

From the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson,



Our reference: **CMOPO00431172(PO185/2009)**

10 August 2009

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Dear Mr Singer,

Thank you for your email of 15 July 2009 regarding swine flu and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis patients.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME) is recognised as a long-term, debilitating condition, with a fluctuating course.

However, it is not known to increase the severity or duration of community acquired infections. I am not aware of evidence that it leads to more severe and complicated influenza, and is not a condition which leads to the inclusion of sufferers in the population groups offered vaccination for seasonal influenza.

The advice for CFS/ME sufferers is:

- Contact the national Pandemic Flu Service without delay if symptoms of flu develop, and take the antiviral medicine which is offered, preferably starting treatment within 48 hours of symptoms beginning
- Good hand hygiene and regular cleaning of work surfaces is effective in reducing transmission
- The respiratory hygiene advice (Catch it, Bin it, Kill it) is effective in the home and the community
- Where appropriate, observe occupational health advice at work

We take advice on H1N1 vaccines from the JCVI and this Committee will comment on any particular risk groups.

I hope that this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Donaldson'.

**SIR LIAM DONALDSON
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER**