



Issue 30

5pm, August 13 2009

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Current situation

General **updated**

The chief medical officer today confirmed that the vaccines are due to be delivered by the manufacturers from late August.

Latest estimates are that 25,000 people were diagnosed with swine flu in England last week – a significant fall.

The fall is also being experienced in Devon. Antiviral collection points are less busy.

Planning continues across the NHS ahead of an expected second wave of swine flu in the autumn.

The Health Protection Agency reports there is no sign that the virus is changing. It is not becoming more severe or developing resistance to antivirals.

Most people in this country have been affected only mildly by the flu. This remains the position for people living in Devon.

You may notice that the format of the update has changed, with clearer sections and a quick links section. This is in response to feedback.

Primary care information

General

People needing advice or treatment are now being advised to contact the National Pandemic Flu Service by phone or over the web.

Here are the contact details: 0800 1 513 100 or
www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

Patients can contact the service if they suspect they have swine flu. Those diagnosed with the illness will be given an authorisation number.

A flu friend (see below) can then use this to pick up medicine from a local antiviral collection point.

Most patients presenting at a surgery or calling with symptoms should be advised to self-isolate at home and contact the National Pandemic Flu Service.

However, GPs should continue to provide diagnosis for those people in high risk groups and, as before, if they feel it is clinically appropriate to swab for the virus, they can do so.

Public information will point the following high-risk groups direct to GPs – rather than the national pandemic flu service:

- ✓ People who have a serious underlying illness
- ✓ Pregnant women
- ✓ Sick children under the age of one
- ✓ People whose condition suddenly gets worse
- ✓ People whose condition continues to worsen after 7 days (5 days for a child).

Contact tracing and prophylaxis is not normally carried out but may be considered in line with the guidance below from the Health Protection Agency (HPA).

http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1247038677052

The HPA has also issued detailed prescribing guidance for oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza):

http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1243581475043

Telephone triage of swine flu patients by GP practices

The clinical assessment algorithm followed by the National Pandemic Flu Service includes a number of questions to determine whether further assessment or advice is needed after authorisation of antiviral treatment. A positive response to these supplementary questions usually results in advice to the patient to contact their GP. A copy of the algorithm is attached.

There have been examples where patients have followed this advice but have not mentioned to the GP receptionist that they have been referred by the National Pandemic Flu Service. This has resulted in appointments made to attend the surgery where the symptomatic patient has then mixed with other patients waiting to see their GP.

GP practices may wish to consider briefing their receptionists that when talking to patients they should enquire whether they have been referred by the National Pandemic Flu Service, to enable the most appropriate method of consultation by the GP to be arranged. In most cases this will be by telephone contact rather than attendance at the surgery unless in the clinical judgement of the GP a face to face consultation is required.

Antiviral collection for high-risk groups

The following advice applies for high-risk groups only as other patients with symptoms are expected to use the National Pandemic Flu Service. You can use FP10 forms instead of the pre-printed swine flu treatment forms. Please note that you must strike through the FP10 form and endorse it with the words "No Payment AV".

In every case, you should fax the prescription form to the antiviral collection point and then phone to check that it has been received (numbers below). You must include dosage instructions and in the case of children, their weight.

You must ensure the patient is given the signed original copy of the prescription to hand over to their flu friend (see below). If you have remotely assessed a patient you won't be able to give the prescription to the patient, but you should still fax the prescription form and then post the original to the antiviral collection point. If no fax nearby, you should at least phone the antiviral collection point.

If you have a face to face consultation with the patient, then once they have the FP10, they should be asked if they have a flu friend. A flu friend is a family member, friend or neighbour who can collect the prescription on their behalf. Please note that on no account should the patient collect the antiviral medicine themselves.

Antivirals will only be given to flu friends if they are able to produce a form of ID. That is their passport, driving licence or utility bill. ID is also required for the patient. This is a very important point as failure to produce both sets of ID may delay treatment.

If you fax a prescription form outside of opening hours, you must tell the patient the opening hours of the collection point to enable their flu friend to collect their medication from 8am the next day.

Vouchers updated

Every GP surgery in the county will shortly receive a small supply of box of vouchers.

Please await further instructions before use.

Antiviral collection points updated

There are 11 antiviral collection points now open in Devon.

The collection points, mostly in community hospitals but also in other locations, are intended to be used by “flu friends” (see below) to collect antiviral medicines.

Most antiviral collection points (below) are open from 8am to 6pm, seven days a week with the exception of Tiverton hospital which is open 24-hours and Barnstaple, which opens 10am to 6pm. **Please note that Whipton hospital has revised its opening hours to 9am-5pm from this weekend.**

The location of the antiviral collection points are based on the latest available demographic data for the county. No one in Devon is more than 30 minutes from a collection point.

Please do not direct patients to the two walk-in centres in Exeter, GP surgeries or accident and emergency departments – unless it is clinically appropriate to do so.

