

For immediate release

Thursday February 2, 2012

It's not too late to vaccinate

Health officials in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are reminding people it's not too late to get the flu jab.

As the cold weather arrives, the flu virus continues to circulate in the community. Those at risk of getting serious complications from flu may be more vulnerable if they haven't yet had the flu jab.

Each winter the free flu jab is offered to people in 'at risk' groups. These include everyone aged 65 and over, children and adults under 65 with certain medical conditions and all pregnant women.

However, there are still some under 65s with long term conditions, such as heart or breathing problems, and pregnant women who have yet to have theirs. The vaccine takes around 10 days to start working, so the sooner people have it the quicker they'll be protected.

Professor Azhar Farooqi, GP and co-chair of the Leicester City CCG, said: "Flu is much more serious than 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. For these people, flu can often result in more serious complications which require hospital treatment. It can even be fatal in some cases.

"Flu can be prevented by having the vaccine, which is provided free at GP surgeries across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for those people most at risk."

If you think you may be eligible for the free flu jab, call your GP surgery now to check and to book an appointment. For more information on the flu vaccine, go to <http://www.leicestercity.nhs.uk/flu>.

ENDS

For interviews or more information please contact media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk senior media officer Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663 or 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.