

Mobile users are advised to keep their calls short

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ADULTS are being warned to restrict the use of mobile phones to essential and short calls.

The new health warning comes from NHS Greater Glasgow and Glasgow City Council and goes further than previous government guidelines. Experts compiled the leaflet entitled Mobile Phone Technology and Health after being contacted by members of the public concerned about emissions from phones and masts.

It advises people to restrict their mobile phone calls to essential and short calls only and use a hands-free kit.

Around 40 million mobiles are in use across the UK.

Experts at NHS Greater Glasgow's public health department, who produced the leaflet, said mobile phones were "a far greater source of microwave radiation" than exposure to masts. But a report from government scientists earlier this year said there was no evidence that either mobile phones or transmission masts were harmful to health.

Previous government advice recommends mobile phone use should be restricted for children under 16.

A spokeswoman for NHS Greater Glasgow said: "We receive calls from people concerned about mobile phone masts and mobile phones so we decided to put a leaflet together which could be distributed in partnership with our six local authorities.

"It is a very complex issue with a lot of different reports and this leaflet aims to provide the public with the best information available."

But Martin Whild, assistant information officer for the National Radiological Protection Board which advises both the public and government on the risks of radiation, said: "I am not aware of any advice which suggests adults should limit their mobile phone calls.

"This advice has been issued to children because absorption of radiation is more effective because they are smaller, they are still developing and are using this type of technology from a very young age so the exposure will be much longer.

"With regards the advice that hands-free kits be used, there are conflicting results. Some studies suggest that radiation exposure, if it exists, could actually be higher because the ear piece is closer to the brain.

"Advice on the use of hands-free kits is being revised and national guidelines are due to be published later this year."

The leaflet will go to Glasgow City Council's environmental protection services committee for approval tomorrow.

No-one from the Mobile Operators Association, which represents the interests of the industry, was available for comment.