



Countesthorpe Health Centre

FLU – ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Flu (also known as influenza) is a highly infectious illness caused by a flu virus and the swine flu virus.

Flu can give you any of these symptoms:

- Sudden fever (a temperature of 38°C / 100.4°F or above)
- Dry, chesty cough
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Chills
- Aching muscles
- Limb or joint pain
- Diarrhoea or stomach upset
- Sore throat
- Runny or blocked nose
- Sneezing
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty sleeping.

Babies and small children with flu may also appear drowsy, unresponsive and floppy.

Your symptoms will usually peak after 2 to 3 days and you should begin to feel much better within 5 to 8 days. A cough and general tiredness may last for 2 to 3 weeks.

Flu or Cold?

Many of the symptoms of flu are similar to those of the common cold, and many people incorrectly refer to a heavy cold as flu.

- Symptoms of a cold appear gradually, are not severe and affect just your nose and throat.
- Symptoms of flu are more severe, causing fever and aching muscles. You will not be able to do your usual activities.

Treating Flu

If you are otherwise fit and healthy, you can manage your symptoms of flu at home (see below). You will usually get better without treatment.

If you are in an at-risk group (see box) and have flu-like symptoms, or if your flu symptoms are getting worse, see your GP. These groups are more likely to suffer complications from flu. You may be prescribed antiviral medication (see below).

Antibiotics are not prescribed for flu as they have no effect on viruses. However occasionally it may be necessary to treat complications of flu, especially serious chest infections or pneumonia.

Caring for yourself at home

Make sure you have plenty of rest and are taking paracetamol-based cold remedies to lower your temperature and relieve symptoms.

Some over-the-counter treatments can be given to children who have flu, according to the instructions supplied with each medicine. Under 16s must not take aspirin or ready-made flu remedies containing it.

Always read the medicine's label or check with the pharmacist that it is suitable for children to take.

Drink plenty of fluids while you are recovering. You may need to stay in bed for 2 to 3 days after your symptoms peak.

Antiviral Medication

If you are in a high-risk group (see box) and have flu-like symptoms, see your GP. You may be prescribed antivirals to take.

They will not cure flu but will help to:

- Reduce the length of time you are ill by around one day
- Relieve some of the symptoms
- Reduce the potential for serious complications

Antivirals work by stopping the virus from multiplying in your body.

At-risk groups

The following groups of people have a greater chance of developing complications and serious illness from flu:

- People aged 65 and over
- People with certain medical conditions (long-term heart, lung, kidney, liver or neurological disease, diabetes or those with a weakened immune system due to treatment or disease) and
- People living in nursing or residential homes where the spread of the virus is more likely
- Pregnant women

These patients will normally be offered the annual seasonal flu jab.

Prevention

Preventing the spread of germs is the most effective way to slow the spread of flu. Always:

- Ensure you wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- Clean surfaces regularly to get rid of germs
- Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in a bin as soon as possible

**If you need advice over the holiday period please contact
NHS Direct on 0845 4647**

**If you think you need to be seen by a doctor, telephone the surgery
on 0116 277 6361 and press 1 to be transferred to the Out of Hours
service. Alternatively, ring the service direct on 0845 045 0411.**

The nearest urgent care centres are:

**Feilding Palmer Hospital, Gilmorton Road, Lutterworth. LE17 4DZ
Tel 01455 552 150**

Open 8 am to 8 pm 365 days a year

Oadby & Wigston Walk-in Centre

18 The Parade, Oadby LE2 5BJ

Tel 0116 271 1360

Open 8 am to 8 pm 365 days a year

Urgent Care Centre

Leicester Royal Infirmary

Infirmary Square, Leicester LE1 5WW

Tel 0845 450 4113

Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Local pharmacies open over the Christmas/New Year period

Asda Pharmacy, Fosse Park Tel 0116 281 5010

Boots the Chemist, Fosse Park Tel 0116 289 2382

Sainsbury's Pharmacy, Grove Farm Triangle Tel 0116 282 6120

Asda Pharmacy, Leicester Road, Oadby Tel 0116 272 9519

Boots the Chemist, Bell Street, Wigston Tel 0116 288 6359

Sainsbury's Pharmacy, Glen Road, Oadby Tel 0116 272 0468