

News Release



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Influenza A (H1N1) update

26/11/2009

Three people have died after contracting H1N1.

Two patients were from the NHS Lanarkshire Board area and both, an older person and an adult, had underlying health conditions.

The third person in the NHS Lothian area had no recorded underlying health conditions.

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon said:

"My heart goes out to both people's families and friends. This is very sad and our thoughts are with them."

The latest figures, from Health Protection Scotland, about the incidence of influenza A (H1N1) in Scotland have also been published today.

The findings are:

- A rate of GP consultations for flu-like illnesses - not necessarily H1N1 - across Scotland of 119.9 per 100,000. This is a small increase of 1 per cent from last week's figure of 119.4
- The number of community samples that tested positive for H1N1 is similar to last week at 44 per cent.
- These rates suggest that an estimated figure of 7,400 people have consulted their GP. However, taking account of the number of people having H1N1 but not consulting their GP, HPS estimate that around 21,100 people have contracted H1N1 in the past week. Both of these figures represent a small decrease of around 1 per cent from last week.
- The estimated uptake rate for one dose of the pandemic vaccine among front line health and social care staff is 37.9 per cent and 18 per cent so far.
- As of November 23, there have been 1104 people with influenza A (H1N1) hospitalised since the start of the outbreak. 137 people have required hospital admission in the last week and, as of yesterday, there were 106 in hospital in Scotland.
- There have been 45 deaths linked to influenza A (H1N1) since the start of the outbreak.
- During the past week, higher than normal pupil absence rates due to influenza-like illness have been reported in an increasing number of schools across Scotland.
- There is limited evidence of antiviral resistance in Scotland.

Speaking about the weekly reported figures, Ms Sturgeon said:

"This week's figures, for the third consecutive week, show a slow down with only marginal increases across consultation and swab rates. However, this is not a reason to become complacent, we must continue to do everything we can to protect ourselves and others.

"The first uptake figures are now available and I'm pleased to see that many staff are protecting themselves against H1N1, also I trust that all eligible health and social care staff will take up the offer of the vaccine, not only for their own protection but for that of the people they care for.

"We now have over 70 per cent of all the supplies we need to vaccinate the priority groups, and that total is increasing on a weekly basis. We remain firmly on track to have offered the vaccine to everybody in the first phase of the priority groups by Christmas.

"I urge everyone within the priority groups to take up the vaccine when invited to do so as vaccination is our best defence in the fight against H1N1."

Anyone who is concerned about flu-like symptoms should continue to contact their GP for advice, or NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24. Further information on the vaccination programme is available via the Scottish Swine Flu Vaccination Helpline on 08000 28 28 16.