulties in very young children](#)

Doctors are already seeing a big increase in cases of RSV in children with the virus this winter. RSV is a highly infectious virus. While most cases are mild, it can lead to more serious breathing problems in some including children born prematurely.

If you are interested in being part of the video or podcast, email me back. We can offer a fee for your participation.

### **Confused over Covid vaccines for children? You're not alone**

Contact is getting inquiries from parents of children with underlying health needs refused a second dose of the COVID vaccine. It seems even some health professionals are misinterpreting the guidelines.

The NHS guidance is clear: while healthy 12- to 17-year-olds will get only one vaccine dose (at least for now) all clinically vulnerable 12- to 17-year-old should be offered two. Visit the Contact website to find out [how many doses of the COVID vaccine your child should get](#) and what to do if they are turned down for their second vaccine dose.

Some children who are immunosuppressed may not mount a full immune response to two vaccine doses and [are therefore eligible for a third shot](#), ideally at least 8 weeks after the second jab.

### **Don't miss out on your flu vaccine – it's free for carers**

Carers, including parent carers, are eligible for the free flu vaccine if you get [Carer's Allowance](#) or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk. You can get a free jab if you live with someone [who's at high risk from coronavirus](#).

If you struggle to get registered on the GP carers register, our advice is to politely persist with your GP, [reminding them of the NHS eligibility guidance](#). You can also approach your local pharmacy who can also provide free flu vaccinations to carers and adults with learning disabilities.

If you are not eligible for a free flu jab, your pharmacist if you can pay for the jab.  
Read more about who is eligible on [our Flu Vaccine FAQs page](#).

### **Working to ensure children are still a priority once CCGs are abolished**

From April 2022, NHS clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) the NHS body responsible for health in your area, will cease to exist.

CCGs will be replaced by Integrated Care Systems (ICS) covering a much larger area. The new ICS will get its powers from the [Health and Care Bill](#) currently making its way through the House of Commons committees.

Many children's charities, Contact included, fear the new bodies will be overly focussed on adult health and care services.

That is why Contact, and the NNPCF, are part of the Health Influencing Policy Group (HPIG) working with MPs to ensure the bill and the bodies it creates prioritise children in their planning.

Please do get in touch if you have a question or would like my help with anything.

Best wishes

Amanda Eliot

Health Lead at Contact

PS. [Sign up here](#) to our new babies and toddlers group or share with your networks so we can get advice out far and wide about keeping well this winter.

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**Our mailing address is:**

Contact  
209-211 City Road  
London, England  
United Kingdom