

Lloydspharmacy Warns Not To Rely On Swine Flu Jab To Protect Against Winter Flu



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Industry: [Healthcare](#)

Lloydspharmacy has warned that the number of people protecting themselves against seasonal flu has fallen this year, possibly the result of a misguided belief that the swine flu jab will protect against winter flu.

As of 6th November there had only been a 54% uptake in people aged 65 and over, and only 27% uptake by people aged 55 - 65 to date, of the seasonal [flu vaccine](#)*. This is a big reduction compared with the 73.5% uptake in 2008 by over the 65s and 73.9% in 2007**.

According to research*** conducted by [Lloydspharmacy](#) almost 40% of people wrongly believe that the [swine flu vaccine](#) will also protect them against seasonal flu. Even more worryingly, more than half (52%) of the over 65s - one of the groups most vulnerable to winter flu - thought they would be protected against both strains if they had had the swine flu vaccination.

People over the age of 65 qualify for a free NHS seasonal flu vaccination as do people with conditions such as [diabetes](#), asthma, [heart disease](#), lung disease, kidney disease, chronic liver disease, lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment) or removal of the spleen, or if they are a resident of a nursing or residential home. Anyone who is the main carer for an elderly or disabled person and whose wellbeing may be put at risk if the carer falls ill, is also eligible for a free vaccination from their GP.

Others who are not eligible for free NHS treatment can still have an online consultation with a doctor and be vaccinated at high street pharmacies for a fee of £5, with Lloydspharmacy offering a seasonal flu vaccination service in 260 of its pharmacies.

Seasonal flu is responsible for the deaths of about 8,000 people in the UK a year and tends to affect the more vulnerable or elderly people. Last week the European Centre

for Disease Prevention and Control forecast that the swine flu and seasonal flu strains could claim 40,000 lives each across Europe this winter.

The World Health Organisation has urged national governments to put in place plans to vaccinate at least 75 per cent of people most at risk of seasonal flu by 2010**.

"Whilst there is still time for vulnerable people to get themselves protected before late November (when the Winter flu season reaches its peak) we would certainly expect to see a higher uptake by this time of year," said Clare Kerr, head of clinical services at Lloydspharmacy.

*** ENDS ***

Editors notes

* Opinion Research conducted for Lloydspharmacy among 2007 UK adults 4 - 6th November 2009

** The Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly

*** ICM Omnibus 'Flu' Vaccinations Survey 25-27 September 2009 among 1003 people.

Notes to editors

About

Lloydspharmacy:

Lloydspharmacy is a community pharmacy which has primary care at the heart of its business and has around 1700 pharmacies across the UK. These are based predominantly in community and health centre locations. The company employs over 17,000 staff and dispenses over 145 million prescription items annually.

Lloydspharmacy is the trading name of Lloydspharmacy Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Celesio AG based in Stuttgart. Celesio is a leading international company which covers the spectrum of pharmaceutical trade and pharmaceutical-related services.

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