



# INFLUENZA

Influenza (flu) is an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract. It is highly infectious with an incubation period of one to three days. Spread by droplets, or contact with infected person.

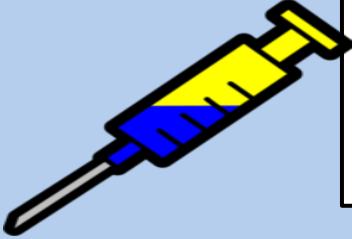
Protect yourself, your family and your patients from catching the flu by making sure you have your **FREE flu vaccine** available at any pharmacy or your GP. Take an ID badge/Wage slip or letter from employer with you.

**Symptoms**  
fever, chills, headache, dry cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, aching muscles, extreme tiredness. Sudden decline in physical or mental ability

**Flu vaccine**  
Protects against the three main circulating viruses. Should be given in September to November. The immune response following flu vaccination takes about two weeks to develop fully.

Most cases of flu in the UK occur during an 8 to 10 week period during the winter usually starting early November.

**Care of patient with flu**  
Isolate for at least 5 days after start of symptoms.  
Keep warm  
Plenty of fluids.  
Tissues and safe disposal of.  
Take daily temperature.  
Paracetamol to reduce fever.  
Ask GP to review – may need antiviral medication.  
Good handwashing.  
Standard infection control precautions inc good hand washing, use protective clothing and dispose of infected waste in plastic bag.



If a patient is diagnosed with flu contact the infection control nurses on 01744 457 314 for advice.



**Possible complications of flu.**  
Bronchitis  
Pneumonia  
Worsening of existing medical conditions e.g asthma, diabetes.  
Meningitis  
Encephalitis,

**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 your tissue as soon as possible.

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

