

Harrogate NHS urges revellers to know their limits on Black Eye Friday and over Christmas

The NHS in Harrogate District is urging local people not to go overboard over the Christmas and New Year period and put unnecessary strain on local health services.

The message from Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group and Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust is for people to remember the potential consequences about drinking to excess, and to look after one another.

Every year some people go too far, and end up in the Emergency Department at hospital, putting unnecessary pressure on services. Alcohol is one of the leading causes of accidents and this problem grows during the festive season when drinking often plays a big part in celebrations with family and friends. More people get together socially and excessive alcohol consumption can lead to unwanted or unplanned consequences.

Dr Matt Shepherd, Lead Consultant for the Emergency Department at Harrogate District Hospital, said: “The Emergency Department is for genuine emergencies only. Avoidable attendances at the Emergency Department mean longer waits for those patients who really do need care, as well as extra pressure on our staff throughout the Trust.

“We absolutely don’t want to stop people celebrating and having fun – we’ll be doing exactly that over the coming weeks ourselves – but we are asking people to look after themselves. Drink plenty of water or soft drinks and be aware of your limits. Please don’t end your evening out with a trip to see us!

“Looking after yourself and knowing the most appropriate places to access healthcare is really important all year round. In recent weeks we’ve been busier as winter starts to bite and those people who don’t require accident or emergency services should consider other options first, such as calling NHS 111 or visiting their pharmacist.”

Healthcare options for local people include:

Self-care: minor symptoms (headaches, sore throats, stomach upsets, etc) can be treated with off-the-shelf medicines available from your local pharmacy, convenience store or supermarket.

Pharmacy: expert advice and treatment for minor symptoms and conditions. Some are open late and on weekends, no appointment necessary. Find pharmacies at www.nhs.uk.

NHS 111: Not sure which service you need? NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. Call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Pharmacy: expert advice and treatment for minor symptoms and conditions. Some are open late and on weekends, no appointment necessary. Find pharmacies at www.nhs.uk.

GP practice: For more significant illnesses and long term conditions, make an appointment with your GP. A new service is available for routine GP appointments at weekends and evenings. The service is based at two GP Practices, one in Harrogate and one in Knaresborough and is available for pre booked appointments. Appointments are available up to 8pm weekdays and 8.30am-12.30pm on Saturdays. There is also an 8.30am-12.30pm service on Sundays at the Harrogate practice. To book an appointment contact your normal GP practice.

When your GP is closed, called NHS 111 to access urgent GP services.

Minor Injuries: Your GP might be able to treat minor injuries; call the practice to check. There is a Minor Injury Unit at Ripon Community Hospital, Firby Lane, Ripon, HG4 2PR. It's open seven days a week, 8am-6pm.

Emergency Department or 999: For serious injuries and emergencies only. There is an Emergency Department at Harrogate District Hospital, Lancaster Park Road, Harrogate, HG2 7SX.