

Managers - Please ensure all employees are notified of this Safety Action Bulletin Especially employees involved in the direct delivery of personal care, food handling and cleaning services

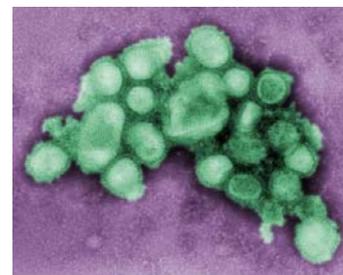
For: Heads of all Establishments/Settings
OCC Managers
Governors/Management Committees
Facilities Managers
Trade Union Safety Representatives
Employee Noticeboards
Intranet

Issue SAB 22
January 2011

Seasonal Flu 2011

Background

The Swine Flu (H1N1) pandemic of 2009/2010 officially came to an end in August 2010 but it is one of the three strains included in the 2010/11 seasonal flu vaccine. Experts are warning there could be a surge in flu cases as people return to work and school following the Christmas holidays.



General Information

Symptoms

The symptoms of flu include:

- Fever;
- Fatigue;
- Lack of appetite;
- Coughing; and
- Sore throat.
- Some people with H1N1 flu have also reported vomiting and diarrhoea.

What you should do if you have symptoms or are ill

Please see information and guidance on the [Occupational Health](#) intranet pages.

People with H1N1 flu typically have a fever or high temperature (over 38C or 100.4F) and may also have aching muscles, sore throat or a dry cough, symptoms are very similar to other types of seasonal flu. Most people recover within a week, even without special treatment. If you suspect you have H1N1 flu call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or visit www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk for further advice and guidance.

If your symptoms get significantly worse you should contact your GP for further advice.

If you are concerned please see NHS Direct Colds and Flu symptom checker:
<https://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/en/CheckSymptoms/SATs/coldandflu>

Vaccination

It is recommended that people in high-risk groups be vaccinated against seasonal flu.

The main risk groups are:

- Pregnant women;
- Men and women over the age of 65;
- People with long-term illnesses including:
 - Heart;
 - Breathing;
 - Kidney;
 - Liver; and
 - Nervous system disease.
- People who have had a stroke or mini-stroke (TIA);
- People with diabetes; and
- Other people with lowered immunity due to disease or treatment.

Carers of people in these groups are also encouraged to have the vaccine.

All front line care workers were offered a voucher to obtain the immunisation. This was part of the normal seasonal flu vaccine programme which ended at 31st December 2010. If there are any remaining staff who are 'front line workers' who did not take up this opportunity but now would like vaccination they could use a local supplier i.e. Boots, Superdrug or their GP. The individual would need to pay the fee and then seek to reclaim via their Manager therefore they should seek their manager's agreement in the first instance.

The seasonal flu vaccine is free and available from your local GP for people in these groups. Because the flu virus changes each year it is important that you have the vaccine each year.

NHS Oxfordshire have reassured people, statement issued 6th January 2011, that across Oxfordshire there are still sufficient stocks of the flu vaccine available.

Pregnant Women

All pregnant women including those not in high-risk groups are now advised to take the seasonal flu jab, which protects against H1N1 flu. This is because there is good evidence that all pregnant women are at increased risk from complications if they catch H1N1 flu. For more information, see [advice for pregnant women](#).

Preventing the spread of flu

It is important to remember that flu is usually spread from one person to another when an infected person has symptoms (i.e. through coughing and sneezing).

This can be reduced if everyone in the workplace plays their part by practising good hygiene. This includes:

- Washing hands frequently with liquid soap and water, to reduce the spread of virus from your hands to your face or to other people.
- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible. 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'.
- Disposing of used tissues promptly and carefully.
- Making sure your children follow this advice.

- Cleaning all hard surfaces (such as door handles) frequently, using a normal cleaning product.
- Use hand sanitizer gel where available

People who have had contact with a person with H1N1 flu but are not showing any symptoms do not need to be excluded from the workplace.

In some circumstances, people in certain higher risk groups who are in close contact with people who may have H1N1 flu may, as advised by their GP, be started on antiviral medicine as a precautionary measure. They should continue their normal lives, including going to work/school, so long as they do not develop any flu-like symptoms.

What should a manager do?

- If a member of staff attends work and is obviously unwell with flu-like symptoms they should be sent home and asked to contact NHS Direct; 0845 46 47 or www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk.
- Advise employees/volunteers, parents/carers/guardians, children and clients that they should not attend the work/school/day care centre etc. setting should they be suffering from the symptoms detailed in this bulletin.
- Stay away from school and other settings until symptom free, usually two to three days.
- Ensure elderly and/or vulnerable clients have someone to care for them and ensure they are kept hydrated.
- Disseminate information to all employees, including those who do not have computer access.
- Display posters to encourage/promote good hand hygiene. (See Annex 1)

For Further Information and Advice:

For general information about flu, see the Health A-Z topics about [Seasonal flu](#) and the [Seasonal flu jab](#).

Based on advice provided by:

- Health Protection Agency
- NHS Direct
- NHS Choices



	Email and web addresses	
Specialist:		
Occupational Health	occupational.health@oxfordshire.gov.uk	01865 815421
Health Protection Agency	www.hpa.org.uk	0845 279 9879
NHS Direct & NHS Choices	www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk www.nhs.uk	0845 46 47
General:		
Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team	healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk web address: http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/healthandsafety	01865 797222

Annex 1

Advice Notices

- **Health Protection Agency Hand Washing Technique Poster**
http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947384669



- **Health Protection Agency Have you washed your hands, aimed at young children**
http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947386382

