



Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
Preparing for Emergencies

Adapted for use in the Diocese of Newcastle

# An introduction to Pandemic Flu

# Understanding the term Pandemic

- ⊕ An **epidemic** is a widespread outbreak within a single community or geographical region.
- ⊕ A **pandemic** is a widespread outbreak around the world, affecting may hundreds of thousands of people, across many countries

# Seasonal Flu

- ✦ Occurs every year
- ✦ Affects 5-15% of the population
- ✦ For most people it is an unpleasant but not life threatening infection
- ✦ Most people recover within one to two weeks without requiring medical treatment
- ✦ The very young, the very old and people with some chronic illness are most at risk
- ✦ Vaccine is available in advance

# What is a flu pandemic?

- ✦ Flu pandemics are global epidemics of a newly emerged strain of flu
- ✦ Markedly different from recently circulating strains
- ✦ Able to infect people
- ✦ Readily transmissible from person to person
- ✦ Capable of causing illness in a high proportion of those infected
- ✦ Able to spread widely because few – if any – people have natural or acquired immunity to it.

# Influenza in the UK since 1900

Approximate deaths

- ⊕ **1918-19** H1N1 “Spanish” flu pandemic 198,000
- ⊕ **1957-58** H2N2 “Asian” flu pandemic 37,500
- ⊕ **1968-70** H3N2 “Hong Kong” flu pandemic 30,000

# Who is at risk?

- ✦ Everyone is at risk
- ✦ Certain groups may be at greater risk than others
- ✦ Until the virus starts to circulate we will probably not know for sure which groups will be most at risk.

# Influenza symptoms

- ✦ **Constitutional**; Fever ( $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), chills, headache, muscle and joint pains
- ✦ **Respiratory**; Cough, sore throat, hoarseness, stuffy or runny nose, shortness of breath, chest pain, sputum production.
- ✦ **Gastrointestinal**; vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain,
- ✦ **Neurological**; confusion, drowsiness, convulsions

## ⊕ Healthcare Demand

- The actual clinical attack rate (persons infected) will only become evident as person-to-person transmission develops, but the Trust's response plans consider a clinical attack rate of 50%, e.g; 50% of the Northumberland and North Tyneside population (**252,753 people**) developing or displaying symptoms of influenza over the course of a pandemic.
- At the peak of the pandemic (week 6-7) 21.6% of the Northumberland and North Tyneside population may be symptomatic (**54,540 people**).

## ✦ Healthcare Demand

- The Trust's plans consider a **0.4%** case fatality rate amongst the population of Northumberland and North Tyneside, which equates to **1011** people over a 15 week period.
- Up to **28%** of those who are symptomatic patients will develop complications (including all children under 3) requiring assessment and treatment by a general practitioner.

## ⊕ Healthcare Demand

- Up to **4%** of those who are symptomatic may require hospitalisation (**10,059** people over a 15 week period and **2,182** over the peak week).
- The average length of stay for those with complications will be 6-7 days (ten if requiring critical care)
- **25%** of hospital admissions will require critical care (**2,515** over the 15 week period and **545** over the peak week)

# Containing Pandemic flu

# Infection Control Precautions

## ✦ Hand Hygiene

(regular washing and gels, avoid touching mouth, nose & eyes)

## ✦ Droplet precautions

(use a tissue – not a handkerchief)

## ✦ Waste Management

(dispose of tissues in a plastic bag, don't re-use)

## ✦ Personal Protective Equipment

(masks, glasses & aprons are recommended in hospitals, but must be washed or disposed of after each use – they are probably not of value to us)



## Droplet Transmission

- ✦ Transmission via large-particle droplets requires close contact between the source and recipient as large droplets do not remain suspended in the air.
- ✦ Droplets can however, land on hard surfaces and remain infectious for some time. Clean hard surfaces like door handles regularly.
- ✦ Importance of Cough/Sneeze Etiquette (use a tissue).
- ✦ Masks are only of value when in close contact, and must be disposed of after each use.

# National Flu & Information Lines

- ✦ When the Pandemic threat increases, the Government will activate a National Flu & Information Line service
- ✦ The National Information Line will provide up to date information on flu, and general guidance on healthcare.
- ✦ At UK alert level 2 (WHO Phase 6) the flu line service will provide rapid assessment and where necessary access to antiviral treatment for symptomatic patients.



# Antiviral Medicines

- ✦ UK building a stockpile of antiviral drugs; oseltamivir (Tamiflu)
- ✦ If administered early (within 48hrs of onset of symptoms) they can improve the chances of people who get flu and could reduce hospitalisations by an estimated 33%
- ✦ The existing stockpiles allow for the treatment of all symptomatic patients at clinical attack rates up to 25%. There are plans to extend the stockpile to 50%



# Social Interventions

- ⊕ The following interventions may be employed to reduce the spread of a pandemic;
  - Possible school closures
  - Symptomatic patients will be asked to stay at home or in a place of residence whilst ill
  - Possible restrictions on gatherings at local level – perhaps church attendance

# For consideration by Chapters

1. Hygiene

2. Pastoral Care

3. Public Meetings

4. Chalice

5. Communications

6. Hospitals

7. Financial Matters

# Contacts and Links for further information on Pandemic Influenza.

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Flu/PandemicFlu/DH\\_065006](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Flu/PandemicFlu/DH_065006)

(or put: 'department health pandemic flu' into your search engine)

Symptoms can be check through NHS direct: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)  
or call: 0845 4647

Keep an eye on the Diocesan website too.