



## Newsletter Nov 09 - Jan 2010

### Swine Flu Immunisations

We are hoping to receive our first assignment of vaccines in the week commencing 2nd November. The order of immunisation will be, as per DOH guidelines:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Children from 6 months old to 65yo in the seasonal flu at-risk groups
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Pregnant women
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Household contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- 4<sup>th</sup> Over 65year of age and in the seasonal flu at-risk groups

Some groups will need to have 2 injections, 3 weeks apart. You will be informed if you do, at the time of your 1<sup>st</sup> injection. Please ask at reception about booking in to either our Saturday morning or Thursday afternoon clinics, if you are in the above groups.

### Questions and answers

#### 1. Do I need to have the vaccine if I have already had swine flu?

If your swine flu was confirmed by laboratory testing (swabs were taken early in the 1<sup>st</sup> wave of illness only), then no. Otherwise, yes, you should have it. It won't harm you and it may be that your earlier illness was not in fact swine flu, as symptoms from different illnesses can overlap.

#### 2. Why do I need the seasonal flu vaccine and the swine flu vaccine?

The seasonal flu vaccine is to protect against strains of flu that the experts predict are most likely to start circulating in winter. The swine flu is an entirely different flu virus and immunisation against each strain is required. Both vaccines can be given at the same time.

#### 3. Is it safe, especially if I am pregnant?

Yes. The vaccine has been extensively tested, which is partly why there has been a delay in its arrival. As with the seasonal flu vaccine, the commonest side effects are mild muscle and joint aches, but headache and low grade temperature as well as localised discomfort at the injection site, are possible. It is extremely rare, for any more serious reactions to occur. However, as the Pandermix vaccine does contain traces of egg protein, it should not be used if you have a history or anaphylaxis (which means breathing problems and or collapse) in response to egg. However intolerance to egg, such as diarrhoea and abdominal pain or eczema related to eating egg, are not important. In cases of true anaphylaxis, the alternative vaccine, Celvapan, should be used. However we don't know when we will get supplies of that vaccine.

### Results of survey into improving phone access.

We undertook a survey of 50 patients on a number of options to improve phone access.

The results are as follows:

1. Ranked "main problem with telephone access is..."

1st - Obtaining engaged tone when trying to make a same day appointment

Much lower scoring was:

2nd - Delay in phone being answered by reception

3rd - Phone lines closed Thursday afternoons

2. Options answering service

a) "Knowing where I am in the queue of callers would be useful"

Agree-89%      Disagree- 11%

b) Knowing an approximate time until my call will be answered would be useful

Agree-86%      Disagree-14%

c) "I don't mind Options answering technology if it means that my call will be answered more quickly"

Agree-74%      Disagree-26%

d) "I definitely do not want any Options answering service"

Agree-32%      Disagree-68%

3. In regard to different options for introducing phone appointments/clinics:

70% said keep things as they are

15% said one Dr each day should undertake a phone surgery

15% said 1/4 of GP appointments in morning and afternoon should be given over to phone clinic slots

On this basis, we are going to proceed with the Options telephone answering service, but not introduce any phone clinics at present.

**Christmas and New Year opening**

In agreement with the PCT, we will be closing our doors at 2pm on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> December and re-open at 8am on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> December.

Similarly, we will close at 2pm on 31<sup>st</sup> December. We will re-open Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January

**Comments and suggestions:**

*Please note we also now have an on-line suggestions box on our website*

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Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_