Prevent winter illness

The elderly and disabled are at a higher risk of *complications* from winter illness, such as:

- dehydration
- poor nutrition
- pressure injuries
  https://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/skin_injuries_caused_by_pressure.pdf
- deep vein thrombosis
- chest infections

When we're caring for people it is important to look after ourselves and those we are caring for. Here are some tips on preventing winter illnesses:

1. Get a flu vaccination.

2. Keep hygiene up by:
   - regular hand washing with soap for 20 seconds
     https://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/handwashing.pdf
   - cough and sneeze into a tissue then throw out *or* into your elbow.
   - wash cups & cutlery well, and surfaces regularly, especially phones and keyboards

3. Exercise – 30- 60 minutes at least three times a week. For guidelines on when to and when not to exercise.
   https://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/to__exercise_or_not_to_exercise_.pdf

4. Eat a healthy diet – have three meals a day that includes dairy, fruit, vegetables, protein, and cereals

5. Drink plenty of fluids – eight cups plus a day.

6. Get fresh air though your house regularly - open curtains during daylight hours and windows for a short period during the day.

7. Keep your house dry and warm - heat your home to at least 18 °C. Avoid using gas heaters and drying your washing inside.

8. Ensure your vitamin D levels are good - get outside in the sun for up to 15 minutes a day, eat vitamin rich foods or discuss supplements with your Doctor.

9. Get 8-10 hours regular sleep - the body does most of its healing and maintenance while we sleep.
   https://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/having_trouble_sleeping_as_you_age.pdf

10. Keep up your social life. Spending time with family and friends is good for your health.

11. If you do get sick - **stay at home** and seek medical attention if required.

If anyone gets sick

While there's not much you can do to reverse a cold or flu there is evidence you can shorten the duration and severity by:

- resting – it is often hard to know whether you should exercise or not. Here is some good advice. http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/to_exercise_or_not.pdf
- eating more vitamin C-rich fruit and vegetables - good choices are broccoli, kiwi fruit and oranges
- drinking plenty of fluid – 8 cups plus a day. Try warm fluids such as herbal teas, lemon and honey drinks and soups.
- enjoying homemade chicken soup - research has shown that chicken soup, sometimes called 'Jewish Penicillin' can helps relieve cold symptoms.