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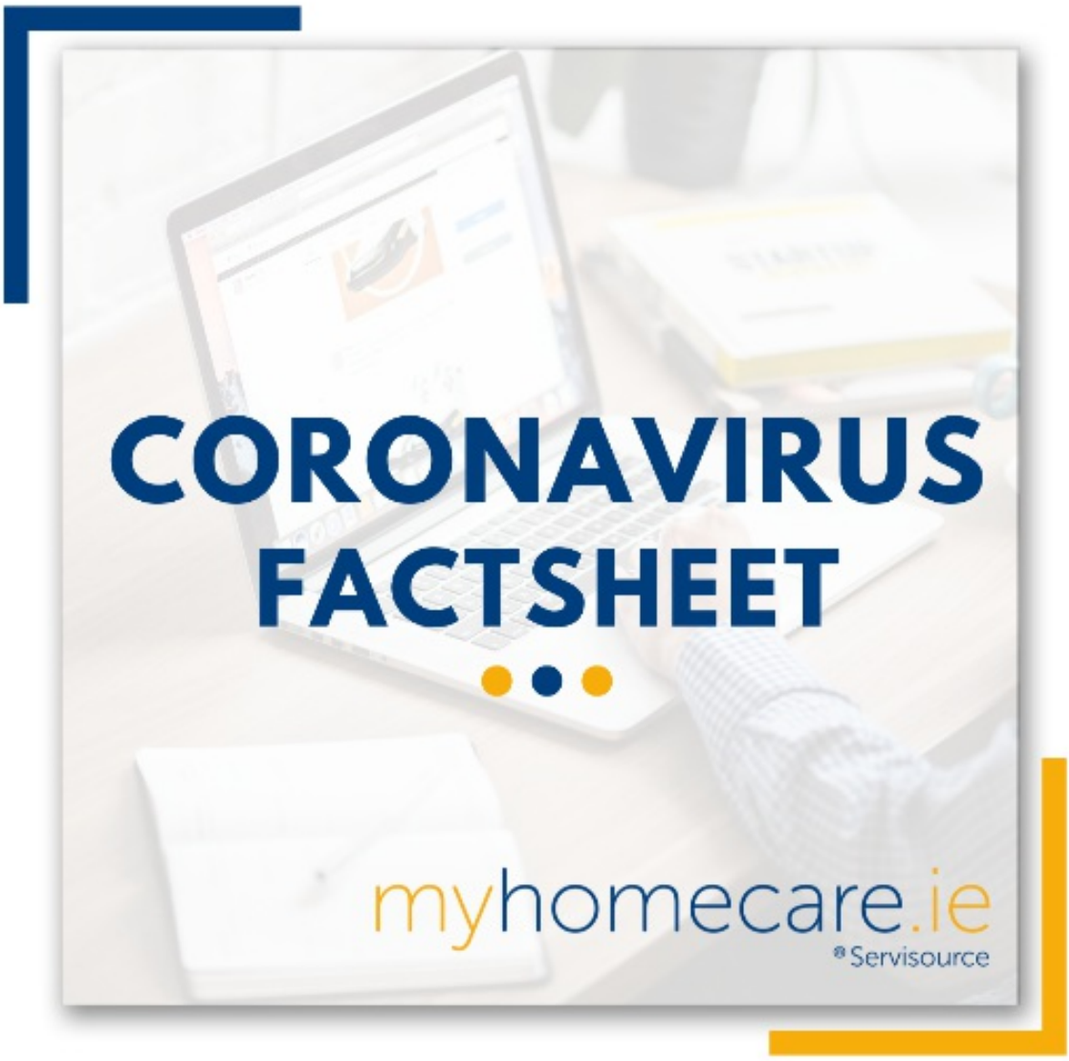
Quarterly Newsletter

Autumn



COVID-19 FACTSHEET

Find out all the information you need regarding Coronavirus.

