

swine flu update



[Issue 23](#)

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For advice about any aspect of swine flu handling please call the flu response centre on **0845 425 1754** (8am to 8pm weekdays and 9 to 5pm weekends)

Current situation updated

GPs continue to report a steady flow of people reporting swine flu symptoms.

There are localised pockets of activity mostly centred on Exeter and there are emerging cases elsewhere, including in North Devon.

There are also cases in a number of schools.

Healthcare services continue to function normally and reported sickness is near normal levels.

Ten antiviral collection points are open and others are on standby as required. There is no need for these to open at present.

The PCT updated the Devon County Council's health overview and scrutiny committee about its approach to swine flu earlier this week.

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

However, we expect the number of people with the virus to rise significantly over the coming weeks and months.

The World Health Organisation has noted a few cases of swine flu resistant to Tamiflu in Denmark, Japan and China. There is no evidence to indicate the development of widespread antiviral resistance among pandemic H1N1 viruses and based on this risk assessment, there are no changes in WHO's clinical treatment guidance. Antiviral drugs remain a key component of the public health response when used as recommended.

Click here for WHO's statement in full:

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/newsbriefs/h1n1_antiviral_resistance_20090708/en/index.html

Advice to GPs updated

GPs should make their own diagnosis over swine flu. If they feel it is clinically appropriate to swab for the virus, they can do so. But it is no longer a requirement.

Contact tracing and prophylaxis will now not normally be carried out and patients should be advised to self isolate at home.

For further advice please call the flu response centre on **0845 425 1754** (8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and from 9am to 5pm at weekends).

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has issued guidance about when prophylaxis may be given. This is available here:

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

The HPA has also issued detailed prescribing guidance for oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza). This document contains some useful ready reckoner tables for correct dosage:

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

Decision to admit to hospital updated

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

Swine flu reporting updated

In line with the move to treatment-only the HPA is no longer providing daily updates on the number of confirmed cases. The HPA will instead issue a weekly media alert covering the various surveillance systems the agency will be using to monitor the ongoing situation. This will also be available in the news section of the agency's website at www.hpa.org.uk. The exact day these new weekly alerts will start is expected to be confirmed shortly.

Advice to GPs about antiviral collection updated

Reminder: you can now use FP10 forms instead of the pre-printed swine flu treatment forms. This should make the process easier for you. 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). Please note that the FP10 can be used in antiviral collection points in neighbouring PCTs.

You must ensure the patient is then 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 identification, examples are a passport, driving licence, utility bill and other ID. ID is **not** required for the patient.

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.

We are working on arrangements to help people who are socially isolated and may not have a “flu friend”.

Please note that the FP10 can be used in antiviral collection points in neighbouring PCTs.

Swine flu information sheet updated

After GP consultations some patients/flu friends will, quite naturally, have additional questions about swine flu.

We enclose a swine flu information sheet that can be handed to patients/flu friends. These will be useful to both GPs and the staff at the antiviral collection points. Please use them.

Advice to community hospital staff

If a patient presents with flu-like symptoms, they should contact their GP or NHS Direct by phone in the first instance.

If a flu friend would like more information to take with them, please give them the swine flu information sheet.

Advice to schools updated

All schools have been sent letters drafted by the Health Protection Agency in conjunction with Devon Primary Care Trust and Devon County Council.

These cover three scenarios: no cases at the school; one suspect case and an outbreak. All will be addressed from the head of the school or college affected and will be sent to parents.

Schools needing additional advice and information should call the Devon County Council helpdesk on 01392 383369.

General advice line for health professionals

For advice about any aspect of swine flu handling please call the flu response centre on **0845 425 1754** (8am to 8pm weekdays and 9 to 5pm weekends).

Antiviral collection points

Antiviral collection points have been set up at venues across Devon.

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

The following antiviral collection points are open from 8am to 6pm, seven days a week with the exception of Tiverton hospital which is open 24-hours.

Please do not direct patients to the two walk-in centres in Exeter.

Antiviral collection points:	Telephone:	Fax:
Honiton Community Hospital	01404 540540	01404 540550
Whipton Hospital	01392 208333	01392 208313
Exmouth Community Hospital	01395 279684	01395 224270
Tiverton Community Hospital	01884 235400	01884 235532
Newton Abbot Community Hospital	01626 324 500	01626 324701
Totnes Community Hospital	01803 862622	01803 863769
Tavistock Community Hospital	01822 612233	01822 610025
Bideford Community Hospital	01237 420200	01237 478036
Ilfracombe Tyrell Hospital	01271 863448	01271 864871
Lynton Resource Centre	01598 753310	01598 753832

Antivirals for children

We sent a letter earlier this week to GPs which clarified the prescribing of Tamiflu for children. It is extremely important that you see this letter. If you are a GP and have not seen this, click here:

<https://nww.devonpctinfo.nhs.uk/Prescribingpost>

Antivirals for staff

Antivirals are not routinely issued as a prophylaxis to staff.

Press and media **updated**

Media activity continues. After recent front page coverage in Exeter the issue is now being picked up by papers in some of the smaller towns. There is also sporadic coverage on local TV and radio.

If you are approached by the press to comment, please note that public messages are being coordinated by Devon PCT's communications department: 01392 267648 (day) and 07969 152217 (out of hours).

GPs may also wish to call if they are approached to comment.

Media approach **updated**

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 but will confirm contact with schools affected by swine flu.

Posters

Posters advising anyone with symptoms not to visit their GP practice or other NHS premises have been sent to all surgeries, the RD&E, walk-in centres and the University of Exeter. A range of other NHS posters have also been sent. If you would like copies, please contact Imogen.gray@nhs.net

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.

They are split into three key themes:

✓ *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 NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 in the first instance.

✓ *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 swine flu information line 08001 513 513 or visit www.nhs.uk for general information.

People should only call NHS Direct 0845 46 47 or their GP if they have used these information sources first.

They should not attend walk-in centres, NHS hospitals or GP practices in person if they have symptoms.

✓ *Flu friends*

People may also 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.

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.