

## Swine Flu Pandemic – Top Lines

Our efforts during the containment phase, have given us time to learn more about this new virus, to build up antiviral and antibiotic stockpiles, and to start to develop a vaccine.

Scientists now expect to see rapid rises in the number of cases. We have always known it would be impossible to contain the virus indefinitely, and now it is right that we move into the treatment phase - treating the increasing numbers affected by swine flu.

There will be an immediate end to contact tracing and prophylaxis in all regions; GPs will now provide clinical diagnosis of Swine Flu cases rather than awaiting laboratory test results; and Primary Care Trusts will now begin to establish antiviral collection points where necessary.

Because cases will not be confirmed in a laboratory we will no longer be publishing daily figures from the Health Protection Agency.

People who have the virus will still be offered antivirals. However, it remains a matter of clinical discretion to decide whether antivirals should be prescribed in individual cases – for example where doctors are likely to be contacted by patients with coughs, colds and the worried well, in addition to those with swine flu.

We will issue clear guidance to doctors to ensure that those at higher risk – including those with chronic lung, kidney or heart disease, under fives, over 65s and pregnant women - get priority access to antivirals, within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms.

This is a cautious approach. Many people will be able to recover from swine flu without the need for antivirals and may therefore choose not to seek treatment. But a doctor faced with a symptomatic patient can not yet predict with certainty the course of their illness and whether or not they will be in the small proportion who may become more seriously ill.

If people think they have Swine Flu, they should first go online and check their symptoms on [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or call the Swine Flu information line on 0800 1 513 513. If they are still concerned, they should then call their GP, who can provide a diagnosis over the phone. People should not go to A&E if they suspect they have swine flu.

If Swine Flu is confirmed, will give them an authorisation voucher, which a flu friend can take to an antiviral collection point to pick up their antivirals. This may be a pharmacy or a community centre.

As cases rise further, we will move to a system where cases are diagnosed and dealt with by the National Pandemic Flu Service. This will take the pressure off GPs by allowing people to be diagnosed and given their antiviral vouchers either online or via a central call centre.

We expect the first batches of vaccines to arrive in August, with around 60 million doses available by the end of the year – enough for 30 million people – with more following after that.