

Distribution:	As Appendix 1
From:	Professor Isabel Oliver, Chief Medical Officer
Date:	22 October 2025
Reference:	CEM/CMO/2025/07
Category:	Immediate (cascade within 6 hours)
Title:	Influenza season 2025: Antiviral medicines
What is this about:	PHW surveillance data indicates that influenza is circulating in the community.
Why has it been sent:	For action, information and to pass on to colleagues. Prescribers working in primary care may now prescribe, and community pharmacists may now supply, antiviral medicines (oseltamivir and zanamivir) for the prophylaxis and treatment of influenza for people in at risk groups.

Dear Colleagues,

Commencement of Influenza Season and Antiviral Prescribing Guidance

Following close monitoring of influenza surveillance data, we have clear indications that influenza activity is increasing in Wales. Furthermore, recent reports from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland indicate they are experiencing increased activity.

Although overall influenza activity has remained near baseline, we are seeing earlier-than-usual seasonal activity. There have been increased GP consultations for influenza-like illness (ILI), rising confirmed cases through the sentinel GP network, and outbreaks in community settings.

In light of these developments, and acting on advice from Public Health Wales, the conditions are now fulfilled for clinicians to begin prescribing antiviral medications (oseltamivir and zanamivir) for the treatment of and prophylaxis following exposure to influenza in at-risk groups, consistent with national guidance and local surveillance.

Health boards should ensure arrangements are in place to ensure adequate supplies of oseltamivir and zanamivir are available to ensure those who are at risk and require antiviral medication can receive treatment or prophylaxis within 48 hours of symptom onset or exposure respectively, and must communicate the details of these arrangements to healthcare professionals in their respective areas.

As evidence suggests that influenza is circulating earlier than we've seen in recent years, I would like to reinforce the importance of ensuring timely uptake of vaccinations in eligible groups. This is especially important for care home residents and older adults in influenza A(H3) seasons, in which these groups can be severely affected.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all staff of the continued importance of robust Infection Prevention and Control (IP&C) measures in health and care settings. Uptake of vaccination, use of clinical pathways to isolate and/or cohort patients and consideration of universal masking in accordance with national and local surveillance supported by system modelling that will be supported by Public Health Wales IP&C advice are key elements of this to enable and inform a risk based approach to decision making. These practices are essential not only for reducing the risk of healthcare-associated infections but also for safeguarding the wellbeing of the people we care for, our colleagues, and the wider community. Everyone has a part to play in maintaining high standards, and I encourage you to review and follow the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (NIPCM) for Wales and Infection Prevention and Control Measures for Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) for Health and Social Care Settings as part of your routine practice.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Isabel Oliver
Chief Medical Officer

Supporting Links

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Guidance on use of antiviral agents for the treatment and prophylaxis of seasonal influenza [Guidance on use of antiviral agents for the treatment and prophylaxis of seasonal influenza \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91234/guidance-on-use-of-antiviral-agents-for-the-treatment-and-prophylaxis-of-seasonal-influenza.pdf)
Stowe J, Tessier E, Zhao H and others.

Public Health Wales (PHW) National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (NIPCM) that supports best practice in infection prevention and control across all care settings in Wales [NIPCM - Public Health Wales](#)

[Public Health Wales \(PHW\) Infection Prevention and Control Measures for Acute Respiratory Infections \(ARI\) for Health and Social Care Settings - WALES](#)

Appendix

To: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership to forward to:

All General Practitioners - please ensure this message is seen by all practice nurses and non-principals working in your practice and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'.

All Community Pharmacists

Deputising services

Independent/Private clinics and Hospitals and Hospices throughout Wales

To: Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts:

Chief Executives

Medical Directors

Nurse Directors

Directors of Public Health

Directors of Pharmacy

Onward distribution to:

Immunisation Leads

Infectious Disease Departments

Acute medical units

Microbiologists

Primary care prescribing and pharmacy advisers

To: Public Health Wales:

Chief Executive

Director of Public Health Services

Consultants in Communicable Disease Control

Microbiologists

Regional Epidemiologists

Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme

Cc: NHS Direct Wales

British Medical Association

Royal College of GPs

Royal College of Nursing

Royal College of Midwives

Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Community Pharmacy Wales

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Wales