



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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10 March 2016

TO ALL NURSING AND RESIDENTIAL HOME MATRONS AND MANAGERS

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Influenza like Illness Management and Preparedness

We are writing to you to inform you that there is now widespread influenza activity nationwide and an increased possibility of influenza like illness occurring amongst your residents.

The very best protection for seasonal influenza is the annual influenza vaccination. In addition we also advise that you ensure that your residents are also up to date with their pneumococcal vaccinations to reduce the risk of secondary infections. Your residents can still be vaccinated with the current seasonal influenza vaccine if they have not yet had this and we would strongly recommend that they have this vaccination this year and every year. As mentioned previously, this is the best protection we have against seasonal influenza, and it saves lives.

It is also important that you are aware of which of your residents have received these vaccinations and keep a record of this in their local care plan. This is important if an outbreak occurs and can help with both the outbreak investigation and planning of care.

The Chief Medical Office for England has also issued her normal seasonal advisory letter letting all clinicians know that as influenza activity is now widespread, a clinician who suspects an Influenza-like illness may prescribe anti-viral drugs such as Oseltamivir (Tamiflu). For illnesses like Influenza prompt taking of anti-virals (usually within 48 hours, it may be of benefit if it is taken up to 5 days later and at any time for severely ill patients) may be of benefit to your residents by reducing illness severity and duration.

In the situation where there is an outbreak of influenza we can therefore, on a case by case basis, consider the prescription of anti-virals for residents who are ill and

also to otherwise well residents as prophylaxis to prevent illness as part of an outbreak management strategy.

As anti-virals have their optimum benefit if taken within 48 hours of illness or exposure, it is very important that you consult with your local General Practitioners as soon as possible if you suspect Influenza like illness amongst your residents. If you have an outbreak of influenza like illness your local Health Protection Team can also assist you with expert advice, support and direction.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B Pankhania". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Dr Bharat Pankhania
Consultant Communicable Disease Control