

Further information is available from;

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

We act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, liaising with staff, managers and where appropriate, relevant organisations to negotiate immediate or prompt solutions. We can also help you get support from other local or national agencies.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691
Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

Other Sources of Information

NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: www.nhs.uk

Patient UK

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self-help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: www.patient.info

Self Help & Support Groups

A selection of websites providing access to good quality patient and consumer health information, covering specific age groups and conditions.

Also includes Shropshire Community Directory which contains up-to-date information on community groups, clubs, societies, organisations, support groups and self-help groups covering Shropshire and its borders.

Website: www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/

Information in Other Formats

Different versions of the leaflet available in large print type.

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

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Patient Information

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.

This leaflet will give you information on:

- Symptoms of seasonal flu.
- How you may catch seasonal flu.
- What happens if you have flu like symptoms?
- How long will I be infectious for?
- What can I do to protect myself?

What are the symptoms of seasonal flu?

The main symptoms are:

- High temperature – above 38°C
- Cough
- Joint or muscle pains
- Sore throat, runny nose.

In addition to these, other symptoms may include:

- Headache
- Fatigue/unusual tiredness
- Feeling sick or being sick or diarrhoea.

How can I catch it?

The virus is contagious and can spread between people.

This can be spread by:

- Coughing or sneezing
- Touching or shaking the hand of an infected person and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose
- Touching surfaces or objects that have become contaminated with the flu virus and then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose without first washing your hands.

What happens if you have flu like symptoms or a heavy cold?

- A swab will be taken from your nose and mouth to see if you are carrying the virus
- You will be isolated in a side-room, or placed with other patients who have flu symptoms whilst awaiting the results of the swab.
- Healthcare workers may wear special masks whilst caring for you. You may need to wear a mask if you are being transferred or visiting departments for tests.

How long will I be infectious to others?

People are most infectious soon after they develop symptoms. They can continue to spread the virus, for example in coughs and sneezes. People are considered no longer infectious as soon as they start to feel better or five days from the start of symptoms whichever is sooner. Children and people with multiple health conditions are considered no longer infectious as soon as they start to feel better or 10 days from the start of symptoms whichever is sooner.

What can I do to protect against infection?

- Washing hands with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to face or to other people
- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue
- Throwing away dirty tissues once you have used them.
- Cleaning hard surfaces frequently using normal cleaning products.
- Have your flu vaccination at the beginning of each flu season if you are:
 - over 65
 - in a high risk group
 - a healthcare worker.
 - pregnant
 - have a long-term condition e.g. diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease etc.
- Please tell your friends and relatives not to visit if they have flu symptoms

I am pregnant, am I at particular risk?

You may be at greater risk of catching seasonal flu because your immune system is likely to be weaker. Therefore, you should talk to your GP or ward staff before visiting anyone with flu. Pregnant women are strongly advised to get vaccinated against flu.