

Sláinte mhaith and have an amazing Fleadh - Public Health Agency advice for participants and visitors to Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

One of the biggest events in Derry~Londonderry's City of Culture calendar will take place this year, the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, organised by



Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, taking place. The

world's largest celebration of traditional Irish culture, the 62nd Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann will be hosted by Comhaltas Dhoire in Derry City from 11-18 August 2013, the first time the event has been held in Northern Ireland.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) is advising people to enjoy the celebration and to take care of one another, in particular to be careful about their use of alcohol. The [Festival Care Guide](#) aims to support health and wellbeing at the event.

Below is some advice for participants and visitors.

Alcohol

Here are a few tips on enjoying alcohol sensibly, should you choose to drink:

- Always look after yourself and know what your limits are. You are the best judge as to how much is enough.
- Don't drink on an empty stomach or mix alcohol with drugs, including prescription drugs.
- It is a good idea to mix alcohol with non-alcoholic drinks and food.
- If a friend does drink too much, don't leave them alone or let them wander off, rather, encourage them to re-hydrate with non-alcoholic drinks.

Sexual health

While enjoying the festival, remember to practice safer sex. The PHA is reminding those who are sexually active to protect your sexual health, and that of your

partner, by using condoms. For information or advice on STIs, or to discuss any sexual health issue, contact your local GUM clinic or your GP. You can also download the PHA booklet Don't gamble with your sexual health from:

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/dont-gamble-your-sexual-health

Drugs

If you decide to take drugs, keep these points in mind to reduce the risks associated with drug misuse:

- Festivals are not a good place to take drugs for the first time.
- Reduce the risk to your health and safety by finding out as much as you can about the effects of different drugs and then decide if it's really worth it.
- It is particularly dangerous to take drugs if you:

- o are on your own;

- o are ill, very tired or depressed;

- o are on medication;

- o have taken alcohol;

- o have a medical condition such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, high blood pressure, mental illness or heart disease.

- It's not a good idea to take other drugs to help you come down as this increases the risk of overdose. Downers are particularly dangerous when combined with alcohol.
- Mixing alcohol and drugs, or different types of drugs, can be dangerous and should be avoided.
- Be careful if buying/ accepting drugs from someone you don't know. Are you sure you know exactly what drug you are getting and whether there is anything else mixed in with it?
- Make sure your friends are aware of which drug you are taking and vice versa.

Sun care

There are a number of simple steps that will protect against the sun's harmful rays:

- Seek shade when the sun is at its strongest - generally 11am to 3pm.
- Cover up in the sun with a long sleeved t-shirt, sunglasses and a hat.
- Use sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 for UVB protection and 4 star for UVA

protection. Apply liberally 30 minutes before going out in the sun and re-apply at least every two hours.

- Be sure to cover areas which are sometimes missed, such as the lips, ears, around the eyes, neck, scalp, backs of hands and tops of feet.
- Sunscreen is not an alternative to avoiding the sun or covering up. It must be used in addition. Sunscreens should not be used to allow you to remain in the sun for longer – use them only to give yourself greater protection.
- Take extra care with children and babies, as their skin is often more sensitive and easily burned.

For further information on safe fun in the sun click on www.careinthesun.org

The following link also provides advice on looking after yourself and others in hot weather, including signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/looking-after-yourself-in-very-hot-weather

Carbon monoxide

There will be camping available at the Fleadh, so campers are reminded of the danger of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from leaving lit or smouldering barbecues inside tents or caravans.

Many people are already aware that fossil fuels and wood, when burnt without enough oxygen, create high levels of CO. However, the PHA is concerned that campers may not be aware of the risks involved with taking lit or smouldering barbecues inside tents, awnings or caravans.

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, tasteless, odourless gas that is non-irritating, and as a result can be very hard to detect.

Symptoms of CO poisoning include headaches, nausea and vomiting, exhaustion, drowsiness, dizziness and light-headedness, flu- like symptoms, chest pain and losing consciousness and palpitations, (which is when you feel your heart beat oddly).

Further information is available here: www.publichealthagency.org/carbon-monoxide-poisoning-barbecues

Hand hygiene

It is important to maintain good hand hygiene during major events. This will help to reduce the risk of picking up or spreading of viruses such as norovirus, (vomiting bug). The PHA recommends simple, practical steps to minimise the risk of illness and infection including:

- Always maintain good personal hygiene. Wash your hands frequently, especially after visits to the toilet, and before preparing or eating food.
- Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, throw the tissue in the bin and wash your hands as soon as you can.
- Encourage children to wash their hands frequently and use tissues as well.
- People with vomiting or diarrhoea symptoms should not prepare food.
- Use an anti-bacterial gel or wipe when hand washing facilities are not available

Further information is available at www.publichealthagency.org/hand-hygiene-%E2%80%93-reducing-spread-infection

Food safety

The Food Standards Agency has issued advice on safe food during major events for the public and local businesses, this can be accessed at:

www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland/safetyhygiene/events/

Water Safety

The PHA advises campers attending major events to boil water collected from standpipes and bowsers. This is particularly important where water is used for direct consumption, for example drinking or brushing teeth.

For further information see: www.publichealth.hscni.net/water-safety

Infection prevention and control advice for hotels

Infection prevention and control advice in the event of an episode of vomiting and diarrhoea in a hotel is available at: www.publichealthagency.org/infection-prevention-control-advice-hotels

This includes advice on management of ill guests, practical measures, staff safety and general cleaning methods.

Accessing health services

During the Fleadh, participants and visitors may need to contact a GP, pharmacist, or dentist. Information on the services available to participants and visitors is available on the Health and Social Care Board's website here:

www.hscboard.hscni.net/news/Fleadh_Cheoil_na_hEireann_2013.html

If you have a medical emergency and need an ambulance, call 999 or 112 from any phone. Text Relay – dial 18000 for emergency calls.

A medical emergency is something that is potentially immediately life-threatening such as:

- Sudden collapse and the person is unresponsive or not breathing
- Suspected stroke or heart attack
- Person unconscious perhaps after heavy blood loss or accident
- Collapse preceded by facial swelling and wheeze (probably anaphylactic shock) or choking episode.

In an emergency, you can also go to an Emergency Department without an appointment. Emergency Departments will treat serious injuries or conditions including fractures.

Festival care

For further information on festival care, visit the Fleadh website at:

www.fleadhcheoil.ie/festival-care

[Print](#)