

## INFORMATION FOR CANCER PATIENTS ABOUT SEASONAL FLU AND CHEMOTHERAPY



If you are receiving chemotherapy or steroids your immune system may be slightly weaker than normal which may make it harder for your body to fight off infections.

This places you in a priority group to receive vaccination against seasonal flu. It is advisable that you contact your GP and arrange to have a vaccination. This **cannot** cause flu.

**IMPORTANT: Your vaccine should be given in the week before your next dose of chemotherapy.**

There are also some common steps that you can take to help protect yourself from flu.

- You will be more likely to get infection 7 to 14 days after your chemotherapy treatment. During this time you should avoid going out into crowds of people where you are in close contact with others. Also try to avoid places with groups of young or small children.
- Stay away from anyone who has a cold, or has diarrhoea, vomiting or flu like symptoms, until they are feeling better usually around a week later. If other family members or neighbours have flu, avoid visiting them.
- If someone in the same household as you develops any of these symptoms they should keep away from you. They should also cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the used tissue in a waste bin right away. Regular cleaning of surfaces such as door handles, toilet handles and taps will help reduce the spread of viruses and germs.
- Keep your hands clean by washing them with warm water and soap after using the bathroom, blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- If you can't wash your hands, use a sanitizing gel
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.

**Symptoms of Seasonal Flu include:-** Fever, Aching Muscles, Cough, Chills, Sore throat, Fatigue and Headache

**IMPORTANT: Some flu symptoms are similar to possible side effects of your treatment. You need to contact your chemotherapy unit right away if you develop any of the symptoms above.**