

# Swine flu adult community assessment tool

For use in all adults aged 16 years or older in the community.

This assessment tool should be used during a pandemic situation to assist with the decision as to whether a sick febrile adult with flu-like illness needs referral to the nearest general hospital Emergency Department. The majority of adults are expected to be managed in the community.

**Respiratory failure, shock, heart failure and encephalopathy are the most likely modes of presentation in adults suffering from severe infection.**

| Criteria label | REFER ADULTS TO THE NEAREST GENERAL HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IF THEY PRESENT WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:   |
|----------------|--|
| <b>A</b>       | <b>Severe respiratory distress</b><br>Severe breathlessness, e.g. unable to complete sentences in one breath.<br>Use of accessory muscles, supra-clavicular recession, tracheal tug or feeling of suffocation.                         |
| <b>B</b>       | <b>Increased respiratory rate</b> measured over at least 30 seconds.<br>Over 30 breaths per minute.  |
| <b>C</b>       | <b>Oxygen saturation <math>\leq 92\%</math> on pulse oximetry, breathing air or on oxygen</b><br>Absence of cyanosis is a poor discriminator for severe illness.   |
| <b>D</b>       | <b>Respiratory exhaustion</b><br>New abnormal breathing pattern, e.g. alternating fast and slow rate or long pauses between breaths.   |
| <b>E</b>       | <b>Evidence of severe clinical dehydration or clinical shock</b><br>Systolic blood pressure $< 90\text{mmHg}$ and/or diastolic blood pressure $< 60\text{mmHg}$ .<br>Sternal capillary refill time $> 2$ seconds, reduced skin turgor. |
| <b>F</b>       | <b>Altered conscious level</b><br>New confusion, striking agitation or seizures.   |
| <b>G</b>       | <b>Causing other clinical concern to their own GP or clinical team</b><br>e.g. a rapidly progressive or an unusually prolonged illness.  |

## Further information

- The tool is designed to support and empower all healthcare professionals working in difficult circumstances with limited resources but does not supersede a decision by an experienced clinician about whether, when or where to refer an adult.
- The assessment applies to all adults aged 16 years or over and is independent of any prior or existing medical condition.
- Fever alone is not used as a criterion for referral as it is a poor discriminator for severe illness.
- Difficulty in self care indicates a need for assessment but is not by itself a good measure of severe illness or need for hospital admission. Referral to a community-based support facility may be suitable.
- When referral is not indicated, a copy of the home care advice leaflet should be provided, with encouragement to seek medical advice again should the adult's condition deteriorate.
- Every assessment should include a record of the time of assessment and time of onset of illness. Referrals must include the criteria label(s) to assist with the treatment of adults on arrival at hospital.

*The Swine Flu Adult Community Assessment Tool is endorsed by: The Royal College of General Practitioners, The Royal College of Physicians, The Royal College of Nursing, The College of Emergency Medicine, The Directors of Clinical Care of UK Ambulance Trusts and The British Medical Association.*