

Healthier Communities,
Outstanding Care



Sherwood Forest Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Seasonal Flu

Information for patients



What are the symptoms of seasonal flu?

The main symptoms are:

- A high temperature above 38 degrees.
- Cough
- Joint or muscle pain.
- Sore throat or runny/blocked nose.

In addition to these, other symptoms may include:

- Headache.
- Fatigue.
- Feeling sick or being sick/diarrhoea.
- Loss of appetite.

How can I catch it?

The virus is contagious and can spread between people. This can be spread by coughing or sneezing, touching surfaces/objects that have become contaminated with the flu virus.

What happens if you have flu like symptoms or a heavy cold?

- A swab will be taken from your nose and throat to see if you are carrying the virus.
- You will be isolated in a side-room or placed with other patients who have flu symptoms while awaiting the results of the swab.

How long will I be infectious to others?

People are most infectious soon after the virus they develop symptoms. They can continue to spread the virus, for example coughing or sneezing. People are considered no longer infectious when they start to feel better or 7 days from the start of symptoms. Children and people with multiple health conditions are considered no longer infectious as soon as they feel better, or 10 days from the start of symptoms.

What can I do to protect against Infection?

- Good hand hygiene.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throwing it in a bin after.
- Cleaning surfaces regular with disinfectant.
- Having your flu vaccine at the beginning of each flu season.

I am pregnant or at particular risk

You may be at greater risk of catching seasonal flu because your immune system is likely to be weaker. Therefore, you should talk to your GP or ward staff before visiting anyone with flu. Pregnant women are strongly advised to get vaccinated against flu.

If you have and are suspected of having flu while you are an inpatient, staff will follow the Trust's RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTION (SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED) POLICY.

You will be isolated with respiratory isolation precautions in a side room, with the door kept shut and respiratory precautions sign placed on the door. Staff will wash their hands before and after contact with you and personal protective equipment (PPE) will be worn when they are entering the room and for prolonged direct contact with you.

If your results come back negative, you will move to a bay if a bed is available.



Adults who can have the flu vaccine

The flu vaccine is given free on the NHS to people who:

- Are 50 and over (including those who'll be 50 by 31 March 2022).
- Have certain health conditions.
- Are pregnant.
- Are in long-stay residential care.
- Receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick.
- Live with someone who is more likely to get infections (such as someone who has HIV, has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus, or rheumatoid arthritis).
- Frontline health or social care workers.

Where to get the flu vaccine

You can have the NHS flu vaccine at:

- Your GP surgery.
- A pharmacy offering the service.
- Your midwifery service if you're pregnant.
- A hospital appointment.

Who should have the nasal spray flu vaccine?

The nasal spray flu vaccine is free on the NHS for:

- Children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2021 – born between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2019.
- All primary school children (reception to year 6),
- All year 7 to year 11 children in secondary school.
- Children aged 2 to 17 years with long-term health conditions.

If your child is aged between 6 months and 2 years and has a long-term health condition that makes them at higher risk from flu, they'll be offered a flu vaccine injection instead of the nasal spray.



Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202208-05-SF
Created: Aug 2022 / Review Date: Aug 2024