



Seasonal Influenza Outbreaks

Information for Patients and Visitors

Flu like illness affects many people during the winter months. Levels of seasonal influenza (flu) are currently increasing across the UK. The two main strains circulating are Influenza B and H1N1 (2009) 'swine' flu, which is the dominant seasonal flu strain this year. This leaflet is to inform you about how to prevent getting flu, how to prevent transmitting it to others, and what your responsibilities are if there is an outbreak of flu in your setting.

Two or more cases of flu-like illness occurring within 48 hours in patients or staff from the same setting may indicate an outbreak.

Respiratory illnesses can spread easily in the same setting e.g. ward. If staff suspect an outbreak, they will ensure that measures are in place to reduce the risk of spread to other residents. They may also restrict visitor and patient movements.



The local PHE Health Protection Team will offer support by advising that

- adequate control measures are taken to prevent the spread of infection;
- affected patients or staff receive appropriate treatment; and
- patients, staff and carers receive appropriate and timely information on the measures being taken.

What you can do to reduce the spread

Patients

- Have you had your seasonal flu vaccine this year? Check with staff if you are not sure. It can be arranged through your GP if you need it.
- Wash hands frequently with liquid soap and water and dry thoroughly with disposable hand towels.
- **'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'**. Dispose of used tissues in the bin after single use. Do not use handkerchiefs. Then wash hands.
- If you have flu, do not mix with other patients and avoid communal areas if possible. You should stay in your room as much as possible while you have symptoms as you could infect others.
- Sit at least 1 meter away from others if you do need to mix with them.
- Discourage visitors as much as possible during the outbreak, especially children and vulnerable adults.
- Support the ward by adhering to any other necessary restrictions



Visitors Carers, family and friends should not visit the ward if they have flu symptoms. If you do need to visit, have a good supply of tissues so that you can cover your cough and sneezes, and avoid communal areas.



- Ensure you have had your seasonal flu vaccination if you are eligible
- Support any restrictions the ward may put in place.