

INFLUENZA

Influenza (flu) is an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract. It is highly infectious with an incubation period of one to three days. Easily transmitted by large droplets, small-particle aerosols and by hand to mouth/eye contamination from a contaminated surface or respiratory secretions of infected person. People with mild or no symptoms can still infect others.

Most cases in the UK occur during November and January. PHE produce weekly reports of cases and outbreaks reported.

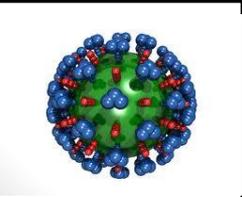
Flu vaccine
 Changes in flu vaccine this year
Adjuvanted trivalent vaccine for 65yrs and over
Quadrivalent vaccine for 18 – 65yr patients at risk, healthcare workers and carers.
Live attenuated nasal vaccine for children ages 2 – 9 years.
 The immune response following flu vaccination takes about two weeks to develop fully.

Flu virus-Two surface antigens:

- Haemagglutinin (H) (blue)
- Neuraminidase (N) (red)

There are **18 different types of H** and **11 different types of N**.

The role of haemagglutinin is to bind to the cells of the infected person
 The role of neuraminidase is to release the virus from the cell surface



Symptoms
 fever, chills, headache, dry cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, aching muscles, extreme tiredness. In elderly can be a sudden decline in physical or mental ability. In children may have vomiting and diarrhoea

Staff should be offered and encouraged to have the vaccine to protect themselves, their patients and their families.

Care home and domiciliary care staff now eligible for a free flu vaccine at their own GPs or any pharmacy.

Antivirals
 Influenza antiviral medicines form part of the programme for protection of people who are at increased risk of severe illness due to flu. Influenza antivirals should only be prescribed in primary care when influenza is circulating in the community and the Chief Medical Officer (CMO)/Chief Pharmaceutical Officer (CPhO) letter has been sent out unless on advice of PHE in an outbreak.

CATCH IT 
 Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.

BIN IT 
 Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.

KILL IT 
 Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.



Treatment
 If normally healthy - rest, keep warm, drink plenty of fluids and take paracetamol.
 If an at risk group or elderly can be given Tamiflu.
 Patient is infectious for **5 days** after the start of symptoms.

Possible complications of flu.
 Bronchitis
 Pneumonia
 Worsening of existing medical conditions e.g asthma, diabetes.
 Meningitis
 Encephalitis,