

## **Influenza**

Influenza or 'flu is a cause of colds and 'flu in winter months. About 1 in 100 people get 'flu each year. Some years are worse than others. It can cause fever, chills, headache, cough, sore throat and muscle aches. Although most people are ill for only a few days, some have a much more serious illness and may need to go into hospital. Thousands of people die each year from influenza related illnesses. Most deaths caused by influenza are in elderly people.

There is a vaccine against influenza that is given each year. The viruses that cause influenza change often. A new influenza vaccine is made at the start of each year using viruses that are most likely to come to the UK later that year. If the vaccine includes the viruses that are the most common later that year it prevents about 6 out of 10 illnesses. The vaccine does not prevent the many other infections that also cause colds and 'flu like illnesses. Occasionally people get mild soreness at the injection site and fever and aches for 1-2 days after vaccination.