Antiviral collection points:	Telephone:	Fax:
Honiton Community Hospital	01404 540 540	01404 540 550
Whipton Hospital	01392 208 366	01392 208 366
Exmouth Community Hospital	01395 279 684	01395 224 270
Tiverton Community Hospital	01884 235 400	01884 235 532
Newton Abbot Community Hospital	01626 324 500	01626 324 701
Totnes Community Hospital	01803 862 622	01803 869 486
Tavistock Community Hospital	01822 612 233	01822 610 025
Bideford Community Hospital	01237 420 200	01237 478 036
Ilfracombe Tyrell Hospital	01271 863 448	01271 864 871
Lynton Resource Centre	01598 753 310	01598 753 832
Barnstaple Health Centre	01271 371 761	01271 321 686

Prophylaxis doses

As of July 17 GPs following HPA guidance over prophylaxis should direct people needing the medicine (unless symptomatic) to one of the community pharmacies below. The sites have been chosen because they are close to antiviral collection points in Devon. No antiviral treatment doses are available from here.

Location	Pharmacy	Telephone number
Exeter	Sainsbury supermarket, Hillbarton Road, Pinhoe, Exeter	01392 469 687
Honiton	Lloyds Pharmacy, Honiton Group Surgery, Marlitts Road, Honiton	01404 427 62
Exmouth	Clarepharm Pharmacy, Claremont Grove, Exmouth	01395 222 878
Tiverton	Lloyds Pharmacy, Tiverton Hospital, Kennedy Way, Tiverton	01884 235 400 and request
Newton Abbot	Boots Pharmacy, Albany Street, Newton Abbot	01626 363 195
Totnes	Boots Pharmacy, Babbage Road, Totnes	01803 862 356
Tavistock	Lake Pharmacy, West Street, Tavistock	01822 612 104

Bideford	Lloyds Pharmacy, Abbotsham Road, Bideford	01237 472 002
Ilfracombe	Lloyds Pharmacy, St Brannock's Road, Ilfracombe	01271 867 524
Lynton	Lynton Pharmacy, Lynton	01598 753 377
Barnstaple	Boots Pharmacy, High Street, Barnstaple	01271 326 772

Help for people with no flu friend

The PCT has signed an agreement with the British Red Cross to provide a flu friend service for vulnerable people who would otherwise be unable to access antiviral medicines.

It is extremely important that the service is not misused as this could result in those in real need failing to receive their medication.

To arrange delivery patients in need should call 0844 412 2840 (7-days a week). There is no charge but patients using the service should expect to wait up to 24-hours before the medicine is delivered.

Antivirals for children

The latest advice with regard to prescribing Tamiflu for children is available here: <https://nww.devonpctinfo.nhs.uk/Prescribingpost>

Decision to admit or send to A&E

The Department of Health has issued detailed guidance on hospital admission criteria for adults and children, along with a referral form. This is available here:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_100941

If you refer a patient to accident and emergency please phone ahead to let the department know they are coming. Medical staff can then make the necessary arrangements to care for the patients.

North Devon

Barnstaple Health Centre is both well equipped and staffed and can deal with high volumes of flu friends. It is also open 7 days a week.

Wherever possible please encourage flu friends to consider choosing this centre over other collection points. It remains a matter of patient choice, of course, but your help would very much be appreciated.

Vaccination updated

The chief medical officer today confirmed that the vaccines are due to be delivered by the manufacturers from late August.

Priority will be as follows:

- 1 Individuals aged 6 months - 65 years in seasonal flu at-risk groups
- 2 All pregnant women (subject to licensing on trimesters)
- 3 Household contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- 4 Individuals over 65 years in seasonal flu

Frontline health care workers and frontline social care workers will be vaccinated in parallel to the above.

Sufficient vaccine is being secured for the UK population. Because of the phased delivery of the vaccine, prioritisation for vaccination of individuals and groups will be needed. The decision on prioritisation will be taken on the basis of epidemiological evidence, vaccine supply and capacity of the NHS to implement the programme. This decision will be subject to further work over the summer period.

A vaccine distribution strategy, similar to that used for HPV vaccine, is being developed. Needles and syringes will be supplied.

Two doses of both Baxter and GSK vaccines are currently recommended with a minimum interval of three weeks between doses. These vaccines will go through the previously established European licensing procedures for pandemic vaccines.

There is no evidence that the vaccines are interchangeable – so individuals need to receive two doses of the Baxter vaccine, or two doses of the GSK vaccine (but not one dose of each). This will require accurate recording of which vaccine was administered for the first dose.

The Department of Health is preparing a range of information materials to support an H1N1 swine flu vaccination programme.

These will include a leaflet, surgery poster and vaccine record card, available to be ordered through Prolog. In addition, there will be web-based resources including a new Green book chapter, fact sheet, Q&A, consent template, Patient Group Directive (PGD) template and patient vaccine invitation letters. Training materials to support NHS staff are also being developed. Materials should be available from late July onwards.

