

Swine 'Flu – update 30 April 2009

The facts so far

- There are a small number of confirmed cases in the UK .
- There are no confirmed cases in Surrey.
- The World Health Organisation's alert level is Phase 5.
- The main message remains: always use a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, throw away used tissues and regularly wash your hands.

Yesterday Health Secretary Alan Johnson announced:

- a mass public health campaign to inform the public, beginning today with print, TV and radio adverts
- a leaflet will be dropped through people's doors from next Tuesday
- steps to increase the national stockpile of the antiviral drugs tamiflu and relenza to provide for 50 million people.
- That DH has ordered additional, specialist facemasks for NHS staff. The surgical masks incorporating a filter will be for use by frontline NHS staff when dealing constantly with affected patients masks.

A national swine flu helpline is now available and members of the public can ring 0800 1 513 513 to listen to the latest information.

The World Health Organisation yesterday raised the alert level to Phase 5, one level below pandemic status. This does not necessarily mean that pandemic 'flu will happen but indicates it is now spreading between humans in at least two countries.

We plan to take care of you

We have advanced, tested, plans to manage 'flu outbreaks and are prepared for a pandemic should it occur. We are monitoring the situation closely and we will keep you informed through regular updates.

To lead Surrey's response to swine flu, the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) has been set up. This group includes the NHS Surrey, Surrey County Council, Surrey Police

and other partner organisations. SCG is meeting regularly to monitor the situation, take all necessary actions and ensure infection control measures are in place.

2 simple measures to help yourself, your family and in your work

- **Wash your hands regularly.** This will reduce the chance of transferring any type of infection.
- **'Catch it, bin it, kill it' is the message.** Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing into a tissue and dispose carefully.

There is no need for anyone at this stage to wear gloves, masks or gowns, unless you are a health professional treating someone who has recently returned from an affected area and who is experiencing the symptoms described above.

Advice for anyone returning from an affected area

If you, a member of your family or someone you are caring for or work with, has just returned from an area affected, it is important to monitor your/their health closely over the next seven days. If you remain well, there is no need to isolate yourself or take any further precautions. If you visited an area affected and you begin to experience 'flu-type symptoms, then don't go to your GP, stay home and call them or call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or contact them via www.nhs.uk.

For further information and updates

Please check www.surreyalert.info and www.surreyhealth.nhs.uk regularly for more information about Surrey's response to swine flu.