



RoodlaneMedical

Pandemic H1N1 Infection Update

15 February 2010

Rates of influenza and flu-like illness have been below normal seasonal levels throughout the early part of 2010. The anticipated "third wave" of H1N1 has not materialised. It is probable that many individuals exposed to the virus have had mild infection that has gone unreported.

Deaths from H1N1 (2009) influenza have been fewer than in previous pandemics and in some flu seasons. The most significant feature of the new virus has been that it has affected pregnant women and young adults and children, particularly the under-5's, disproportionately. This is a common feature of new flu viruses which generally reduces over time.

National Pandemic response stood down

The National Pandemic Flu Service (NPFS) in England was stood down from **11 February 2010**. The latest advice at national level from the Department of Health can be summarised as follows:

1. Closure of NPFS in England

The NPFS closed at 1am Thursday 11 February 2010, with both web and phone services discontinued simultaneously. People ringing the line after this point will hear a message directing them to contact their GPs if appropriate and giving information about swine flu and self-care.

2. Obtaining antiviral medication

GPs can continue to make antivirals available to all patients with influenza-like illness, subject to their clinical discretion, until the end of March 2010. Antiviral policy will then revert to normal (as per the pre-existing advice issued by NICE, the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, www.nice.org.uk). Antiviral collection points will continue to function until 1 April.

3. Vaccination of pregnant women and the under-5's

The Department of Health continues to urge GPs to offer immunisation to clinical priority groups on the basis that both pregnant women and the under-5's were disproportionately affected by H1N1-2009. See previous Flu Updates for discussion of vaccination in high risk groups. Please also be aware that H1N1 vaccine is currently **only available through the NHS**.

The future of Pandemic H1N1-2009

It is likely that the new H1N1 virus will be the predominant flu virus in the 2010 flu season. There is also a likelihood that over time the composition of the virus will change slightly so that it can become more (or less) dangerous. This phenomenon of “antigenic drift” is why seasonal flu vaccines need to change slightly every year.

Roodlane’s advice to our clients

- We recommend you no longer collect statistics on flu and flu-like illness as per national advice and will advise if this situation changes.
- The seasonal flu vaccine for the 2010 flu campaign will contain an H1N1 component to protect against the current and any “drifted” strains of the new virus.
- Roodlane will offer the new seasonal vaccine from autumn 2010 and we will help you to plan your next seasonal campaigns as usual.

For further information on planning for flu vaccine campaigns please contact:

seasonalflu@roodlane.co.uk

For specific advice on H1N1 or related issues that are not related to the planning of a vaccination campaign then please contact your usual client relationship manager at Roodlane:

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