



September 29th, 2016

Flu vaccination to protect health staff and patients

Health staff are preparing to protect their patients this winter, with the launch of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's annual staff flu vaccination campaign on Monday (October 3rd).

The Trust has trained 'flu champions' in individual departments to support its occupational health team in administering the jab to staff at South Tyneside District Hospital and at community health venues in South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead.

Trust Medical Director Dr Shaz Wahid said: "Every year, influenza vaccination is offered to NHS staff as a way of reducing the risk of them contracting the virus and transmitting it to their patients. By having the vaccination, they also protect their own family members, especially young children and other relatives who may fall into one of the 'at risk' groups for flu, and they keep themselves healthy during the winter when NHS services, particularly urgent and emergency care, come under great pressure."

Public Health England estimate that an average of 8,000 people die from flu in England each year. It is highly infectious and patients in hospital and other care settings are much more vulnerable to its severe effects.

Whilst flu can be unpleasant, if you are otherwise healthy it will usually clear up on its own within a week. However, it can be more severe in certain at risk groups such as anyone aged 65 and over, pregnant women, children and adults with an underlying health condition (particularly long-term heart or respiratory disease) and children and adults with weakened immune systems.

You are eligible to receive a free flu jab if you:

- are 65 years of age or over
- are pregnant
- have certain medical conditions
- are very overweight
- are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility
- receive a carer's allowance, or you are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill
- are a front-line health and social care worker

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Pictured above: South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Medical Director Dr Shaz Wahid receives his flu jab from Lisa Dawson, senior occupational health nurse

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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