



## Seasonal Flu Vaccination

This information is for cancer patients who are now receiving chemotherapy treatment and for those who have received chemotherapy during the last twelve months at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre (MVCC).

### Should I have the vaccination?

**We would recommend that all cancer patients who are now having chemotherapy, or who have had chemotherapy during the past year, should receive the 'seasonal flu vaccine'.** This vaccination is to provide protection, because you could be at a higher risk of developing serious complications if you get flu while receiving chemotherapy treatment. The people who live with you should also be vaccinated, because they could pass the virus on to you if they get flu.

The 2011 seasonal flu vaccine will provide protection against three types of flu, including swine flu. If you have had the swine flu vaccine before, the new vaccine will increase the immunity you have already developed.

### Is it safe?

The vaccines are not 'live' and **cannot** cause swine flu or seasonal flu. Please tell your GP if you have any allergies, especially if you have been allergic to any vaccines you have received in the past, or if you have been allergic to eggs or to chicken protein. Although most vaccines are prepared in hens' eggs, the Preflucel vaccine **is not prepared** in hens' eggs. Your GP will discuss with you which is the best vaccine in your case.

### Where can I get the vaccine?

Your GP surgery will provide your seasonal flu vaccine.

Mount Vernon Cancer Centre does not carry stocks of the vaccines. Please call your GP surgery to arrange for your flu vaccination.

### When should I have the vaccine?

**If you have not yet started** your chemotherapy, it is best to get your seasonal flu vaccination more than seven days before you start your treatment if possible\*.

**If you have started** your treatment, it is still possible to get the seasonal flu vaccination, but you will need to discuss with your hospital doctor or nurse when is the best time to receive it. They will tell you when your immunity should be at its strongest (usually seven days before your next treatment) so that you can get the seasonal flu vaccination at a time when it will have the best effect. You will need to discuss with your hospital doctor if you will need a second vaccination once your treatment is finished.

**If it has been more than six weeks since the end of** your treatment, you can receive the seasonal flu vaccine at any time. If it has been **less than** six weeks since you finished your treatment, please discuss the best time to receive the seasonal flu vaccine with your hospital doctor or nurse.

It is important to remember that this leaflet only applies to the seasonal flu vaccine. If you are receiving chemotherapy you must discuss with your doctor whether you can have any other vaccines, as you must not have any live vaccinations.

\* The Department of Health recommends the ideal time to be vaccinated is two weeks or more before the start of your treatment.

Reference: Department of Health Immunisation Against Infectious Disease 2006-updated; pg 49-50

For more information regarding flu vaccines:  
NHS Choices website at **www.nhs.uk**  
Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre at MVCC on  
**01923 844014**