

# SWINE FLU VACCINATION PROGRAMME

## H1N1 SWINE FLU VIRUS – What we know so far:

- The swine flu virus is a new virus which has evolved by the combination of swine, avian and human flu viruses
- This is a new virus and we are all susceptible to it
- Human to human transmission is occurring
- The usual seasonal flu vaccine that we give to people in the wintertime is unlikely to give effective protection against it
- Vaccine is now in production but is still waiting to be licensed for use
- We have not been given a date for when the vaccine will be available in the UK, nor when it will be delivered to us at this Practice
- Two doses of the vaccine are needed, the second vaccine being given at least three weeks after the first. We have seen that the virus tends to affect younger people and it may be that older people (over 40) may have some immunity

## Priority Groups for Vaccination

The Department of Health and Health Protection Agency have prioritised for us the groups of people who should be vaccinated first.

The following groups of people follow in order of priority, and as and when the vaccine is available to us we will inform you as to which flu clinic you may attend.

Priority Groups (in order):

- Those aged 6 months to 65 years of age in a clinical “*at risk group*”

*At risk group* means those with

- heart disease
- lung disease
- COPD
- asthma
- kidney disease
- liver disease
- the immuno-compromised (eg chemotherapy, oral steroids, methotrexate and other similar drugs)
- diabetes
- coeliac disease
  
- pregnant women
- household contacts of immuno-compromised patients
- those over the age of 65 in the clinical “at risk groups” as outlined above
  
- Front line health and social care workers

It is hoped that the vaccine might be available in mid-October