Coronavirus Factsheet

PSORIASIS AWARENESS

August is Psoriasis Awareness month and is used as an opportunity to educate and inform people on a range of topics varying from treatment, causes, triggers and management of the inflammatory and often irritating disease.

The cause of psoriasis is still unknown, but specialists do know that it is largely affected by the immune system and genetics.

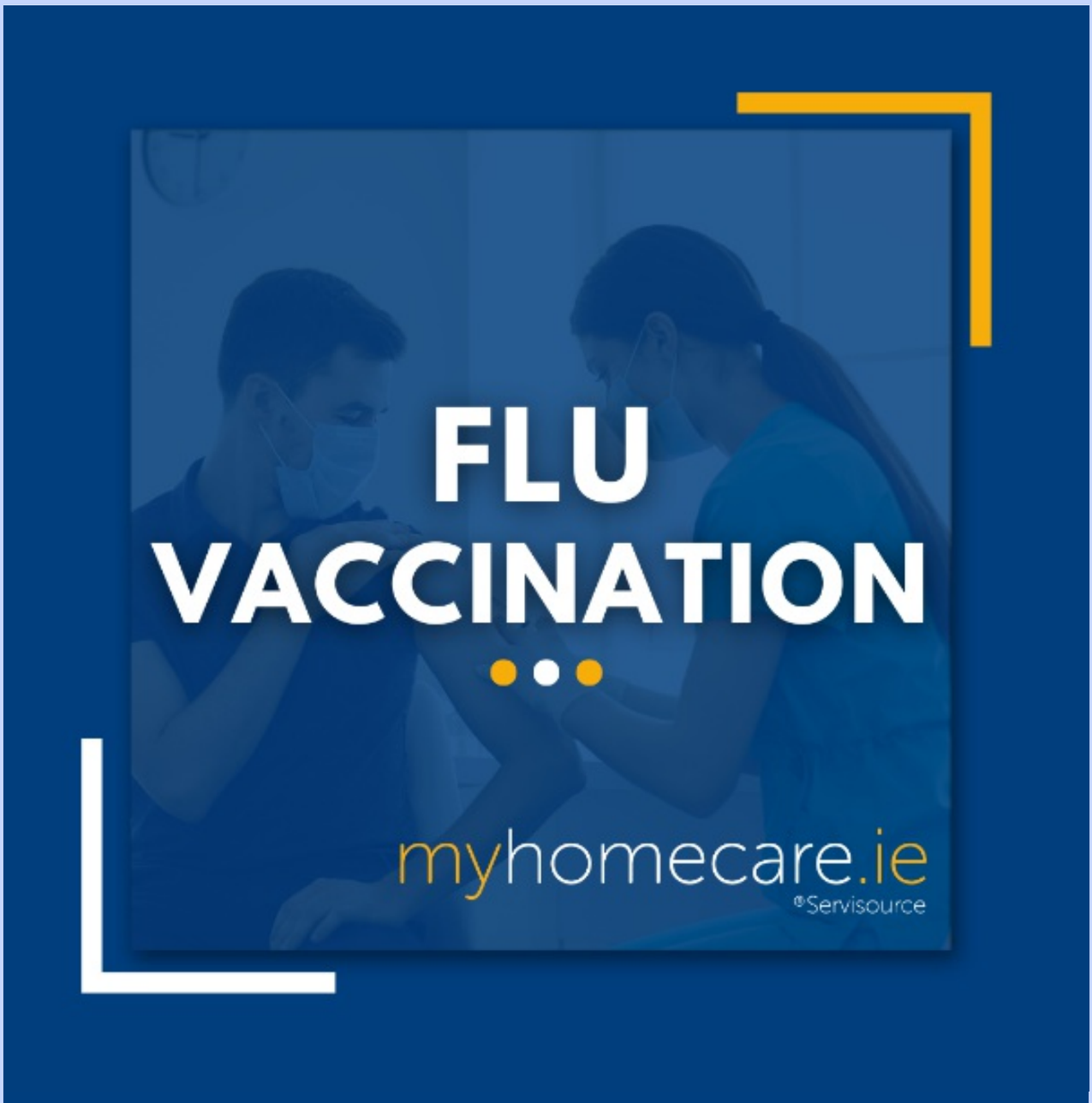
Affecting men and women, all races and all ages, the disease can display on a variety of body parts at any given time therefore it is important to understand what you can do about it as and when you are affected by it. Learning to successfully manage treatment can take a long period of time but there are many ways in which the disease can be controlled and treated.

