

## What if I am coming into hospital for a scheduled appointment?

If you have flu-like symptoms, please follow this advice:

- If you are coming for a routine outpatient appointment please reschedule your appointment date if possible.
- If you are attending for day care treatment, please call the department in advance of your attendance to inform them.
- If you are due to be admitted to hospital please call the number in your admission letter or the ward where you are being admitted so appropriate measures can be taken.

## Help us prevent the spread of flu

- If you have a fever or flu-like symptoms do not visit our hospital
- Relatives and friends should not visit if they are unwell, especially with any flu-like symptoms.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing.
- Clean hands regularly.

## For further information

- NHS Choices Website:  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Public Health England Website:  
[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)
- The World Health Organisation Website:  
<http://www.who.int>
- This leaflet is based on patient leaflet from Ashford and St Peters Hospital and East Surrey Hospital.

## Contact details

### Infection Control Team

Royal Surrey County Hospital  
Egerton Road, Guildford GU2 7XX

**Telephone:** 01483 571122 ext 4580

### PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm  
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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## Flu

**Help us to prevent the spread of flu and other respiratory viruses to keep our patients safe**  
Infection Control Department



**Patient and visitor information leaflet**

This leaflet explains what flu is, how it spreads as well as prevention and treatment.

## What is flu?

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Flu (influenza) is a common viral illness that is spread by coughs and sneezes. It is not the same as the common cold. Symptoms tend to be more severe and last for longer. You can catch flu all year round, but it is especially common in winter months in the UK.

## Flu symptoms – include:

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- High temperature / Fever (38°C)
- Shortness of breath or cough
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Aching limbs
- Lack of appetite
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea

## How do you catch flu?

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The virus is spread in small droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets spread for about a meter; they can remain airborne before landing on surfaces. The virus can survive for up to 24 hours. Anyone who breathes in the droplets can catch flu. You can also catch flu through contact with contaminated surfaces and then touching your nose or mouth. Everyday items such as door handles, TV remotes and mobile phones, can easily become contaminated. It is therefore important to wash your hands regularly.

## When are people most infectious?

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Adults are likely to be infectious from approximately 1 day before until 3-5 days from the onset of symptoms. Children and immunocompromised patients, however, tend to be infectious for longer (typically up to 7 days).

People become less infectious as their symptoms subside. Once symptoms are gone, they are no longer considered infectious. If you have had a transplant and/or receive chemotherapy or other immunosuppression you may excrete the virus for longer.

## Who is most at risk from flu?

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- Those with a long-term medical condition – e.g. diabetes or a heart, lung, kidney or neurological disease.
- Children under five and people over 65.
- People with weakened immune systems as a result of a disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or medication (such as steroids, chemotherapy).
- Patients with chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases.
- Pregnant women.
- Contact your GP / pharmacy for your annual vaccine (flu jab) if this is the case.

## What can I do to help stop the spread of the virus?

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Coughs and sneezes spread diseases:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- Disposing of used tissues promptly and carefully.

- Washing hands frequently with soap and warm water or alcohol foam/gel to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to your face or to other people.

## What should I do if I think I have flu symptoms?

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If you are normally fit and healthy there is no need to see a doctor. Stay at home and rest while the acute symptoms persist normally 2-3 days.

- Limit contact with others.
- Take over the counter remedies providing not allergic.
- Get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids.

You should contact your GP or call 111 if:

- You're worried about your baby's or child's symptoms.
- You're 65 or over.
- You're pregnant.
- You have a long-term medical condition – for example, diabetes or a heart, lung, kidney or neurological disease.
- You have a weakened immune system – for example, because of chemotherapy or HIV.
- Your symptoms don't improve after 7 days.

You should call 999 or go to A&E if you:

- Develop sudden chest pain
- Have difficulty breathing
- Start coughing up blood.