

20/12/2010

To all Pharmacies, GPs, Practice Managers & Practice Nurses Non Medical Prescribers and Out of Hours

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Who Should have antivirals?

Along with other Flu A and Flu B viruses, the H1N1 (2009) virus is now regarded as one of the group of **seasonal** flu viruses in general circulation and therefore the NICE recommendations on the use of antivirals for treatment and prophylaxis will apply during the 2010/11 influenza season.

Antivirals should be used when:

A person with a flu-like illness who has not been vaccinated and is **in an 'at-risk' group** and can start treatment within 48 hours (or within 36 hours for zanamivir treatment in children) of the onset of symptoms as per licensed indications

The NICE guidance on the use of antivirals can be accessed at:

- (a) <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/TA168> for treatment and
- (b) <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/TA158> for prophylaxis.

At Risk Groups include:-

- Chronic Respiratory Disease
- Chronic Heart Disease
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- Chronic Liver Disease
- Chronic Neurological Disease
- Diabetes
- Pregnant women
- All those aged 65 years and over
- Those living in long-stay residential homes or other long-stay care facilities where rapid spread is likely to follow introduction of infection and cause high morbidity and mortality.

Antivirals supplies are still limited so please only use for at risk groups.

Please continue to encourage all patients in these groups to have influenza vaccine if they have not already been vaccinated.