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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



SWINE FLU
INFORMATION
0800 1 513 513
www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

Factsheet

This factsheet gives advice about what to do if you think you have swine flu

What is swine flu?

Swine Flu is a viral infection caused by a new virus which has spread across the world. The symptoms of swine flu are fever, with a temperature of 38° C (100°F) or above, and some of the following: cough, sore throat, headache, tiredness, aching muscles, aching joints, diarrhoea and vomiting.

The majority of cases in Wales have been mild although there have been a small number of people who have been severely ill and some people have been treated in hospital.

What should I do if I think I or someone I know has Swine Flu?

If you or they have flu-like symptoms stay at home. You can check the symptoms by calling the swine flu information line on **0800 1 513 513** or by visiting the NHS Direct Wales website at www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Flu is an unpleasant illness but most healthy people, including children, will get better after a few days if they follow these steps:

- 1. Stay at home and rest**
- 2. Drink plenty of fluids**
- 3. Take medication such as paracetamol to control fever and pain**

Please do not go to your GP surgery, A&E, or other healthcare premises as you may pass the infection on to other people who are at a higher risk of complications if they get the virus.

If you are concerned – perhaps your symptoms are severe or continue to get worse – or you are in a high risk group then you should phone your GP for further advice, and if necessary, antiviral treatment.

For general advice, you can also contact NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47.

Who is at a higher risk of complications?

Some people are at higher risk of complications such as those with:

- Chronic lung disease
 - Chronic heart disease
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - Chronic liver disease
 - Chronic neurological disease
 - Immunosuppression (whether caused by disease or treatment)
 - Diabetes mellitus
 - People who have had medical treatment for their asthma within the past three years
- And also
- Pregnant women
 - Children under five years old
 - People aged 65 years and older

What should I do if I or someone I know fall into one of these higher risk groups?

If you think you or they have swine flu and are in one of the above higher risk groups you should phone your GP for an assessment so that, if needed, you can be prescribed antiviral medication as soon as possible, preferably within 48 hours.

What is antiviral medication?

Antiviral medication can help you to recover, particularly if taken within 48 hours of symptoms developing. It may relieve some of the symptoms, reduce the length of time you are ill by around one day and reduce the potential for serious complications.

We have good supplies of the antiviral medication Tamiflu and Relenza for people who need them. Like all drugs, some people may experience side effects – the most common being nausea and vomiting.

You should only take the antiviral medication if it has been prescribed for you.

How will at-risk people get antiviral medication?

Antiviral medication will be obtained in the same way as free prescriptions from your GP or community pharmacy. However, the person prescribed antiviral medication should not go to get it themselves. They should ask a 'flu friend' – a friend or relative who does not have swine flu – to collect the antiviral medication for them so that they do not spread the infection to others.

Why is Wales not a part of the National Pandemic Flu Service?

You may have heard about the National Pandemic Flu Service which is operating in England.

This consists of a website and call centre to help people identify if they have swine flu and allow them to pick up antiviral medication – if it is required – from an antiviral collection point.

The service has been switched on in England due to service pressures but not in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland who are continuing to use the services that people are familiar with.

Welsh residents and visitors to Wales are advised to contact the normal NHS Services as outlined in this factsheet. We have the opportunity to opt into the National Pandemic Flu Service at any point in the future if and when required.

What if I am a visitor to Wales?

As a visitor, if you feel unwell while you are in Wales, you will be able to access the same advice and treatment for swine flu as residents of Wales. If you have flu-like symptoms remain where you are staying. You can check your symptoms by calling the swine flu information line on 0800 1 513 513 or by visiting the NHS Direct Wales website at www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Your hotel, accommodation provider or Tourist Information Centre will be able to give you the telephone number of a local doctor if needed. Overseas visitors will not be charged for NHS hospital treatment for swine flu, including antivirals such as Tamiflu or Relenza. Pandemic flu is included in the list of exempt from charge diseases, so the diagnosis and treatment of swine flu in hospitals is free for everyone. Further details can be found on the Directgov website at www.direct.gov.uk.

How can I avoid spreading the infection?

Everyone who is ill should try to avoid spreading the infection further. You can do this by:

- Limiting contact with others
- Sneezing or coughing into a paper tissue and disposing of it safely
- Wiping surfaces which have been contaminated
- Washing your hands frequently

Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.

Who are your flu friends?

Flu friends collect medicines, food and other supplies for you if you get swine flu, so that you do not have to leave home.

We recommend that you identify up to five flu friends to ensure someone is available to help you at all times.

- 1. Identify your flu friends and check that they are happy to help you.
- 2. Make a flu friend list now and keep it in a safe place e.g. on the fridge or by the phone



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My flu friends

1. Name:..... Tel:.....

2. Name:..... Tel:.....

3. Name:..... Tel:.....

4. Name:..... Tel:.....

5. Name:..... Tel:.....

My GP

Name:..... Tel:.....