Whether you chose to do this via medication, holistic, complementary and alternative approaches, dietary control or lifestyle choices is down to each individual but there is a huge amount of support and information available enabling you to find the best solution.

An often irritating and sometimes challenging disease, we hope you can find support to manage the symptoms successfully. The National Psoriasis Foundation website has lots of useful information to guide you.

Also please see below some other helpful links.

https://irishskin.ie/psoriasis/
https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/psoriasis/treatment/



FLU VACCINATION

INTRODUCTION

| Flu (also known as influenza) is a viral illness that affects your lungs and upper airways. It is highly infectious and can lead to serious complications for some people. However, an annual flu vaccine can help to protect you.
This information applies to the 2022/2023 flu vaccination programme. You can read more about this programme on the HSE Website.

CAN I GET THE FLU VACCINE?

You can get a free flu vaccine if you are:

- Aged from 2 to 17.
- Aged 65 and over.
- A healthcare worker.
- Pregnant.
- Living in a nursing home or other long-term care facility.
- In regular contact with pigs, poultry or waterfowl.
- Living with one of these medical conditions.
- A household contact or carer for somebody with one of the above medical conditions.

The vaccine for children is given by nasal spray rather than injection.
If you are eligible for a free flu vaccine, you will need to provide your PPS number at your flu vaccine appointment.
You can get your COVID-19 booster and flu vaccine at the same time.

WHAT IS FLU?

There are different types (or ‘strains’) of flu virus that go around each year. You should get a new flu vaccine every flu season to make sure you are protected. The flu season runs from October until April every year.
If you are infected with flu, you can spread it to other people by coughing or sneezing. You can also spread flu by touching surfaces without washing your hands.
You can infect other people from 1-2 days before your symptoms develop, and up to 5 days after your symptoms develop. Read the differences between the symptoms of flu and COVID-19.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Flu can affect you at any age, but some people are more at risk and are strongly advised to get the flu vaccine.
The flu vaccine is free for people that are more at risk (listed above).

HOW TO GET THE FLU VACCINE?

You can usually get your annual flu vaccine from your:
• GP (family doctor)
• Local pharmacist (subject to availability)
• Occupational health department
If you do not have a GP, you can find a GP in your area.

WHEN TO GET THE FLU VACCINE?

The flu vaccine is usually available from early October until late April every year.
It will protect you against the most common strains of flu going around each winter. As strains of flu change every year, you should get a new flu vaccine every flu season.
When you get the flu vaccine, your immune system will start to produce antibodies. Then, if you come into contact with the flu virus, these antibodies will fight it and stop you from getting sick.
The flu vaccine does not contain live viruses – this means it cannot give you flu.

FLU VACCINE DURING PREGNANCY?

If you are pregnant, you should get the flu vaccine as soon as possible. This is because pregnant people are more at risk of complications from flu.
If you are pregnant through two flu seasons (for example, your pregnancy goes from the end of one flu season to the beginning of another), you may need to get two flu vaccines (one in each flu season). Read more about the flu vaccine during pregnancy.
You may be able to get the flu vaccine on the same day as the whooping cough vaccine.

COST OF THE FLU VACCINE?

If you are in one of the at-risk groups, you can get your flu vaccine for free. The free flu vaccine includes people aged 65 and over for the 2022/2023 flu season.
If you do not fall into one of the at-risk groups, check the cost with your GP or pharmacist.

