

To:  
General Practitioners  
Out of Hours  
Accident and Emergency Departments

Health Protection Agency  
Dorset and Somerset Health Protection Unit  
The Wing  
East Reach House  
East Reach  
Taunton TA1 3EN  
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Dear Colleague

### **Swine Flu Pandemic - Update**

As you are aware, the government announced a move from containment to treatment phase across the UK yesterday. The CMO letter sent out today outlines the response to date and sets out future actions. It also highlights groups considered to be at high risk.

The move to treatment phase essentially consists of:

- **stopping routine swabbing of all suspected cases**

While swabs may still be appropriate based on clinical or epidemiological need (for example, unusual clinical presentation), there will be no need for routine swabs to be undertaken in primary care. Swabbing may be appropriate in certain hospital cases or 'spotter' practices

- **stopping routine contact tracing and prophylaxis to all close contacts**

close household contacts in high risk groups may still be considered for prophylaxis. See Appendix A attached for further details

- **cases will be diagnosed and treated with antivirals based on clinical features, and not laboratory results**

It would be advisable to offer antivirals to all those with symptoms strongly compatible with Swine Influenza H1N1.

Clinical features compatible with Swine Influenza H1N1 include:

- \* a temperature of  $\geq 38$  degrees Celsius or history of fever

AND

- \* two or more of the symptoms of cough, sore throat, rhinorrhoea, limb/joint pain, headache

It will not be necessary to offer antivirals where there are only minor symptoms or respiratory symptoms which appear unrelated to Swine Influenza H1N1

Swine influenza is not generally considered an emergency out of hours. Most suspect cases overnight can be given advice about treatment of symptoms and referred to their own GP (or OOH at weekends) the following day, if appropriate. However action may need to be considered more urgently if clinical symptoms are severe enough to warrant a home visit and/or if the patient is in a high risk group.

The possibility of offering antivirals only to those considered to be in high risk groups is being kept under review.

Members of the public are being advised to contact NHS Direct or the Swine Flu information line initially. If still concerned, they will be advised to phone their GP Surgery and not visit either the Surgery or A & E.

If Swine Flu is clinically suspected, please issue a prescription as usual. **Please cross out FP10 and mark 'No payment – AV'**. A flu friend will need to collect the script and take it to an antiviral collection point to pick up antivirals. Procedures for accessing antiviral medication will remain unchanged in Somerset for the present and will be via the community pharmacies listed in Appendix B attached and the six out of hours urgent care service centres. Further guidance on the location of antiviral collection can be obtained via Somerset Primary Link on 01749 836706 between the hours of 0800hrs and 1900hrs.

As cases rise further, it is expected that the UK will move to a system where cases are diagnosed and dealt with by the National Pandemic Flu Service. This will take the pressure off GPs. In the meantime, if you wish to discuss cases with significant clinical or public health implications, such as care homes, please contact either the Regional Flu Centre on 0845 425 1754 or the local Health Protection Unit on 01823 287817(OOHs via Musgrove Park Hospital switchboard on 01823 333444).

For your information, the Department of Health has published *Swine Flu Pandemic: from Containment to Treatment – Guidance for the NHS 2 July 2009*. The guidance contains details of the specific role and responsibilities for general practice. For ease, I attach that section of the guidance as Appendix C. The full guidance can be found by following the link below:

[www.dh.gov.uk/swineflutreatmentphase](http://www.dh.gov.uk/swineflutreatmentphase)

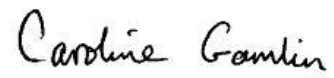
Through this link you will also find a number of other guidance documents, including a section called 'clinical package' containing guidance on community assessment of adults and children. For your convenience, a copy of these are attached as well.

Thank you very much for your help during this challenging period.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Dr K Kumaran in black ink.

**Dr K Kumaran**  
**Consultant in Communicable Disease Control**

Handwritten signature of Dr. Caroline Gamlin in black ink.

**Dr. Caroline Gamlin**  
**Joint Director of Public Health**  
**NHS Somerset and Somerset**  
**County Council**

From the Chief Medical Officer, SP Liam Donaldson



## ANNEX A

### Pandemic influenza - Who are the high risk groups?

Some people will be at greater risk of becoming more seriously ill from swine flu than others. As advised by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) these high risk groups are:

- People with:
  - Chronic lung disease
  - Chronic heart disease
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - Chronic liver disease
  - Chronic neurological disease
  - Immunosuppression (whether caused by disease or treatment)
  - Diabetes mellitus
  
- Patients who have had drug treatment for their asthma within the past three years
- Pregnant women
- People aged 65 years and older
- Young children under 5 years old.

