

Evelina Children's Hospital
@ St Thomas' Hospital
Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7EH
Switchboard: 020 7188 7188
9th July 2009

To the parents of

Re: SWINE FLU Influenza AH1N1

You will be aware that there is increasing spread of swine flu in the community. Your child is **no more likely to get flu than anyone else**, but some children such as yours may be at greater risk of complications from flu than otherwise healthy children. Your child may benefit from drugs to reduce the risk of getting flu if he/she comes into prolonged close contact with someone with flu. The greatest risk is **household contact** with swine flu. A case of swine flu is based on symptoms; the person has not been swabbed to confirm flu.

So that there is no doubt about certain terms, below are some details and definitions:

* The common symptoms of swine flu are: **abrupt onset of fever (greater than 38.5°C) plus two or more** of the following

- cough and/or runny nose
- sore throat
- headache
- muscle aches and pains
- feeling very tired and listless
- diarrhoea or vomiting

* We need to consider giving medication after **prolonged close contact** with someone while they have flu symptoms; probably this means **being within a metre of someone with flu symptoms for at least an hour**:

- this mainly includes people who live with your child
- contact with someone in the same class as your child at school / nursery or who plays with your child poses a lower risk

If your child has prolonged close contact with flu, we advise they should receive a **prophylactic (meaning preventative)** course of medication called **Tamiflu** (also called Oseltamivir) for 10 days to **reduce the risk** of getting flu. Contact with people who have flu symptoms outside the family should clearly be avoided wherever possible. ***Please call your GP to discuss this; we are sending your GP a copy of this letter but also take this letter with you.***

If your child develops flu symptoms themselves, early treatment should reduce the risk of severe disease or complications. You should **contact your GP** so that Tamiflu can be started immediately at **treatment dosage**, that is, twice daily for 5 days. It is important to understand that Tamiflu is only of benefit if given as prophylaxis after close direct contact, or as treatment for flu symptoms. It cannot be given continuously.

If your child needs **treatment** with Tamiflu for flu symptoms, do not delay in arranging this through your GP or NHS Direct, but you should also let us know.

Please discuss the advice in this letter with us at your next routine visit, or you can speak to us over the phone if you have queries or concerns. **As we learn more about swine flu over time, the best advice we can give you will change so please discuss with your GP who will be up to date.**

Updates on the national swine flu treatment and prophylaxis advice can be found on the following website:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1242949541960?p=1242949541960>