

HIGH-RISK GROUPS

Some people are more at risk of serious illness if they catch swine flu, and will need to start taking anti-virals as soon as they are confirmed with the illness. The risk profile of the virus is still being studied but it is already known that the following people are particularly vulnerable:

- people with chronic lung disease,
- people with chronic heart disease,
- people with chronic kidney disease,
- people with chronic liver disease,
- people with chronic neurological disease (neurological disorders include motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease),
- people with immunosuppression (whether caused by disease or treatment),
- people with diabetes mellitus,
- patients who have had drug treatment for asthma in the past three years,
- pregnant women,
- people aged 65 years and older, and
- children under five years old.

Please note that being associated with an “at risk group” does not make an individual categorised as at risk themselves.

E.g. having a wife who is pregnant or having a child that is Asthmatic does not make the individual an at risk group; no special action at work is necessary for that individual.

If you are classed as at risk in the above categories and wish to consider workplace adjustments regarding swine flu, it is your responsibility to inform Occupational Health or your line manager.

High-Risk groups and the Swine flu vaccine

A vaccine to protect against swine flu is being developed and manufactured but it is not available yet.

The first batches of vaccine are expected to arrive in the autumn, and 30 million double doses - enough for half the population - are expected to be available by the end of the year or just after.

The government has ordered enough vaccine for the whole population and, when it becomes available, the programme of vaccination will focus on those at the greatest risk first.

It is vital that you register with a local doctor's surgery if you are in one of the above high risk groups. The University strongly recommends that all

staff and students are registered with a local GP. If you have any problems registering with a GP then the staff at the University Health Centre, 47 Park Place; 02920 874810; will be happy to explain the process and to facilitate registration for you.

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