**Flu - increase in confirmed cases in our hospitals**

Thursday, 11 January 2018

FLU - we now are seeing a significant increase in confirmed flu cases in our hospitals. Please avoid visiting unless you really need to, and if you have a flu-like illness please stay away from our wards in case the infection is spread to patients

To avoid catching flu, wash your hands frequently, and ensure you've had your flu jab if you are in an at-risk group.

Flu vaccines are not perfect, but they remain the single best way to protect against flu. Having a flu jab significantly reduces your chances of getting flu in the first place; but if you are unlucky and still catch it, your illness is likely to be milder and shorter.

This season’s vaccine does contain protection against the H3N2 strain of flu, one of the main types which have been circulating in Australia. The vaccine also offers protection against most other strains of flu currently circulating in Wales.

Flu vaccines are developed well in advance of the flu season, based on viruses that had recently been circulating at that time. However flu viruses are unpredictable. They mutate and change, and some strains may dominant over others. Additional factors like patients’ ages may also affect the degree of protection a particular vaccine offers.

So because of these varying factors, it is not possible to produce a vaccine that is 100% effective.

But having a free flu jab remains a very sensible choice for people in at-risk groups, and for those over the age of 65. The protection the vaccine offers, even limited, is still well worth having.

Remember, flu is not just a heavy cold. It can be a very serious and sometimes life-threatening illness - so having a flu jab could really make a difference.

What is a high risk group?

• aged 65 and over
• pregnant – any stage of pregnancy
• aged 6 months or older with a long-term health condition such as asthma, emphysema, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease
• immunosuppressed or living with someone who is
• morbidly obese adult (BMI 40+)
• a carer
• in long-stay residential care
• children aged 2 and 3 on 31st August, 2017 and 4 years old but not in school
• children in Reception & Years 1, 2, 3 & 4 at school (vaccination sessions will be held in school)

If you haven’t heard from your GP surgery regarding an appointment or clinic running for the flu vaccination please give them a call. If you are over 18 years of age you can also go to a participating pharmacy for your vaccination – follow the link for details [https://tinyurl.com/ycnynvd8](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2Fycnynvd8&h=ATObDJ6tDWxT2scdqIf5K7ZgfwIwZhwEDMo-kiGj7yoPtsfS-juEgo9EXRYtLthnMBxVRJsQTJ8EKI6Lbov04Sdzq5e5UYdNelkilDV95-1gbYLjNsVh0YN7eursi9F71GqWiQUyq4GaHYu4to7e1SsqouYY-43JzxUmhl_ra9IcC72pTxkfVByKg3V5hf1JubBes-zftAk73crPbRhv8o2I0fXatIgfkQYqeRX90K1Qw3UV52rOddku4Wg1eqY4cHvisMGYeT3MRPpmriBaD5yWmvxJVfavqd3thrE) .

For further information about the flu vaccination please visit [www.abm.wales.nhs.uk/flu](http://www.abm.wales.nhs.uk/flu)

Source: [Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board](http://www.abm.wales.nhs.uk/)