**Wellington**

Lloyds Pharmacy  
Luson Surgery  
Fore Street  
Wellington  
TA21 8AG

**0900 - 1830 Monday to Friday**

Contact number 01823 662446

**Williton**

Lloyds Pharmacy  
Williton Surgery  
Robert Street  
Williton  
TA4 4QE

**0900 - 1830 Monday to Friday**

**0900 - 1300 Saturday**

Contact number 01984 632512

**Burnham**

Boots The Chemists  
15/17 High Street  
Burnham-on-Sea  
Somerset  
TA8 1NX

**0830 - 1800 Monday, Tuesday, Wed, Friday**

**0900 - 1800 Thursday**

**0830 - 1730 Saturday**

**1000 to 1600 Sundays commencing 5 July through to and including 6 September**

Contact number 01278 782029

**Glastonbury Pharmacy**

The Glastonbury Surgery  
Feversham Lane  
Glastonbury  
BA6 9LP

**0700 - 2300 Monday to Friday**  
**0700 - 1900 Saturday**  
**0900 - 1300 1330 - 1730 Sunday**

Contact number 01458 834986

**Evercreech (Shepton Mallet)**

Evercreech Pharmacy  
Victoria Square  
Evercreech  
BA4 6JP

**0900 - 1300 1400 - 1800 Monday to Friday**  
**0900 - 1300 Saturday**

Contact number 01749 830267

**Bridgwater**

Sainsbury Pharmacy (The Clink)  
The Clink, Bridgwater, TA6 4AB  
Pharmacy is open:

**0800 – 2000 Monday to Wednesday**  
**0800 – 2100 Thursday and Friday**  
**0800 – 1900 Saturday**  
**1000 – 1600 Sunday**

Contact number 01278 422108

**Minehead**

Boots the Chemist (The Parade)  
14-16 The Parade, Minehead, TA24 5UG  
Pharmacy is open:

**0830 – 1330 1430 – 1730 Monday to Saturday**  
**1000 – 1600 Sunday**

Contact number 01643 702004

**Taunton**

Asda Pharmacy (Creechbarrow Road)  
Creechbarrow Road, Taunton, TA1 2AN

Pharmacy is open:

**0900 – 1230 1430 – 1800 1830 – 2100 Monday to Saturday**

**1000 – 1300 1400 – 1600 Sunday**

**Direct line to pharmacy: 01823 448010**

Contact number 01823 252701 **(this is the general store number)**

**Yeovil**

Asda Pharmacy (Preston Road)  
Preston Rd, Yeovil, BA20 2HB

Pharmacy is open:

**0730 – 2300 Monday**

**0700 – 2300 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday**

**0700 – 2330 Friday**

**0700 – 2100 Saturday**

**1000 – 1600 Sunday**

**Direct line to pharmacy : 01935 709510**

Contact number 01935 709500 **(this is the general store number)**

**Street**

Sainsbury's Pharmacy (Gravenchon Way)  
Gravenchon Way, Street, BA16 0HS.

Pharmacy is open:

**0700 – 2300 Monday to Friday**

**0700 – 2200 Saturday**

**1000 – 1600 Sunday**

**Direct line to pharmacy 01458 442764**

**Frome**

Sainsbury Pharmacy (Wessex Fields)  
Wessex Fields, Marston Road, Frome, BA11 4DH

Pharmacy is open:

**0700 – 2300 Monday to Friday**

**0700 – 2200 Saturday**

**1000 – 1600 Sunday**

**Direct line to pharmacy 01373 473284**

Contact number 01373 453554 **(This is the general store number)**

### General Practice

The RCGP and BMA, with DH support, are revising guidance for GPs and a CMO alert letter is being issued to all medical staff today. In the light of this, GPs are asked to:

- encourage people who have flu symptoms to stay at home in order to avoid spreading the infection;
- assess and clinically diagnose people (rather than swabbing and testing) with influenza-like illness, particularly ensuring that those patients in higher risk groups are prescribed antivirals;
- ensure that all under 1s who are symptomatic are seen, given a general examination and authorised the appropriate antiviral medication;
- provide, in the interim, locally-agreed documentation to the patient's flu friend to obtain the appropriate antivirals from the local pharmacy or ACP, depending upon local arrangements. National 'authorisation vouchers' will be distributed to PCTs in advance of the NPFS being introduced;
- prepare staff and patients for the transition to the National Pandemic Flu Service, where people with suspected pandemic swine flu will be able to be assessed and diagnosed using a national web and a telephony service. We expect the service will be ready to be stood up, if needed, by the middle of July;
- undertake and provide assurance to the local PCT that their Flu Pandemic Plan has been tested to ensure its resilience, working with partner practices to ensure business continuity.