

Swine Flu

Community Update

Issue 1

Welcome to the first edition of the swine flu community update.

The purpose of the update is to keep all community or voluntary groups and organisations that are active in Wales up to date with the latest information on swine flu. It also provides advice to people on how they can look after themselves during the outbreak. Please share the advice as widely as possible with individuals in your communities. This will help community groups understand the likely impact of swine flu on individuals and their wider communities.

Further updates will be produced on a regular basis and will be sent electronically to a range of national, representative and umbrella organisations that work with or represent community and voluntary groups. We would ask these larger organisations to then disseminate it far and wide to the groups and organisations they are in touch with to enable this advice to reach as many people as possible.

To help this process a short 'flu friend' form is attached to this update which can be downloaded and provided to people in your community to help them take the necessary actions to help themselves.

What is swine flu and what are the symptoms?

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, sneezing, runny nose, loss of appetite, diarrhoea and vomiting.

The current situation

Current levels of flu-like illness are increasing in Wales. The number of people with flu is higher than usual for this time of year.

While in the majority of people swine flu is mild, we must not be complacent, for some this virus can still cause serious illness and sadly some people will die.

The swine flu vaccination has commenced for those in higher risk groups¹ and front line health and social care workers in the first instance. People in the priority groups will be invited by their GP to an immunisation clinic or to an appointment at their surgery. NHS and social care employers will arrange for the vaccination of their staff. The seasonal flu vaccine programme will continue at the same time.²

How to reduce the spread of the infection

Everyone who is ill should try to avoid spreading the infection further. This can be done 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

In short: Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.

Who is most at risk?

Some people are at higher risk of complications such as:

- Those with a long-term health condition such as chronic lung, heart, kidney, liver or neurological disease, or diabetes mellitus
- Pregnant women
- People with suppressed immune systems (whether caused by disease or treatment)
- Children under 5
- People aged 65 or over



SWINE FLU INFORMATION

www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

0800 1 513 513

Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.

¹ Further information on high risk groups can be found at:
<http://www.wales.gov.uk/swineflu>

² Further information on seasonal flu vaccination can be found at:
<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgId=719&pid=23110>

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What to do if you think you or someone you provide care for has swine flu.

The following advice should be given to all groups. To reduce the spread of the disease, people with flu-like symptoms should stay at home and check their symptoms on the NHS Direct Wales website at www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk or by phoning the swine flu information line on **0800 1 513 513**.

If the symptoms are worsening or severe, or people are in an at-risk groups such as those with a chronic condition, children under 5 or pregnant women, people should phone their GP as they are a priority for early treatment by antivirals to reduce the severity of the symptoms.

People with flu-like symptoms should not go to their A&E, local GP or pharmacy in case they spread the virus to others. Such visits cause undue pressure and potential delay for other patients who are in need of emergency services.

For general advice call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or visit: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Looking after yourself – flu friends

If people become ill and are prescribed antiviral medication they 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.

Flu friends may undertake tasks such as collecting medicines, food and other supplies and feeding peoples' pets etc. so that people with swine flu do not have to leave home. We recommend that people identify up to five flu friends to ensure someone is available to help at all times.

People should be encouraged to:

1. Identify flu friends and check that they are happy to help.
2. Make a flu friend list now and keep it in a safe place. The list should contain all the relevant telephone contact details of the flu friends

Where to find more information on swine flu

A swine flu factsheet containing further information on swine flu is available to download from the Welsh Assembly Government website, www.wales.gov.uk/swineflu

It is available in English and Welsh, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi, Somali, Urdu and in Easyread format. It is also available to order in Braille and audio formats by calling 029 2037 0011. In addition there is an online video in British Sign Language.



How community and voluntary organisations can help?

It is important to recognise that there are vulnerable people in our communities who do not have regular contact with family and friends and whose relative isolation could put them more at risk if they get swine flu.

Community and voluntary organisations are uniquely placed to identify and help those vulnerable and hard to reach groups in their communities by conveying key swine flu messages using their tried and tested methods. This could include community newsletters, or community engagement events etc. Community Groups are being encouraged to consider how they can help convey advice on swine flu to individuals or groups within their communities who are unlikely to have access to TV, radio or internet and who may have difficulty in seeing, hearing or understanding the messages.

Community Groups such as Communities First, Neighbourhood Watch, Local or Community Councils, faith groups and rural community groups have been asked to include swine flu for discussion at their meetings and consider how they can help.

How can I help as a volunteer?

Each of the 22 County Voluntary Councils in Wales has a Health Social Care & Wellbeing Facilitator who has been co-ordinating the voluntary sector contribution to the response to swine flu. If you would like to know more about organised events providing advice and guidance to the community on swine flu or if you would like to act as a volunteer to help support this work please contact your local County Voluntary Council.

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



Prepare yourself for Swine Flu

Please complete this form and keep it to hand

What do I do if I think I have swine flu?

- Check symptoms - call the swine flu information line on **0800 1 513 513** or visit: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk
- Take the following steps:
 1. Stay at home and rest
 2. Drink plenty of fluids
 3. Take medication such as paracetamol to control fever and pain.
- If your symptoms are severe or continue to get worse, phone your GP for further advice.

- For general advice call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47

Do not go to your GP surgery, A&E, or other healthcare premises as you may pass the infection on to other people

Make Sure you have the following

- Normal flu remedies i.e. paracetamol as appropriate for adults and children.
- Food and drink.
- Extra supplies of tissues and toilet paper.
- Supply of regular prescriptions.

Useful Telephone Numbers:

GP

Pharmacy

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0800 1 513 513

My flu friends

1. Name Tel.....

2. Name Tel.....

3. Name Tel.....

4. Name Tel.....

5. Name Tel.....