KEEPING ACTIVE THIS AUTUMN

𝍐𝍐𝍐𝍐♀ | Autumn is a time that can lead to activity slowdown, sometimes even apathy, also among older people. The increasingly colder and shorter days together with less sunshine are all factors that lead many older people to limit their walks and outings beyond the minimum necessary. The late autumn landscape and the weather around All Souls' Day can also create a reflective and melancholic mood, reminding us of the passing of time. The autumn of recent years has been particularly unkind in this respect.

Last year was marked by another wave of pandemics, which took a deadly toll and was full of anxiety, and this year? Also immersed in a multitude of pandemic losses, threats and limitations, at the same time bearing the fruits of the fatigue of already more than 1.5 years of living in the covid shadow. For the elderly and their activities, these consequences can be particularly acute. From the beginning, seniors have been a group particularly at risk of a severe course of the disease, or even death as a result of infection, which has led many of them to temporarily suspend all activity, and sometimes even complete home isolation. Also, especially in the first phases of the pandemic, many initiatives and institutions such as senior citizens' clubs and universities of the third age temporarily suspended their activities. Many older people who ceased their activities at that time may now find it psychologically difficult to return to them after a longer break. The loss of rhythm of life and vitality in old age can be difficult to reverse. And even today, free activity is not possible due to the still raging pandemic. Still not all senior citizens are vaccinated, and even those who are, are not 100% protected. It is hardly surprising that some of them choose limited or no participation. Some have also lost loved ones, either through coronavirus or other illnesses, and the loss of a loved one can be a situation that throws off the psychophysical balance and can be a reason for withdrawal.

There are also seniors who have been through Covid-19 themselves in the preceding months, and even if in their case, the course of the disease was not very severe, the experience has severely fractured them psychologically and they still feel the anxiety associated with it to this day (I personally know Covid recovering seniors with just such an experience). Special attention should be paid to older people living alone. For them, any illness – and this is happens all the time during the flu season in autumn – becomes a source of mundane difficulties, with supplies, walking the animals etc. For some people, such threats are a reason to give up or limit their activities. Both outdoors and at home, for example, when hosting other people.

It is also worth mentioning that the activity of seniors in Poland has been statistically limited for a long time. It is not only a matter of slowing down in the autumn period or dramatic circumstances of a pandemic. Research conducted by the Central Statistical Office indicates that the percentage of people aged 60+ participating in various forms of physical activity is modest (3/4 people at this age do not practise sport at all). The only relatively popular physical activity – although it concerns only 50% of people at this age – is walking. Other forms of social or cultural activity are also disturbingly rare in the experience of older Poles. In this sense, we are dealing with a more permanent and universal problem, and seasonal circumstances exacerbate it.

ACTIVITY POSSIBLY NOT ONLY OUTDOORS

Although outdoor and moderate physical activity is highly recommended, we should not stop there when thinking about promoting autumn activity for seniors. There are many valuable and also attractive activities at home – perfect for autumn days and evenings. For example, a variety of card games, board games and other entertaining exercises, which also have a health-promoting dimension by training the memory and cognitive skills, and, if these are not played alone, a social dimension which is sorely lacking at this time. Some of these activities can also be done partly remotely, although in some cases the digital exclusion of a large proportion of older people can get in the way. However, this might be a good time to fight against this exclusion. Even if an elderly person does not have appropriate equipment at home, you can bring your own equipment, if you have it in the form of laptop and smartphone, and use these mobile devices to familiarise the elderly with the possibilities offered by virtual reality. Who knows, perhaps after some time the older person will "catch the digital bug" and it will also become an area of activity for him or her. In order to maintain and stimulate the activity of elderly people, it is worth using the opportunities offered by telephone contact. These opportunities are all the greater if we purchase phones adapted to the needs of older users and/or introduce functional applications that can also help organise regular activity and ensure safety.

