

## **News release**

Monday September 26, 2011  
For immediate release

### **Get the jab that could save your life**

Last winter's flu outbreak resulted in over 600 deaths in the UK, and thousands more people died with flu as a contributory factor.

The NHS in the East Midlands is today launching a campaign to encourage people at risk of flu to get protected and have the vaccine.

Four groups have been identified as being most at risk:

- Pregnant women
- People with long term conditions which can be anything from diabetes to asthma, heart disease and multiple sclerosis.
- Carers, and
- People over 65 years

Ivan Browne, consultant in public health speaking on behalf of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster, said: "Flu is different to getting a cold and the effects of seasonal flu are often underestimated. Some people are more at risk from flu and need the vaccine because they are not able to fight off flu as easily as others. It can often result in more serious complications which require hospital treatment – and the figures from last winter show that sometimes there can be devastating consequences.

"This can be prevented by having the vaccine, which is being provided free at GP surgeries across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for people with long term conditions, carers, those over 65 and pregnant women.

"Flu is a highly infectious illness caused by a virus. It changes every year as does the vaccine to fight it, so it is important that those at risk protect themselves every year. Getting the free jab helps protect them and their loved ones."

There are additional ways people can protect themselves and those around them. Good hand hygiene the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' technique – reduces the spread of germs. This means carrying tissues, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, disposing of the tissue after one use, and cleaning hands as soon as possible with soap and water or an alcohol hand gel.

Posters and information leaflets designed to bust flu myths and help educate people on the importance of getting the jab will be available at local GP surgeries, hospitals and clinics. Copies will also be available on the hospitals, primary care and partnership trusts and ambulance service websites.

ENDS

**For interviews or more information please contact media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or [liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk](mailto:liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk) or senior media officer Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663 or [caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk](mailto:caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk)**

Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving ongoing transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament and the House of Lords.