

NHS GRAMPIAN / Aberdeen City Community Health Partnership (CHP)

UPDATE for Partners: INFLUENZA A (H1N1) - Swine Flu August 2009

As influenza A (H1N1) flu spreads and more people catch it, the Scottish Government has moved from intensive efforts to contain the virus to focusing efforts on treating the increasing number of people who have the disease. In Grampian these numbers are still very small but are expected to increase over the coming months.

The Scottish Government has produced a range of guidance to support NHS Boards in delivering their services during a pandemic flu outbreak. NHS Grampian is responsible for delivering the local response. We have well established local plans in place setting out how we will deal with swine flu.

Recent media reports can be confusing for the public but the main messages remain unchanged:

- Keep practising good respiratory and hand hygiene. In other words, remember to ***Catch It, Bin It, Kill It***. Catch your sneeze in a tissue, place it quickly in a bin and wash your hands and surfaces regularly to kill the virus.
- Symptoms of swine flu are usually similar to seasonal flu symptoms: fever (high temperature), tiredness, lack of appetite, coughing, sore throat. Some people may also suffer vomiting and diarrhoea. The symptoms can usually be managed by staying at home, resting, taking mild analgesics, that also help to reduce fever and using a cough medicine.
- Contact your GP or call NHS24 on **0845 4 24 24 24** if you have flu-like symptoms and need advice.
- A few people may need further treatment with prescription-only antiviral drugs (Tamiflu and Relenza). These drugs can be expected to shorten the duration of the disease, alleviate symptoms and reduce the risk of complications and serious illness. To be effective, antivirals need to be taken within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms.
- Some people are more at risk of serious illness if they catch swine flu and it is vital they begin taking the antivirals as soon as symptoms appear. A list of the groups of people known to be more at risk can be found at www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1094/0083613.pdf
- A vaccine is being developed against swine flu and the Government has ordered enough for the whole population. The timing of any vaccination programme in Grampian will depend on how quickly the vaccine can be manufactured and distributed. The vaccination programme is likely to begin in September or October and the Government has indicated which groups of people will be vaccinated first, but this will be confirmed nearer the time as we learn more about the disease.

Advice for pregnant women

There has been some confusion about the best advice for pregnant women. Scottish Government advice to pregnant women is as follows:

- Mothers-to-be are not advised to curtail normal activities such as going to work, travelling on public transport, attending events and family gatherings
- Observe good hand hygiene procedures
- Wherever possible, avoid contact with someone who is known or suspected to have swine flu

If mothers-to-be have flu-like symptoms, it is recommended that early contact with their General Practitioner is made, who may advise treatment with anti-viral drugs

A UK Information Line has been set up that provides regularly updated recorded information about swine flu. This service is available by calling **0800 1 513 513** (operated by the UK Department of Health). Alongside this service, the CHP would encourage partners to visit, and direct members of the public to the following websites for consistent, up-to-date information:

- NHS Grampian www.nhsgrampian.org
- NHS 24 www.nhs24.com
- Health Protection Scotland www.hps.scot.nhs.uk
- Scottish Government www.scotland.gov.uk

Earlier this year all households were sent a leaflet about swine flu. An easy to read version of this leaflet can be downloaded from www.scotland.gov.uk. There is also an audio version of the leaflet available on the website. If you require the information in another format or language please contact NHS Grampian's Corporate Communications tel: **(01224) 554400** or email: Grampian@nhs.net

Arrangements for responding to pandemic flu should be part of all employers' business continuity, and guidance on specific health issues is available from Health Protection Scotland (HPS) and will be updated routinely as further information becomes available. If you have a specific corporate query regarding swine flu you should contact NHS Grampian's Health Protection Team tel: **(01224) 558520**.

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