It is good to ensure that our thinking on activating older people is, as far as possible, profiled in such a way that it does not depend only on our presence and support, but also opens up to other, broader contacts or suggests possibilities for independent activities. It is therefore worthwhile, for example, to look for information on events and initiatives in the local area, in which the older person might be interested, to tell him about them and to encourage him to take part, and sometimes to accompany his first steps into a new social environment.

SENIORS FROM OUTSIDE THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

We are thus moving from the individual to the social. It is important for us – as a younger generation – to recognise needs of not only seniors or people in our circle of relatives, but also those who are lonely and have no relatives or do not keep in touch with them. There are various tried-and-tested channels for reaching and supporting such people. We could mention, for example, the Little Brothers of the Poor Association, which has been operating for many years and implementing the 'Presence' programme, in which the activities of older people in various forms are forged as part of the bond between them and volunteers. There are also many other initiatives that flourished with the onset of the pandemic, some of which are still in existence. Some of these are of a typically supportive nature, e.g. in terms of provision for older people, but there are also those in which, through interaction with older people, it is easier for them to find the strength to be active to the extent of their abilities or needs.

CAN THIS BE REMEDIED?

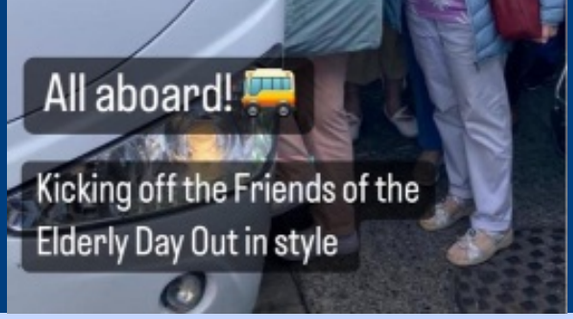
On a personal level, talking about seniors in our family or neighbourhood – people with whom we have or have had at least somewhat close relations, we can try to refresh these relations or undertake initiatives to motivate older people to become active. When talking about activity, however, one should not limit oneself to organised, group-based forms of social activity or to strictly sporting activities. Sometimes it is worth starting with something simpler, especially when addressing a person who has remained isolated or passive for a long time. You can start with a friendly conversation. If we know such a person in terms of his or her interests or preferences, it is worth referring to this in order to revive them psychologically a little, to give them energy. Sometimes it is a good idea to offer to visit, which may motivate the person, e.g. to tidy up the space around them or prepare a small snack. Some people living alone and falling into apathy sometimes stop even such quite basic household activities, and the prospect of a visit can be an impulse to undertake these seemingly simple activities. However, it is necessary to approach such proposals with maximum sensitivity, so that the person does not feel uncomfortable – does not have a sense of being intruded upon, etc. Given that many older people live in low-income households, when visiting them it is also worthwhile, if possible, not to come completely empty-handed.

Sometimes in old age we also have to deal with depression – not always realised, let alone formally diagnosed – and then simple gestures may not be enough, but more professional help is needed. Reaching out to people who have become inactive can be a first step to spot such problems, to encourage them to ask for support or to help them get it. Some people in old age may prefer to meet not at home, but outdoors, which is especially desirable from the point of view of activity and health. For this reason, it may be useful to offer, for example, a walk in the neighbourhood or to go to a place where the person would feel comfortable (such as a café, cinema, etc.). Some people may have difficulty getting around and may not always be prepared to ask for help. If you have a car, it might be a good idea to suggest a short trip to the countryside or somewhere attractive, which could also be good for the health of seniors who have been stuck in their own flats for months.

???? FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY

We were delighted to support Friends of the Elderly Day Out to Belfast on Thursday 25th of August.

We had so much fun at the Friends of the Elderly Day Out. The stories and jokes told were brilliant.



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Some absolute legends here. Hard-working, caring, passionate about their work and most of all loved by the people they care for. Super work guys!

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Mary McCarthy
South

Marianna Javorzski DNE	***Amanda Soares*** Dublin	***Nicoleta Purcarea*** West

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