SWINE FLU JAB
What you need to know

Easy read
This booklet is an Easy read version of a booklet called *Swine flu vaccination: what you need to know*.

When we say *we* in this booklet, we mean the **National Health Service** or **NHS** for short.

There are some difficult words in this booklet.

There is a list of these words and what they mean on page 25.

These words are in **pink** letters in the booklet.

You may like to have someone to support you when you look at this booklet.
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This booklet is about a new type of flu called **swine flu**.

The booklet tells you:

- what swine flu is
- what you can do to protect yourself from swine flu
- who is most at risk from swine flu
- what to do if you think you or someone you know has swine flu.
What is swine flu?

Swine flu is a new type of flu.

Swine flu is not the same as the seasonal flu that comes round every year.

It is a completely new flu germ. Swine flu may affect more people than seasonal flu and it is more serious.

The jab you can have to help protect you against seasonal flu will not protect you against swine flu.

Jab is another word for injection.

If you have the seasonal flu jab you will need an extra jab to help protect you from swine flu. You need 2 different jabs because the 2 kinds of flu are different.
How bad is swine flu?

For most people, swine flu is not that bad.

Swine flu usually starts quickly and lasts for about a week.

If you have swine flu you will probably:

• have a fever and feel very hot and sweaty

• feel tired

• have a cough and sore throat.
You might also:

- have a headache
- have aching muscles
- feel shivery
- sneeze a lot.
You might also:

- have a runny nose
- not feel hungry
- be sick
- have an upset stomach.
And some people may be very ill with swine flu, including:

- people who have health problems already

- people who have a weak immune system. Your immune system is the part of your body that fights off illness and keeps you well

- pregnant women.

These people may need to go to hospital if they get swine flu. Some people may even die.

If you are one of these people, it is very important that you have a swine flu jab to help protect you from swine flu.
About the swine flu vaccine

Scientists have made new vaccines to help protect people against swine flu.

A vaccine is made from dead flu germs. It helps your body fight off swine flu. The vaccine is given to you by a jab in your arm.

There are 2 sorts of swine flu vaccine. They are called Pandemrix and Celvapan.

Most people who have Pandemrix will only need one jab.
People who have **Celvapan** will need another **jab** at least 3 weeks after the first jab.

**Swine flu jabs** are **different** from the **seasonal flu jabs** that you can have every year.

If you usually have the seasonal flu jab, you should have one this year as normal.

Because the **seasonal flu jab** does not protect you from swine flu, your doctor may say you should also have a **swine flu jab**.
Who will get the swine flu jab first?

At first we will only offer the swine flu jab to the people who are most likely to be very ill if they get swine flu.

These people are:

1. Adults and children over 6 months old who already have serious health problems

Like people who have:

- lung problems
- heart problems
- kidney problems
- liver problems
- diabetes
- no spleen. Your spleen is a part of your body that helps protect you against illness
- problems with their nervous system
- a weak immune system because of treatments or medicines they are taking for illnesses like cancer.
2. Pregnant women

Pregnant women are more likely to be very ill if they get swine flu.

Pregnant women are also more likely to need to go to hospital.

Swine flu is most dangerous towards the end of being pregnant, just before the baby is born.

3. People who live in the same house as someone with a weak immune system

If you get swine flu and you live with someone who has a weak immune system you might give them swine flu. This could make them very ill.

If you have a weak immune system, you should ask the people you live with to think about having a swine flu jab. This will help protect you from swine flu.
Talk to your doctor or practice nurse if you are worried about whether you should have the *swine flu jab*.

We will also offer the *swine flu jab* to people who work in health and social care who may look after people in the list on pages 10 to 12.
Who cannot have a swine flu jab?

There are only a few people who cannot have a swine flu jab.

You should not have the jab if:

- you have ever been very ill because of a swine flu vaccine
- you have ever been very ill because of one of the ingredients in the swine flu vaccine.

Talk to your doctor or practice nurse if you are worried about whether you should have the swine flu jab.
What about people who cannot eat eggs?

Some people cannot eat eggs because it makes them very ill. This is called being allergic to hens’ eggs.

Pandemrix is made using hens’ eggs. So you should not have the Pandemrix jab if you are very allergic to hens’ eggs.

Celvapan is not made using eggs. So you should have this jab if you are very allergic to hens’ eggs.
What about everyone else?

At first we will only offer a swine flu jab to the people in the list on pages 10 to 12, who are most at risk.

Later we might offer the jab to people who are not in the list.

We have ordered enough vaccine for everyone in the country if we need it.
What else do I need to know?

Are there any side-effects?

All vaccines can have side-effects, like soreness where you had the jab.

