



Protecting people
Preventing harm
Preparing for threats

Pregnancy and swine flu

Who are the higher risk groups for swine flu?

- ▶ people with chronic lung disease including people who have had drug treatment for their asthma within the past three years
- ▶ people with chronic heart disease
- ▶ people with chronic kidney disease
- ▶ people with chronic liver disease
- ▶ people with chronic neurological disease
- ▶ people with suppressed immune systems (whether caused by disease or treatment),
- ▶ people with diabetes
- ▶ pregnant women
- ▶ people aged 65 years and older
- ▶ children under five years old

What do I have to do?

It is important that any woman who is pregnant and has the symptoms of a flu-like illness (headache, cough, sore throat and fever) should get advice from NHS Direct or their doctor as soon as possible. Women who are diagnosed with any type of flu may require close monitoring.

Complications from flu can be serious for anyone and should they develop it is important that they are picked up quickly so that treatment can be given straight away.

If after assessing a woman's condition it is felt that flu is present and causing a problem then an antiviral may be offered. Relenza (zanamivir) is an antiviral that is inhaled into the lungs. This means that very little of it gets into the blood stream therefore this drug is recommended by the Department of Health for use in pregnant women rather than Tamiflu (oseltamivir).

The Department of Health has purchased Relenza (zanamivir), an inhaled antiviral drug that treats flu without reaching the developing fetus.

I am pregnant, so what symptoms am I likely to have if I have got swine flu?

Clinical information on the effects of H1N1 swine flu in pregnant women is still being gathered and assessed. However, it is considered likely that the current swine flu virus will be similar in effect to seasonal flu.

Most pregnant women who are diagnosed with swine flu will show the same symptoms as seasonal flu – headache, cough, sore throat and fever and most will recover from this. As with seasonal flu it is possible that some women may become very unwell from swine flu.

Am I at increased risk of complications?

Any infection in pregnant women can increase the likelihood of complications developing – influenza is no exception. Influenza, on top of the 'stresses and strains' that the body will already be experiencing, particularly in later term, could cause a greater impact than usual on mother and baby.

What is the risk to my baby?

It is very difficult to estimate the risk in individuals. However, there is evidence emerging that fever/ increased temperature in a pregnant woman can have a bad effect on the baby.

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