

- everyone living in a residential or nursing home
- everyone who is the main carer for an older or disabled person
- household contacts of anyone who is immunocompromised
- all frontline health and social care workers

Contact times:

Office hours 08.00 to 1700
Monday to Friday

Telephone 01274 364049

We use Next Generation Text for people with hearing difficulties. This used to be called BT Text Relay'. To contact us ring **18001 01274 36 4049**.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff.

Office administrator email address:

Infection.control@bthft.nhs.uk

Smoking

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke in any of the hospital buildings or grounds, with the exception of the smoking shelters which are provided for visitors and patients only.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.

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Bradford Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Flu (Influenza)

**How you can protect
yourself and others**

Information for Patients, Relatives,
Carers and Visitors

This leaflet will help you understand the causes, symptoms and prevention of Flu

What is flu? How will I know I've got it?

- Flu is caused by influenza viruses that circulate in the community every year, usually in the winter. It's a highly infectious disease with symptoms that come on very quickly.
- The most common symptoms of flu are similar to colds but with fever, chills, headache, aches and pains in the joints and muscles, and extreme tiredness. Healthy individuals usually recover within two to seven days.

How do you catch flu and can I avoid it?

- When an infected person coughs or sneezes, they spread the flu virus in tiny droplets over a wide area. These droplets can then be breathed in by other people or they can be picked up by touching surfaces where the droplets have landed and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes.
- You can reduce the risk of flu by avoiding contact with other cases and good hand hygiene. Flu vaccination is effective and it is particularly important that those who are at higher risk of flu complication or are health care staff receive the vaccine.

- If you have flu you can help prevent the spread to others by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and disposing of the tissue and by frequent hand washing or use of alcohol hand gel.

What harm can flu do?

Some people are more susceptible to the effects of flu. For them, it can increase the risk of developing more serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia, or can make existing conditions worse. In the worst cases, flu can result in a stay in hospital, or even death.

Am I at increased risk from flu?

Flu can affect anyone but if you have a health condition that affects your immune system or have underlying disorders that makes flu complication more likely. People at higher risk include those who are: pregnant or have:

- a heart problem
- a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or severe asthma
- a kidney disease
- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment)
- liver disease

- Diabetes
- a neurological condition, eg multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy or learning disability
- a problem with the spleen, eg sickle cell disease, or spleen removed
- a weight problem (BMI of 40 or more).

What treatment should I take for flu?

The mainstay of treatment is to use simple pain relief such as paracetamol and drink plenty of fluids. Antibiotics are not active against flu because they don't work against viruses. There are some specific antivirals that help if taken early in the infection and these are especially useful in people at high risk of complications. Complications of flu such as pneumonia may require antibiotic treatment.

Who should consider having a flu vaccination?

- everyone aged 65 and over
- everyone under 65 years of age who has a long term medical condition as listed above, including children and babies over six months of age
- all pregnant women, at any stage of pregnancy
- all two- and three- year-old children
- all children in reception class or primary school