

## **News release**

Thursday October 27, 2011  
For immediate release

### **Older people urged to get the flu jab for winter protection**

Getting the flu jab is the best way to help protect you and others around you from getting flu this winter.

Health officials from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster are appealing for people over 65 to call their GP or healthcare worker to book a free flu vaccination appointment.

Last winter 72.2 per cent of over-65s in Leicestershire and Rutland and 70.1 per cent in Leicester city took up the offer of a free flu jab. This year more than 115,000 people aged 65 and over will be eligible across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for the vaccination.

Ivan Browne, consultant in public health speaking on behalf of the Cluster, said: "Getting your jab is the best way to protect yourself and others from flu this winter. Although most flu sufferers recover quickly, for others it can lead to serious illness. The elderly, people with long term conditions such as heart or lung problems and those with a weakened immune system are particularly vulnerable."

Many over 65s may not feel they need the jab but flu can become life-threatening in older people.

Mr Browne added: "Anyone who is 65 and over should take advantage of their offer of a free flu jab. It only requires a five minute appointment to have a jab that can prevent serious illness that can result in being admitted to hospital or, in a few cases, even death. The flu jab is a quick, easy way to have peace of mind and help maintain good health over the winter months."

There are five groups of people most at risk from flu – pregnant women; people with long-term conditions; people with weakened immune systems; people with certain conditions related to their nervous system and those over 65. It is important that anyone who falls into these categories visit their GP to get their jab. To book a flu jab or to get more advice call your GP surgery. If you need to register with a GP contact the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster customer services team on 0116 295 7011.

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 websites of University Hospitals of Leicester, NHS Leicester City, NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and East Midlands Ambulance Service.

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 on-going 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.