An advertising campaign is being planned to raise awareness and understanding of the H1N1 swine flu immunisation.

PCT staff information

General

If a patient presents with flu-like symptoms, they should contact the National Pandemic Flu Line in the first instance. If they are in any of the high-risk groups they should seek medical advice from their GP – over the phone.

If a flu friend would like more information to take with them, please give them the swine flu information sheet (attached). We have also sent general information to each of the antiviral sites.

Antivirals for staff

Antivirals are not routinely issued as a prophylaxis to staff.

Human resources

A big thank you to the 1,400 staff who have now filled in the “Pandemic Flu Planning Workforce Data Questionnaire”.

If you have problems accessing website, the correct address is (don't forget that you'll need your password):

https://nww.devonpctinfo.nhs.uk/KSF/WFQ_Login.asp (please note that there is an underscore between WFQ and Login)

The trust's human resources (HR) department will use the information to assess the potential impact of the pandemic on the workforce.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the questionnaire, please contact Tim Robinson, assistant director of HR, or Helen Belcher, HR advisor on 01392 449 781.

Antiviral collection point communications

Boxes of communications materials were sent to all antiviral collection points earlier last week. Each contains:

- 4 paper AVC posters (with opening times and ID messages)
- 5 A3 posters advertising the National Pandemic Flu Service
- 5 A4 posters advertising the National Pandemic Flu Service
- 800 advice leaflets for people issued with antivirals
- 100 advice leaflets for parents/carers of children under 1 issued with Oseltamivir
- 20 swine flu leaflets in English and a selection of other languages.

Swine flu antiviral collection point signs for all sites will be with you shortly.

Please note that it is a requirement that every person issued with antiviral medication is given the appropriate advice leaflet (underlined).

This information is repeated on page 8.

Logistics and administration

Swine flu reporting

In line with the move to treatment-only the Health Protection Agency (HPA) is no longer providing daily updates on the number of confirmed cases. The HPA is instead issuing a weekly media alert covering the various surveillance systems to monitor the ongoing situation. This will also be available in the news section of the agency's website at www.hpa.org.uk.

Communications and partnership working

Posters and public information updated

Packs of "catch it, bin it, kill it" and other public information posters were sent last week to a range of additional outlets, including motorway service stations, railway stations, larger football and rugby grounds, shopping centres, cinemas, Exeter airport and all tourist information centres.

NHS partners and other stakeholders have also received a range of public information and boxes of communications materials were sent to all antiviral collection points last week.

Each contains:

- 4 paper AVC posters (with opening times and ID messages)
- 5 A3 posters advertising the National Pandemic Flu Service
- 5 A4 posters advertising the National Pandemic Flu Service
- 800 advice leaflets for people issued with antivirals
- 100 advice leaflets for parents/carers of children under 1 issued with Oseltamivir
- 20 swine flu leaflets in English and a selection of other languages.

Swine flu antiviral collection point signs should be put up at all sites over the next two weeks.

Press and media updated

Coverage of the swine flu issue has declined with other stories now leading the news. We expect coverage to increase after the holiday period when the focus is expected to fall on preparations for the second wave.

We would invite all partner organisations to contact the PCT communications if they are planning media messages about swine flu.

Public messages continue to be coordinated by the communications department and if you or your organisation are approached to comment you should call: 01392 267648 (day) and 07969 152217 (out of hours).

GPs may also wish to call if they are approached.

Media approach

We continue to push the key public health messages (see main messages to public below). We will not confirm individual cases or the location of antiviral collection points.

Main messages to public

The following messages are designed to be used by all NHS bodies (and partner agencies). They may change if the pandemic becomes more severe.

- ✓ Catch it, Bin it, Kill it

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 them as soon as possible.

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

Anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms is advised to contact the National Pandemic Flu Service on 0800 1 513 100 or visit

www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

- ✓ Main sources of information

Most people in this country have been affected only mildly by the flu and this remains the position in Devon. People are advised to call the National Pandemic Flu Service on 0800 1 513 100 or visit www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

General information is available still available on www.nhs.uk People in high-risk groups should call their GP. No one with symptoms should attend walk-in centres, NHS hospitals or GP practices in person, unless instructed to do so.

✓ Flu friends

People should now consider setting up a network of flu friends (neighbours, friends or relatives who can help you if you get ill).

They could collect medicines, food and other supplies, so that the patient doesn't have to leave home.

Please see the attached flu friend form. This should be used by partners to inform their communications.

General advice and back issues

We have transferred a great deal of general swine flu information to InfoPoint – the trust's internal website. You must have an InfoPoint username and password to view this. If you have mislaid these or wish to re-register, please contact howard.chapman@nhs.net

To view all current advice click here:

http://www.infopoint.devonpct.nhs.uk/your-sites/Directorates/Public_Health/Swine_Flu_response.asp

Next update

The next update will be published when there is anything significant to report.