Side-effects are things that may happen to you because of a treatment you are having.

Flu vaccines can also give you:

- a fever

- a headache

- aching muscles.
These side-effects are not as bad as having flu and only last a few days.

But if you think that you or someone you know has had a very bad side-effect from Pandemrix or Celvapan, please visit the website www.mhra.gov.uk/swineflu

The vaccine is made with dead germs, so it cannot give you swine flu.
How can I be sure these new vaccines are safe and work well?

Pandemrix and Celvapan are both licensed vaccines. This means that experts say that the vaccines can be used to protect people from swine flu.

More than 5 million people have already had a swine flu vaccine, including children and older people.

These vaccines did not harm people and should protect them well against flu.

Seasonal flu vaccines are very safe. If we change the germs to make a vaccine for swine flu, that does not make the vaccine less safe.
Is the jab safe for pregnant women?

Experts have said that both Pandemrix and Celvapan can be given to pregnant women.

Pandemrix will protect you faster, as you only need one jab.

It is important that pregnant women have the swine flu jab, because they are at more risk of being very ill with swine flu.

And they are more likely to need to go to hospital if they have swine flu.

If you are about to have a baby, the jab could help protect you from swine flu and stop you giving swine flu to your baby.
What should I do if I think I’ve already had swine flu?

You do not need the jab if you are sure that you have already had swine flu. You can only be sure if you had a test that showed that you had swine flu.

But most people cannot be sure they have had swine flu.

People in the list on pages 10 to 12 should have the swine flu jab unless they have had a test that showed they have had swine flu.
Why is it a good idea to have the jab?

Having the *swine flu* jab will:

- help protect you from *swine flu*
- help protect your family and other people, who will not then catch *swine flu* from you.

The *jab* may also help protect you from similar sorts of *swine flu* in the future.
What should I do now?

If you are one of the people in the list on pages 10 to 12, you will be asked to go to a special clinic or to your doctor to get a **swine flu jab**.

Not everyone will get their **jab** at exactly the same time, so do not worry if you do not hear from your doctor straightaway.

You may need 2 jabs. Your doctor will tell you if you need to go back for a second jab.

If you think you should have had a **jab** and have not heard anything after a few weeks, you should talk to your doctor.
What to do if you think you have swine flu

If you think you already have swine flu you should ask for help and advice.

In England
Visit www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu
Or call the National Pandemic Flu Service on 0800 1 513 100

In Scotland
Call your doctor or call NHS24 on 08454 24 24 24

In Wales
Call your doctor or call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47
In Northern Ireland
Call your doctor or the Northern Ireland swine flu helpline on **0800 0514 142**

**How much will the call cost?**

- Calls to NHS24 should cost no more than a local call from a BT home phone.

- Calls to NHS Direct Wales cost up to 2p per minute from most BT home phones.

- Calls to the other numbers are free from home phones.

- Calls from mobiles and other networks may cost more.

For more information about swine flu visit [www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu](http://www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu)
# What the words mean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Celvapan</strong></td>
<td>A sort of vaccine to help protect you from <strong>swine flu</strong>. It is not made using hens’ eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>flu</strong></td>
<td>A short word for the illness called influenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>flu vaccine</strong></td>
<td>A <strong>jab</strong> to help protect you from <strong>flu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>immune system</strong></td>
<td>The part of your body that fights off illness and keeps you well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>jab</strong></td>
<td>An injection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pandemrix</strong></td>
<td>A sort of <strong>vaccine</strong> to help protect you from <strong>swine flu</strong>. It is made using hens’ eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>seasonal flu</strong></td>
<td>The sort of <strong>flu</strong> that comes round every year, usually in the winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>seasonal flu jab</strong></td>
<td>An injection you can have to help protect you from <strong>seasonal flu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>swine flu</strong></td>
<td>A new sort of flu that is different from <strong>seasonal flu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>swine flu jab</strong></td>
<td>An injection of <strong>swine flu vaccine</strong> that helps protect you from <strong>swine flu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>swine flu vaccine</strong></td>
<td>A medicine made from parts of dead <strong>flu</strong> germs that helps protect you from <strong>swine flu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>vaccine</strong></td>
<td>A medicine that helps your <strong>immune system</strong> fight off germs</td>
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For more copies of this booklet

If you live in England, you can get more copies of this booklet from:

www.orderline.dh.gov.uk

Or telephone 0300 123 1002
(8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday)

You can also download this Easy read, the longer version of this booklet and other formats and languages.

If you live in England go to
www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu

If you live in Scotland go to
www.scotland.gov.uk/swineflu

Or if you live in Wales go to
www.wales.gov.uk/swineflu

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