

Mark urges people to get the flu jab

Mark has today urged those most vulnerable in Milton Keynes, including the elderly and those with heart conditions, to get their flu jabs this winter.

Patients who have heart problems face a far higher risk of complications should they catch flu. Health officials from NHS Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire are appealing for people with heart problems to call their GP surgery as soon as possible to book a free flu vaccination.

Heart problems cover a range of long term medical conditions and include cardiovascular disease (CVD), coronary heart disease (CHD), heart attacks, angina (pain in the chest on exertion) and heart failure. These patients are more at risk of developing serious complications from flu.

Every year the flu jab is offered to people with long term conditions, such as heart disease, to protect them from the most prevalent strains of flu circulating that winter.

Professor John Parkes, Chief Executive of NHS Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire, said: "Getting the flu jab is the best way to help protect you and others around you from getting flu this winter. People should not underestimate the dangers of flu. It is a highly infectious illness and people with long term conditions such as heart disease can become seriously ill and may require hospital treatment if they catch flu.

"Anyone with a heart condition who has not yet had the jab should contact their GP surgery to make an appointment as soon as possible."

Mark added: 'It is crucial that those who are most at risk ensure that they get the flu jab this winter, we all know how serious the flu is and particularly to those in the most vulnerable groups.'

The groups of people most at risk from flu are:

people with long-term conditions
people with weakened immune systems
pregnant women
people with certain conditions related to their nervous system
those over 65.

It is important that anyone who falls into these categories visits their GP to get their jab. For more information on the flu jab go to <http://www.northamptonshire.nhs.uk/flu> or www.miltonkeynes.nhs.uk/flu.htm