
Treatment Information

Swine Flu

National Pandemic Flu Service

0800 1 513 100

www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

What are the symptoms of swine flu?

Typical symptoms are sudden fever (38°C / 100.4°F) and sudden cough. Other symptoms are headache, chills, aching muscles and joints, diarrhoea or stomach upset, sore throat, runny nose, loss of appetite

Can I avoid catching swine flu?

In general you should not change your daily activities to avoid exposure to swine flu. If you know that someone has symptoms of swine flu then it would be sensible to avoid this person, if possible, for the duration they have symptoms.

What should I do if I feel well?

If you feel well and have not been in contact with a person with swine flu you should continue all your arthritis medications.

What should I do if I have been exposed to someone who has symptoms of swine flu?

Symptoms of swine flu develop within 2-7 days of exposure. If you have prolonged contact (more than 1 hour in the same room or house as a person with swine flu) you should contact the pandemic flu line National Pandemic Flu Service **0800 1 513 100** or www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu, your GP or out of hours service to assess your symptoms. You should stop your medications as described below. If you have not developed flu like symptoms within 7 days your medications can be re-started.

What should I do if I develop symptoms of swine 'flu?

If you develop symptoms of swine flu you should contact the National Pandemic Flu Service (National Pandemic Flu Service **0800 1 513 100**, www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu, your GP or out of hours service to consider treatment with tamiflu in the usual way.

Rheumatology department Patient Information

- Patients taking any of the following therapies
 - Adalimumab (Humira), etanercept (enbrel), infliximab (Remicade), rituximab (Mabthera), cyclophosphamide, methotrexate, azathioprine (Imuran), ciclosporin (Neoral), hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil), mycophenolate Mofetil (Cellcept), gold, leflunomide (Arava), sulphasalazine (Salazopyrin)

- Stop these treatments until the symptoms of swine flu have gone away completely. You can then restart your treatment.

- Steroids (e.g. prednisolone) **MUST NOT** be stopped. If you are unwell the dose may need to be increased. Please discuss with your GP.

- You can continue to take painkiller and anti-inflammatory tablets.

- If your flu symptoms are very severe or getting worse it is important to seek advice from your GP. This is because you may be at higher risk of developing a bacterial infection that requires treatment with antibiotics.

Is it safe for me to take tamiflu?

Tamiflu is safe to take if you have arthritis. You should stop your arthritis tablets as described above.

Should I have a 'flu jab?

When the swine flu vaccination is available (later in the Summer or Autumn) it is likely that your GP surgery will run a programme of vaccination in the same way as the usual annual 'flu jab. It is safe to have this vaccination.

You should also have the usual annual 'flu jab in the normal way.

Contact Details

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment phone the Rheumatology Advice line on

01202 442849.

www.poole.nhs.uk/our_services/rheumatology.asp

Rheumatology department Patient Information

For further health-related information, please contact:

The Health Information & Resource Centre

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Longfleet Road

Poole

BH15 2JB

Telephone: (01202) 448003

Rheumatology Practitioners

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We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. A member of staff will be happy to discuss this with you. Please call PALS on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice